

## D.C. Freeway Revolt and the Coming of Metro

### Part 2

### Official Challenges to the DC Freeways

#### Table of Contents

Mass Transportation Survey .....	3
Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region-1959 .....	6
Highways and Transit .....	11
Introducing Peter S. Craig.....	23
The I-70S Hearing.....	25
National Capital Transportation Act of 1960.....	33
NCTA Gets Underway.....	41
President Kennedy’s Interest.....	42
Thinking About the Future.....	45
Defining the District’s Freeway Network .....	49
Transition at NCTA .....	50
The Cost of Right-of-way .....	54
Awaiting NCTA’s Report .....	58
Battle over the Inner Loop Freeway.....	60
Trying to Get Started.....	66
The Switch .....	73
Enter Chairman Natcher.....	85
A Blistering Report .....	89
A Matter of Jurisdiction .....	91
National Capital Transportation Agency Submits Its Report .....	126
Trying to Sort Out the Freeway Battles .....	131
Implementing the Year 2000 Plan .....	135
The Darwinian Theory of Transportation .....	137
In the Wake of the NCTA Report .....	139
Debating the NCTA Data.....	143
Responding to NCTA .....	146
President Kennedy’s Decisions - Delayed .....	154
The President’s Recommendations .....	159
Congress Considers the President’s Report .....	162
The Commissioners’ Views.....	166
Chairman Natcher Takes a Stand.....	168
Chairman Fallon – To The Rescue?.....	178
The New Engineer Commissioner .....	199
Searching for a Solution.....	200
Appropriations 1964 .....	208
Senate Considers the Appropriation Act, 1964.....	211
Waiting For Hearings on NCTA’s Transit Plan.....	216
Transit Program for the Capital Region .....	220
While Whitener Considers the Options .....	250
The Freeway-Transit Link.....	257

The Bobtail Plan .....	260
The House Debates the Bobtail Plan.....	267
In the Aftermath .....	275
Locating the Three Sisters Bridge.....	279
The North Central Corridor .....	285

## **Part 2**

### **Official Challenges to the DC Freeways**

During the 1940s and 1950s, District officials, BPR, and National, Maryland, and Virginia road and planning officials struggled among themselves to plan a freeway network that would address the city's chronic and growing traffic congestion while minimizing impacts on parks, historic sites, homes, and businesses. Maryland and Virginia highway officials had their own problems developing highway plans, but their concerns often were directly affected by the District's ever-changing plans. Citizens expressed their views, generally to protect their homes, businesses, and communities.

Highway officials believed they must try to minimize harm, but the road network was too important to be blocked. In the interest of the greater good, as they saw it, they continued with their plans.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many officials and government organizations turned against the highway plans in favor of transit, especially rail rapid transit. In many cases, the issue was no longer where to build Interstate expressways but whether to build them at all.

#### **Mass Transportation Survey**

NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council established a Joint Steering Committee for the survey. The committee identified four major study areas: (1) planning the future region, including land use, the economy, population, and employment; (2) the region's future travel demands; (3) design of physical facilities to meet the projected requirements; and (4) design of machinery for financing and administering the proposed transportation system. For this work, the committee engaged several consulting firms and undertook a traffic survey with the cooperation of Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia highway authorities and BPR.

In 1955, BPR had completed studies, based on home interviews, of employees' place of residence and mode of travel to work as affected by the decentralization of government employment centers in the Washington area. The study found that the residents who were employed in the central area lived throughout the city and region "in the same proportion as general population distribution":

However, as agencies are relocated at increased distances from a central point, a larger number of employees have residences in the area of the new office location, with a secondary group having residence in the area of greatest population density near the central business district. When place of employment is removed approximately 8 to 10 miles from the central business district, most of the employees live in the vicinity of employment or in the semirural area beyond. As the distance from the central business district increases, there is a corresponding increase in the proportion of the work trips made by automobile. [Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1954, Bureau of Public Roads, Department of Commerce, page 35]

The traffic surveys helped BPR and State and local officials develop the initial plan for Interstate highways in the metropolitan area. In *General Location of National System of Interstate Highways*, released in 1955 and referred to as the Yellow Book because of the color its cover, BPR displayed a map of the Washington area showing an extensive Interstate network similar to the plan outlined in the Comprehensive Plan of 1950. An inner belt surrounded the White House and central core, with the Potomac River occupying one segment. A second, outer belt, later named the Capital Beltway, was shown entirely outside the city except where it crossed the District at its southernmost tip on what would be named the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge. Neither the third outer beltway shown in the 1950 plan nor the intermediate beltway known as Fort Drive was included in the Interstate System.

Radial Interstates linked the two circumferentials:

- One of the radial left the western leg of the inner beltway and continued on the District side of the Potomac River to the outer beltway on its way to Frederick, Maryland (loosely I-270 in today's numbering plan).
- Where the Potomac River served as a quadrant of the inner belt, the eastern and western legs of the inner belt continued into Virginia (loosely I-66 and I-395/95).
- A route entering the area from the northeast crossed the outer beltway and split in the vicinity of Bladensburg, Maryland, north of the District line:
  1. One route continued east of the Anacostia River (I-295) and ended on the outer beltway near what is now the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge.
  2. The other route coming from the northeast continued through the city, roughly in the New York Avenue corridor, to the inner belt (part of I-95).
- A short route linked the Anacostia Interstate with the inner belt (I-295 linked with I-395).

The map did not show any Interstate routes in northern Washington other than the Potomac River route in northwest and the New York Avenue corridor in northeast.

The *Post* described the routes in terms of existing roads that readers were familiar with:

Sanctioned was the north leg of the Inner Belt which general runs along Q and R sts. nw. and down 24<sup>th</sup> st. nw. to the proposed Constitution ave. bridge. Third st., which connects the north and south legs of the Inner Belt, also was approved.

New York ave., linking the Inner Belt with the Washington-Baltimore parkway, was designated an interstate highway. Also included were the Kenilworth-Anacostia Freeway and the Southwest Freeway which links the 14<sup>th</sup> st. bridge and the Anacostia Freeway

.....

The final road project inside the District made part of the interstate system was Canal Road which will connect the Inner and Outer Beltways. It generally will follow the north bank of the Potomac.

Maryland's Interstate System included the outer beltway, the roads connecting to Canal Road and New York Avenue, and a short stretch of the Kenilworth-Anacostia Freeway connecting to the outer beltway.

Virginia's network included the outer beltway, Shirley Highway and U.S. 50.

The District portion of the network totaled 22 miles (the District had requested 28 miles).

(The Interstate numbers employed here did not exist in 1955; they are intended to help with visualization of the Yellow Book map of the Washington area.)

Bartholomew appeared before the Joint Committee of Congress on Washington Metropolitan Problems, chaired by Senator Bible, in May 1958 to discuss the mass transportation survey. Transportation, Bartholomew said, "is the lifeblood of the community." An appropriate plan would "be of inestimable significance and benefit," while an "an inadequate or haltingly ineffective approach will be extremely costly and will be damaging to the community welfare." The key was to gather accurate information:

Mass transportation has been undergoing such a profound change in character in all American cities, particularly since World War II, that there is evident need for clarification of where we are heading and what should be the specific form of plan to be adopted and enforced. We must know whether or not individual automobile transportation can take over the full burden of transportation in a large metropolitan area such as Washington. If so, we will need many new expressways.

If not, we need to know what traditional forms of mass transportation such as the streetcar or the motorbus should be retained, and what particular function either or both should play in any new comprehensive plan. In addition to this, considering the demands of our 1980 community, which will be greatly enlarged both in total population and in area development, we need to know whether any new forms of mass transportation would be justified. And likewise, considering both total demand and alternate types of physical facilities, what is the most economical and effective means of providing the standard of service that will be required.

He emphasized three points. First, he said that as yet, "no American city has devised and constructed a mass transportation system geared to the needs and requirements of the modern metropolitan community now in process of formulation." That was why the "exhaustive survey" then underway on population and employment, and the dispersal of both was vitally necessary.

Second, the study was "the first profound attempt to ascertain the relative scope and function of the automobile, the bus, the streetcar, rapid transit, and other newer concepts of transportation." The result would be an areawide transportation plan showing the approximate location of highways and high-speed transit, "particularly any which may be located on separated ways either on the highway network or elsewhere." The report also would discuss parking needs, the cost of needed facilities, and basic plans for financing them.

Finally, he told the Joint Committee of Congress that, “There will be no quick or simple solution adequate to the need.” Transportation was as important to the community as “an adequate water supply and proper sanitation.” Creating the needed network would “be a most difficult undertaking, requiring extraordinary effort and cooperative endeavor.” [*Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Problems*, Hearings Before the Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, Congress of the United States, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1958, pages 15, 18]

While the surveys were undertaken mainly for mass transportation, BPR’s release of the Yellow Book established the first version of the area’s Interstate freeway network. Subsequent passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided the funds that Maryland, Virginia, and the District would need to begin planning, designing, and constructing the Interstate network.

### **Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region-1959**

On July 11, 1959, as noted earlier, President Eisenhower sent *Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region: The Mass Transportation Survey Report—1959* to Congress. His brief transmittal letter, dated July 10 and addressed to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, said:

Sir,

I herewith transmit for the consideration of the Congress the report of the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council on the Mass Transportation Survey of the Washington Region.

The report, the end result of several years of intensive study and research by the Planning Commission and Council, aided by experts drawn from public agencies and private concerns, points out the present and future problems of transportation of people and goods in the Region. The report also proposes a plan to meet the transportation problem and makes recommendations for organizing and financing the creation of the proposed transportation system.

The actions which may be taken in the years ahead to meet the problems of transportation will have a profound effect on the economy of the entire area, the welfare of its people, and the status of Washington as the Nation’s Capital. Accordingly, I am requesting the various Government agencies to make a detailed study of the Mass Transportation Survey report and the Planning Commission and Council’s recommendations. Such recommendations as are warranted will then be made to the Congress.

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

On July 15, President Eisenhower designated Maurice H. Stans, Director of the Bureau of the Budget, to screen the comments and recommendations received from other Federal Agencies. In effect, the bureau would serve as a clearinghouse for the ideas that might be submitted to Congress. ["Stans Is Designated For Transit Review," *The Evening Star*, July 15, 1959]

The \$500,000 plan was based on predictions about the region's development through 1980:

1. Population would increase from 2 million in 1959 to 3 million in 1980. "This increase in the number of persons to be served is the most important single factor in creating the need for new transportation facilities."
2. The outer spread of population would continue. "More than 80 per cent of the added population will be outside the original 10-mile square (the District of Columbia, Arlington County and part of Alexandria)." This dispersal would spread more in some directions than others, based on terrain, water availability, sewer services, and zoning. An especially large population will lie to the north and northwest of Washington in Montgomery County. Since suburban residents will make more and longer trips than at present, total daily person-miles will triple by 1980.
3. The downtown area (the area bordered by the Inner Loop Freeway) would remain the largest employment center in the area, with jobs increasing "moderately" by 1980. Work trips to downtown would increase by about 20 percent by then.
4. Most new jobs, however, would be located outside of downtown and, in fact, outside the District. "The large increase in trips to dispersed places of work will lead to a tremendous growth in peak hour trips through, around, or just short of the downtown area." Home-to-work movement across the 10-mile-square will increase more than 200 percent by 1980, but 24-hour travel volume into downtown will increase only a little more than 25 percent. "This type of dispersed traffic flow will place new demands on the transportation system, of a much different sort from the radial flow in and out of the downtown area that is so prominent today."
5. Automobile ownership and use throughout the region would increase as people "rely more and more on the private automobile for most kinds of travel," especially shopping, recreation, and social trips, as well as trips outside of downtown. "More than 80 per cent of the total regional travel will be in automobiles even with the proposed transit system in operation." Truck traffic also was expected to increase.
6. About half of the travelers during peak periods would be able to choose between the automobile and transit. They will base their choice on "the relative speed, cost, convenience and comfort of these two modes of travel." Of the other half, about one-fourth will have to use their automobile because they need it for work or for some other reason. In addition, one fourth will use transit, "many of them because they will not have automobiles available."
7. Peak volumes of travel (nearly half of all travel in a 24-hour period) in 1980 would occur during morning and afternoon weekday peaks. "These are the critical volumes that the transportation system must be designed to accommodate." Radial routes leading into the District will carry the heaviest peak-hour volumes.
8. Many key segments of the existing highway network "are rapidly nearing capacity, and some are already carrying more traffic than their rated capacities." Improving existing

roads and streets would “accommodate only a small part of the anticipated traffic increase.”

Because of these factors, the area’s transportation system must have greater capacities on all main routes of travel, including:

- Increased highway capacity throughout the region “since public transit can only serve economically a small proportion of the trips originating in the suburbs;”
- Larger capacities on the main radial routes;
- Emphasis on circumferential highways;
- Increased capacity serving areas north and northwest of the District;
- And “many new highways [that] must be built promptly” as well as high-capacity transit service to meet peak demand.

The Mass Transportation Survey considered three alternatives:

1. Auto-dominant with little change in transit – This alternative was “infeasible” because officials could not provide the number of freeway lanes needed to carry all the automobiles.
2. Express bus system – Providing express bus service on radial freeways would reduce the number of lanes needed by encouraging commuters to leave their automobiles, but more highways would be needed to accommodate the inevitable increase in automobiles and trucks, as well as the new express buses. Further, providing lanes for express buses would run into the same problem as freeway construction within the District’s built-up areas to accommodate traffic from the north and northwest.
3. Rail transit system – Rail transit could accommodate large volumes of passengers where express bus service would be inadequate, but construction of rail lines in the District would be very expensive, in contrast with buses that can be accommodated on existing freeways at little additional cost. Buses, therefore, had the advantage where they can accommodate all potential transit riders.

Because none of these alternatives was altogether satisfactory, the survey settled on a fourth alternative that combined the best features of the other three:

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the evaluation of the three alternatives and the recommended system may be stated as follows: An adequate transportation system for the National Capital Region must include a new form of express transit service, capable of attracting a large number of riders who would otherwise travel by private automobile from the suburbs to points in or near downtown Washington during the rush hours. Only if many of these people are induced to use public transit can the highway system within the 10-mile square accommodate the people who are not in a position to travel by transit.

Therefore, the recommended system consisted of an express system of rapid transit rail lines, express bus lines, and an extensive freeway and parkway network. Initially, express buses would serve the rapid rail corridors while the rail lines were under construction. Local bus lines would



serve as feeders for rail and bus lines and as distributors within the central business district. Buses also would serve areas in the District and the suburbs where express service could not be justified. Other streets and highways would need additional capacity to supplement the freeway/parkway system for shorter trips and to provide capacity beyond the limits of freeway construction.

Rail rapid transit lines would serve as radials linking downtown to points in Maryland and Virginia:

- Wheaton, Maryland, to Alexandria, Virginia; and
- Pooks Hill north of Bethesda to a point just beyond the Anacostia River, southeast of the central business district, to a feeder bus transfer station and parking lot.

To the extent possible, the trains would operate in the median of the new freeways. Within the center city, the rail lines would be built in cut-and-cover tunnels that, when covered by a deck would resume carrying surface traffic. Officials considered technological alternatives such as monorail, moving belts, automated buses, helicopters, and greater use of existing railroad service or right-of-way, but none was satisfactory.

The recommended network included 33 miles of rail rapid transit, 66 miles of express bus routes, and parking for the rail and bus passengers at an estimated cost of \$564 million.

However, transit could not serve commuters who needed their vehicles during the day and those beyond the range of feasible transit lines. It also could not serve traffic passing through the region or the movement of commercial vehicles. (The survey estimated that in 1980, trucks would constitute one-sixth of all trips.) Therefore, even with this mass transit network, the area would need freeways and parkways.

The report on the Mass Transportation Survey called for a freeway component of 326 miles at a cost of \$1.8 billion and \$119 million for related downtown parking facilities. To supplement existing freeways, area highway agencies were planning 179 miles of freeways and parkways in the next 10 years, but another 66 miles would be needed. Existing freeways would have to be widened to accommodate growth in population and, therefore, traffic. In addition to the planned inner and outer beltways, the report included the Northwest Freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor.

Creating the area's modern transportation system should proceed in three steps. First, existing public transit should be improved. It should be organized on a regional instead of jurisdictional basis as at present, to eliminate barriers to crossing State, District, and county lines. Traffic controls and regulations should be employed to increase speeds, while detailed planning for new express transit facilities should get underway. Efforts should include reserving right-of-way on new freeways for transit service, with freeway construction completed well ahead of the present schedule. Quick opening of freeways would increase service by express bus lines.

Second, express bus service should be included in new radial freeways, beginning in the early 1960s. The accelerated highway construction should continue even as construction of subways

gets underway in the mid 1960s. Radial freeways should be built with increased demand in mind by building wide medians where additional lanes can be provided as needed. Alternatively, the wide medians could be used as reversible one-way freeways.

Finally, rail transit should begin service no later than 1970.

The survey also considered downtown parking needs. About the same number of downtown all-day parking spaces would be needed in 1980 as at present. However, many current spaces on temporary parking lots and on-street parking would be lost. About 22,000 new spaces would be needed for all-day spaces, mostly in multi-level structures, with 27,000 new short-time spaces to replace existing spaces and meet new demand downtown.

The survey estimated the cost of the recommended system would be approximately \$2.5 billion:

- \$1.8 billion for highways
- \$664 million for express transit facilities
- \$119 million for parking facilities in the downtown area

About three-fourths of the funding should be spent in the first 10 years. More than half of the funds (or \$1.3 billion) would be expended on transportation facilities in the District of Columbia.

Some funds could be expected under current laws but, for example, about \$500 million that would be needed for highway construction was not covered by present arrangements. New sources, such as 30-year bonds, would have to be considered.

The survey's assumption about transit costs and revenue indicated that "revenues would be sufficient—when the region's population reached 3 million and the transit and freeway systems are in full operation—to cover operating costs and a substantial part of the yearly payments of interest and principal [estimated: \$26.7 million a year] on the initial investment." The deficit would be about \$16.1 million in 1980.

The two most likely sources of added revenue for costs beyond present projections were increased Federal contributions and taxes and charges imposed within the region. Examples of taxes and charges included a regional motor fuel tax, motor vehicle license fees, special parking fees, payroll taxes, and real estate taxes. The best option would "probably consist of a combination of several of them." Governing bodies in the area would have to decide on the best mix, but serious doubts existed on whether they could provide the entire amount of additional revenue needed.

Considering the strong Federal interest in improved transportation within the area, the survey found that strong arguments could be made to support Federal loans and contributions. At the time, the Federal Government did not have a transit-aid program, but should contribute toward the planning and design of the rapid rail system, as well as the early construction stages undertaken by an interstate agency capable of raising funds within the region. The Federal Government also should identify a way of providing the necessary added revenue to pay for the additional highway mileage needed by 1980.

To carry out the plans, the survey projected several organizational stages. First, Congress should ratify the interstate compact approved by Maryland and Virginia to establish an agency to regulate transit throughout the area. This compact would allow for integration of transit lines across jurisdictional borders.

Second, Congress should authorize a temporary public corporation to begin planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and even operation of transit facilities. The corporation also would review ways of linking highway and transit service.

Third, the first two steps should end when local jurisdictions agree to an interstate compact to form an organization that would carry out all activities, including the financing, construction, operation, and maintenance of transit facilities. This organization would be in charge of the rail rapid transit system, including the subway segments. [“Summary of Mass Transit Program for Capital Area,” *The Sunday Star*, July 12, 1959; the summary provided the text of the summary in the Mass Transportation Survey report]

Harland Bartholomew said the report resulted from an “evolution of successive studies and steps” involving the top transportation, traffic, and urban development experts in the country. It was, he believed, the first such study based on widespread consultation with experts.

Gingery, chairman of the regional council, said the study had “developed the answers to any pet theory that anyone wants to throw at us.”

Engineer Commissioner Welling, however, was concerned that the funding goals would be impossible without substantial Federal assistance. “For the future, I foresee an increase in District tax rates and a heavier distribution to the Highway Fund of available revenues. Even so, it is reasonable to assume that the residents and business enterprises in the District cannot afford the cost of constructing the recommended system in the District, or even a major portion thereof.”

Senator Bible indicated that his Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems would hold hearings on the survey report in the fall. [Beveridge, George, “Subway and Road Needs for 1980 Outlined in Survey,” *The Sunday Star*, July 12, 1959]

## **Highways and Transit**

Chairman Bible’s joint committee held hearings on November 9-14, 1959, on the transportation plan. Overall, witnesses supported the proposed mass transit network, although they differed in some aspects of it. Witnesses were generally concerned about the inclusion of freeways, such as the Inner Loop and Northwest Freeway, in the plan.

On November 9, Elmer B. Staats, Deputy Director of the Bureau of the Budget, was the first witness. He recalled that in transmitting the survey report to Congress, President Eisenhower had indicated he would ask government agencies to review the survey and submit recommendations, which he would then send to Congress as warranted. Staats reported that the results of agency reviews indicated that the proposed comprehensive transportation system was

“a constructive approach,” with highest priority to be given to the proposed rail transit facilities. He emphasized that this support was general, not linked to any specific transit line or highway.

Staats encouraged Congress to ratify the interstate compact approved by Maryland and Virginia to regulate fares and determine routes of private carriers. Beyond that, Staats supported the proposed temporary Federal corporation to plan the express transit facilities, acquire right-of-way, and begin building the system. After the groundwork was in place, a permanent interstate agency should be established by compact among the jurisdictions to succeed the regulatory agencies and transit corporation.

He acknowledged the call for substantial Federal contributions to the capital costs of the new system. “As a general rule, the Federal Government does not assume responsibility for financing highways designed primarily to meet mass transportation or other predominantly local traffic requirements.” However, additional aid, especially for the rail rapid transit system “may be justified by the special Federal interest in the Nation’s Capital.” He cautioned that “long-term reliance on Federal financing should be avoided.”

He emphasized:

The objective would be furthered by making every effort by Federal and local agencies to emphasize or encourage the use of rail transit, express buses and outlying terminal parking, rather than emphasizing additional highways which tend to encourage automobile commuting.

In the absence of detailed plans, Staats could not talk dollar amounts, but agreed that initial Federal financing of the corporation for rapid transit would be necessary. “At the same time we believe that the scheduling of capital outlays for rapid transit services and the development of fare schedules should proceed on the basis that the corporation will ultimately be self-supporting.” He also wanted to ensure that “every opportunity” was given to employing private enterprise in operating and financing the integrated mass transportation system, “especially the express bus service and downtown parking facilities.” [pages 14-15]

As the *Star*’s George Beveridge explained, the Eisenhower administration was developing legislation providing for Federal aid to the corporation:

“The bill simply would authorize the Treasury to loan to the corporation,” Mr. Staats said, in answer to questions. “That is why we say the transportation system eventually must be self-supporting—so that receipts can repay the Federal loan.”

Budget Bureau aides explained they envision the set-up here as a parallel to financing the St. Lawrence Seaway. [Beveridge, George, “White House Backs Rapid Rail Plan Here,” *The Evening Star*, November 9, 1959]

(The St. Lawrence Seaway Bill (the Wiley-Donero Act, P.L. 83-358), approved by President Eisenhower on May 13, 1954, established the United States St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation to construct the seaway on United States territory. The project was to be self-liquidating in that the corporation would sell up to \$105 million in interest-bearing revenue

bonds to the U.S. Treasury to be paid back within 50 years through the collection of tolls, negotiated with Canada, for shipments on the seaway.)

As Beveridge pointed out, the first 2 days of the hearing were devoted to the planners' recommendations, "and some differing opinions are likely from planning and transportation experts who did not participate in the four-year study."

These differences were apparently on Bartholomew's mind when he testified after Staats concluded his presentation. He summarized the history of the survey, the "high caliber of technical competence engaged" in preparing the plan, and how the consultants and professional firms involved "exceed in their qualifications any group ever assembled for such an undertaking." They were mindful that:

Providing for a good transportation system in a great, growing, dynamic community such as this is, at best, a most complex undertaking. There is no patent readymade solution that can be pulled out of the hat, nor created by a single legislative or administrative edict.

The result of 4 years of work involved "an infinite number of meetings, as well as laborious staff work," and an "areawide cooperative endeavor":

Furthermore, we would call to your attention that this is a balanced transportation plan, wherein, probably for the first time, experts and qualified authorities in the fields of transit and automotive transportation both endeavored seriously to determine where, in this changing urban scene, these two forms of transportation meet and overlap.

The plan, he said, anticipated regional growth to 3 million people in 20 years, and possibly 5 million in 40 years. Traffic estimates based on those increases were realistic. "It takes no expert to demonstrate that, with an approximate 65-percent increase in total population, provision for the added traffic load necessitates bolder measures than have yet been taken, both in the new highways and in adequate rights-of-way for some form of rapid transit." The proposed plan, in short, "is conservative, especially since we cannot assume that future growth will cease by 1980, the target date of this plan."

NCPC and the Regional Planning Commission concluded that "our first obligation was to devise an adequate metropolitan areawide mass transportation plan." As shown by experience elsewhere, public financing would be required, especially in acquiring right-of-way. He thought that operation of the express bus system, and possibly the rail system, "might conceivably, and profitably, be by private enterprise."

The proposed rail system was "based on the use of the latest technological developments." Bartholomew said, "It is our firm position that only subways would be acceptable in the central city and that no so-called modern elevated structure should be used."

He emphasized jurisdictional cooperation, supported the idea of an interim agency referred to as a Federal Corporation to keep things moving as rapidly as possible until a permanent metropolitan agency could be created by compact. [pages 18-20]

As mentioned earlier ACTION's Roy W. Johnson was concerned by the superhighway elements of the comprehensive plan. He emphasized the importance of using science to find answers in "an era of great technological change." Transportation had been "revolutionized by the internal combustion engine," but society had not explored all applications of electricity, nuclear energy, computer technology, and new fuels. "Vistas of automation in transportation, offering dramatic advances in safety, comfort and economy, stretch out before us." He added, "We shall not solve the problems of metropolitan transportation by denying ourselves the resources we are employing to do the many modern scientific tests."

The worsening transportation situation in the metropolitan area was steadily "creeping along." Every day, people adjusted to it: "mostly bad adjustments," as reflected in the flight of people, businesses, and industry out of the city:

The city cripples itself. It limps more and more. Its capacity to recover, to combat further deterioration weakens. The very adjustments it made further complicate the disease as everyone who had grappled with financing the full range of Government services for sprawling suburbs knows. We are traveling a road to metropolitan disorganization and disaster.

As for building more superhighways, people should ask "whether it is wise to destroy many values of our Capital City" to accommodate commuters:

Is there an alternative to building expressways into the heart of Washington? Surely, it is the simple, obvious one of rapid transit. With all the possibility of developing transportation technology . . . we have in our hands today the means to build efficient, attractive, economical rapid transit that can be augmented as time goes on to an even greater degree.

Rail rapid transit should be not seen only as a means of transportation, but rather "as a means of organizing the future growth of the Washington metropolitan area, not merely the millions new population of the report—but far more in the future." With rail rapid transit beginning to solve urban transportation problems, "the city will build from strength to strength." In so doing, officials will halt suburban sprawl, build communities, reverse the decay of the center city, and "substitute for an uneconomic and hopelessly frustrating illusion of personal freedom on the highway the reality of comfortable and convenient journeys to work by mass transportation."  
[pages 27-30]

Other witnesses on this first day questioned some of the survey's projections of population and traffic, including the number of transit passengers, and the methodology used to arrive at them.

The second day saw additional attacks on estimates and projections. For example, Stanley D. Forsythe, general superintendent of engineering for the Chicago Transit Authority, questioned predictions of passenger numbers, the use of private rights-of-way, and the schedule for building the rail rapid transit system. The Mass Transportation Survey estimated that by 1980, with full implementation of the plan, "only 45 percent of the people coming into the central district" would use mass transit. He was surprised by the "pessimism of the report on that phase."

Experience elsewhere, including Chicago, suggested the percentage would be much higher – 79 percent in Chicago during peak hours and even higher, 87 percent in the Loop (the city’s central business district). Other cities were experiencing similar percentages. Forsythe cited Philadelphia (between 66 and 75 percent) and Boston (66 percent), as well as increases in Cleveland and Toronto. Even in Los Angeles, “where there is no rapid transit . . . today 54 percent of the people come in by mass transit.” [pages 137-138]

Forsythe stressed the value of putting rail rapid transit in the median of superhighways. As experience in Chicago with the Congress Street Expressway demonstrated, it was “an ideal combination, and no one is more enthusiastic about it in Chicago than the highway planners themselves, who see in that combination of rapid transit in the median strip and the terrifically expensive expressways an opportunity to increase the capacity of the highway, particularly in the last few miles as you come into the center area.”

He knew that debates occurred over whether to include rail rapid transit at the start of a transportation plan or the end. However, “any sort of prudent planning” would include rail rapid transit, or at least part of it, in the “very earliest part . . . and let it demonstrate itself.” It would prove to be a municipal asset, but he cautioned the joint committee:

You are going to find nobody operating rapid transit that will make any money out of it. You will have to subsidize it, the same as you subsidize your highways, but it is a municipal asset that is quite valuable, in my judgment. [pages 141-142]

Chairman Finley of the Commission of Fine Arts also testified, indicating that members of the commission “firmly believe that a rapid transit system is the most logical means of meeting these traffic needs.” The central area’s ability to absorb more vehicles had long since “gone beyond the saturation point.” One option that Finley said should be considered is “to organize the centers of employment and at the same time to retain the unique features of the Washington plan.” As for the centers of employment, he said:

For instance, if Government buildings were erected east of the Capitol, outside of the Mall, with residential areas adjacent to them, much could be accomplished to avoid congestion that results when all these employment centers are located in one general area far from adequate housing.

The city, Finley said, “was made by Washington, Jefferson, and L’Enfant, and further developed by their successors for a special purpose.” He continued:

It reflects our early aspirations that our Capital City should be worthy of this great Nation; and to this end it provides a harmonious relationship of streets, buildings, and parks to give to Washington the beauty and dignity so admired by visitors. This plan should be treated with the utmost respect. Washington, himself, said with reference to it:

. . . no departure from the engraved plan of the city ought to be allowed unless imperious necessity should require it or some great public good is to be promoted thereby.

The Mass Transportation Survey had applied to the District “the factors used in planning for the average city where commercial rather than governmental factors are dominant.” In seeking solutions to the area’s transportation problems, special emphasis should be given to a “solution to traffic problems which would preserve the unique character of Washington as the Nation’s Capital.” Fortunately, “a rapid underground transit system is excellent, so far as it goes, and should receive the first consideration.” As noted earlier, he added that the freeways planned for the area, such as the Inner Belt Freeway, would change the city to reflect the considerations of highway engineers, not the vision of the Washington plan. [pages 120-122]

On November 11, Virginia State Senator Fenwick told the joint committee that Virginia wanted to ensure that the Federal Corporation envisioned by the bill would be an interim agency. Virginia had reluctantly gone along with the idea on that basis alone. The Federal Corporation could work in the District, but he said that during meetings on the plan, “representatives from Maryland and Virginia were emphatic in their position that, under no circumstances, would they be willing to give to the Federal corporation the necessary powers to carry out the mass transportation plan which probably would include acquisition of rights-of-way by eminent domain, the levying of taxes, and control of such highways.”

They believed that “a compact with representatives from the jurisdictions involved was workable and acceptable.” Further:

In recommending the establishment of a Federal corporation it was their understanding that such a corporation would recognize the establishment of a compact and would go out of existence upon such compact being formed.

Any attempt to supplant such a compact would result in “vigorous opposition” not only from the local jurisdictions but the States:

The very idea of giving to a Federal agency the right to come into thickly populated areas and construct great barriers of concrete irrespective of property rights in zoning and residential areas would create such resistance that the whole concept of a mass transportation plan would be defeated. [pages 382-383]

On the same day, representatives of two private bus lines operating between Virginia and Washington testified that private companies should retain their rights. Attorney Manual J. Davis said on their behalf, “We are opposed to the rapid transit plan as it is not only infeasible, but will ultimately destroy existing private enterprise.” He added:

We are in general agreement to a plan of expressways with a privately owned transit system providing an expressway bus system and continuing the existing transit service. We cannot support parts of the proposed plan which do not support themselves.

He recommended that the plan include measures to discourage unlimited automobile use by removing free off-the-street parking. By staggering work hours in downtown government buildings, and including space in Interstate medians to operate transit, the plan would go a long way to relieving congestion. [pages 276, 289, 293-294]



Representative Howard Smith, a member of the Joint Committee, said during the question period that he wanted to comment on rail transportation:

I make [this comment] out of a long experience and from long observation from the time of the horse-and-buggy days with respect to rail transportation from Alexandria to Washington.

(Representative Smith had been born in 1883 and was in his mid-70s at the time.)

Now, I recall the days when the horse and buggy were fading, and the automobile was coming along, when an automobile was so rare in Alexandria that everybody would go to the window when there was one rattling down the street.

The Washington, Alexandria & Mount Vernon Railroad back then “was a gold mine.” He recalled the first bus he ever saw, which carried about 10 passengers on King Street and they had the “thrill for the first time of riding on a vehicle that did not have a horse attached to it.” The buses “began to prosper, and that has been history all over the country of these rail lines, as I understand it, particularly the suburban lines, and everyone of them around here went broke when the bus started.”

The reason he was recalling these experiences was:

If that has been the experience with rail transportation in the suburban areas and they failed and went completely broke, what has happened since [then] that will make anybody think that they can prosper again? I just do not see it. That is all. [pages 303-304]

The following day, November 12, O. Roy Chalk, the owner of the D.C. Transit System, Inc., was the primary witness. His predecessors, the four Wolfson brothers, had earned a fortune buying and selling surplus Florida shipyards. In 1949, they purchased a controlling interest in the D.C. transit company because they considered it another under-valued property. They spent much of the company’s profits in large dividends. Professor Zachary M. Schrag, in his history of the Metro System, explained that these payments were legal, but “were regarded by the public and many politicians as the plunder of what had been a prudent, conservative company.”

When operators went on a 7-week strike in 1955, Congress terminated the franchise, which the District sold to Chalk, an airline entrepreneur. Congress approved the transfer in the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority Act (P. L. 84-757), which granted a franchise to D.C. Transit System, Inc., to operate a mass transportation system for passengers within the District of Columbia and between the District and points within the area. President Eisenhower signed the legislation on July 24, 1956. The law required Chalk to replace the system’s streetcars with buses:

Getting rid of Washington’s streetcars had been a top priority for the District commissioners as soon as they decided to revoke the Capital Transit franchise. Streetcars, they believed, were in the way of automobiles. A street with two-way streetcar tracks could not be converted to auto-friendly, one-way operation, and streetcar boarding platforms occupied traffic lanes. With congressional approval, the

commissioners required that any new franchise promise to sell off Washington's streetcars and remove the tracks. Within two years, Chalk would fight to keep his streetcars, but the District government and Congress were adamant. It seemed as though the era of rail transit in Washington was over. [Schrag, Zachary M., *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pages 29-30]

Officials had been glad to see the Wolfsons go, but they soon came to regret the arrival of Chalk, whom Schrag called "the infamous transit baron." He said, "Many in Washington speculated that his true interest in D.C. Transit lay in selling off its valuable real estate: streetcar barns that could be converted to offices, shops, and even apartment buildings." The usual mix of declining ridership, increasing fares, and deteriorating service that many other cities had experienced undermined the company's finances. [Schrag, page 175]

In his testimony, Chalk rejected the Mass Transportation Survey's \$2.5 billion transportation plan for the area. He was "shocked and amazed" that the survey had placed overriding emphasis on public ownership, which he said was "inconsistent with American traditions of free enterprise." The assumption behind it, that "private industry either cannot, or will not, supply the mass transit needs of this area," reflected a "complete lack of faith in the ability, capacity, and ingenuity of American business." He was, he said, "alarmed by the ease with which the sponsors of this plan have departed from the fundamental principles of our national heritage."

He contrasted public ownership, as in New York City, with its "ever-increasing annual deficits, and their lack of imagination, efficiency, and ability," with the job done by private enterprise. "Throughout the country privately owned transit facilities have been operated profitably, while the municipally owned systems have averaged a loss of 16.3 percent on their operation."

Chairman Bible interrupted to point out that other witnesses had testified to the struggles of the private companies. When Chalk said he was referring only to cities comparable to Washington, Chairman Bible suggested that staff might examine operations in the 17 or so comparable metropolitan areas. Chalk suggested they had only to look at the District of Columbia, where the transit experience was "a record of progress and achievement—a subject of great interest and encouragement to the industry throughout the nation." [pages 595-597]

In any event, D.C. Transit's franchise was "a binding contractual obligation." Public operation of mass transit in the metropolitan area "would be a breach of this contract. It would be confiscatory and unconstitutional." This reality had been "ignored by the pending proposal."

Beyond the legal issue, he said, "we consider the total plan lacking in imagination." The planners appeared "to adopt a theory of status quo, so far as facilities are concerned" and were "still tied to the cast-iron age." He added, "it is inescapable, that, contrary to long-standing American tradition, the report with one fast brush stroke has pushed aside all thought of progress, innovation, and pioneering, and has gone forward on the assumption that the automobile is the ultimate, most desirable means of transportation." In fact, 72 percent of the recommended expenditures under the plan were for highway construction, and a "mere 28 percent" for all

public transportation. “In reality, a more appropriate name for the survey,” he said, would be “Superhighway Planning in and Around the Washington Metropolitan Area.” [pages 598-599]

He offered two alternatives. The first was to “exclude all but public transportation traffic from the central portion of the city during the rush hours of 7 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 7 p.m., when the mass transit job must be done.” Downtown street parking must be eliminated, fringe parking should be provided, work hours staggered, and commercial loading and unloading restricted during the peak hours. With those conditions, “D.C. Transit could, without question, provide really effective rapid transit throughout the metropolitan area, and not wait for 1980.”

He acknowledged that “such a project would be far from painless.” Doubtless, it would be met by “violent objections from the automobile and petroleum industries, their suppliers, and the automobile associations.” Still, considering the cost of the survey’s plan, he said, “I suggest trading \$2.5 billion for some guts.”

If Congress preferred to spend the money the survey suggested, he had a better alternative. In the spirit of innovation, he proposed to operate a monorail system:

We are not talking about the monorail system investigated by the survey’s engineers and found to be unsuitable for Washington. We present instead a system which has been designed, engineered, and perfected by one of the Nation’s leading aircraft manufacturers, the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. D.C. Transit is prepared, with appropriate Government assistance, to go forward with the installation of the system. With such aid, the first line could be constructed and in operation within 2 years following the acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way.

He displayed a scale model of the monorail and presented a brochure on the plan to the committee for review. The brochure outlined a 116-mile monorail system with cars riding about 20 feet above ground, 2 miles in tunnels through downtown, and another 2.7 miles in an uncovered cut below ground. Two lines intersected in downtown. One from Viers Mill in Montgomery County passed along 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW., with branches to Andrews Air Force Base and Jones Point, the new CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, and Dulles International Airport. This route passed by the Pentagon and Falls Church and was the first priority in Chalk’s plan. A second U-shaped route ran between Rockville via a route west of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street line to Fort Meade and Friendship International Airport in Maryland:

Included in our proposal would be approximately 2 miles of tunneling through the heart of the city to avoid the necessity of having the monorail on the pillars in the center of the city.

He estimated the system would cost \$250 million.

Representative Broyhill asked if Chalk had checked with the Commission of Fine Arts about the aesthetics of a monorail in Washington. Chalk said the plan was so new, he had not yet checked with the commission, but would do so after the plan was completed. He was certain “they may

have some very fine suggestions for, possibly, beautifying various aspects of our proposal.”  
[pages 600-604]

Harvey Speak, counsel for D.C. Transit System, appeared on the panel with Chalk to attack the prospect of an interstate compact to operate the transit system. A tri-State commission would be “unconstitutional and an improper delegation, even if Congress retained approval authority. D.C. Transit System had an exclusive franchise for at least 20 years, running to 1976. The Mass Transportation Survey plan “represents a breach of contract, a breach of franchise, and hence a violation of the terms of the contract to which Congress is committed.” In the absence of a remedy for D.C. Transit System, the plan would give “cause of action for damages in the eyes of the law.”

Aside from the legal issues surrounding violation of the franchise contract, Speak argued that the District’s unique constitutional status was another issue. The Constitution created the District “for the benefit of the 50 States, and the Supreme Court . . . has in several opinions held that the District . . . must be operated for the benefit of all 50 States, not to the advantage of any one or two and, in particular, that Congress could not delegate to the control of one or more of the States control over the District at the expense of the other of the 50 States.” A compact authorized by Congress among the District, Maryland, and Virginia “would then be unconstitutional.”

He referred to State Senator Fenwick’s testimony that Virginia would not yield its sovereignty to a Federal agency or the other jurisdictions that would be party to the compact. As a result, the compact “is already a dead duck, because it serves no purpose . . . . It is a waste of time which creates legal complications, which will only delay the next stage, and I would suggest that in terms of the legality of this, if the committee were to take the entire project, grapple with it and come up with one solution, the legal problems raised, the unconstitutional problems, would be significantly diminished.” [pages 622-625]

Under Secretary of Commerce John J. Allen, Jr., testified later in the day, accompanied by Commissioner of Public Roads Ellis L. Armstrong and Garland E. Marple, Chief of BPR’s Planning Operations Branch, Division of Highway Planning. (During this period, the title Commissioner of Public Roads, once held by the BPR head, was a secondary title below Administrator Tallamy.) Allen had served in the House representing Oakland, California, from January 3, 1947-January 3, 1959 (R-Ca.), before taking the sub-Cabinet post after losing his reelection bid. The Commerce Department’s interest in the survey’s plan stemmed from BPR’s role in highway planning and financing for the road elements “and through our general responsibility for a coordinated national transportation policy to meet the needs of our Nation for effective and economical transportation.

His personal interest stemmed from his service on the House District Committee “and from being a citizen and representative of another great metropolitan center with similar transportation problems.” (He lived in the District’s Capitol Hill neighborhood at 110 Fourth Street, NE.)

He was impressed that the District, Maryland, and Virginia had agreed “to pool their power . . . to continue a common program of transport planning and regulation.” He urged Congress to

follow the example of the District and State officials “and also ratify the compact in behalf of the District of Columbia”:

So far the transportation plan is an outstanding accomplishment in intergovernmental relations. An act of the Congress can now make it a landmark in metropolitan regional government; a system of common planning and administration will be created among three independent jurisdictions and the Federal Government itself.

The proposed regional transportation plan was “an outstanding example of the art of city planning, a worthy successor to L’Enfant and the other great plans that have shaped the Nation’s Capital.”

That highways constituted 72 percent of the cost of the plan was appropriate because the survey predicted that by 1980, about 80 percent of all travel in the metropolitan area would be by motor vehicle on roads. “Anyway you look at the highway phase of the plan it is a large undertaking, considering both the volume of construction and the financial requirements.”

Under Secretary Allen praised the rail and transit elements of the plan, calling the rapid transit system “the boldest conception yet by advanced officials for solving the Washington commuting problem.” For rapid transit to succeed, the community must stay united even though patronage of transit would be concentrated in the few peak hours during the week, “a fact which defies the economics of most business enterprises and throws some of the cost on the community generally.” Beyond cost, “The community must furthermore cooperate by encouraging rapid transit use by coordinating traffic regulations, other transit operations, parking facilities, and in some instances zoning.”

Senator Bible asked if the panel could comment on the general feeling of many other witnesses that “we are overemphasizing the highway program, putting all this emphasis on a highway dominant program and we will end up with something like the Los Angeles situation which they point to as a horrible example.”

Under Secretary Allen replied that the Commerce Department did not have a preference among transportation modes. Instead, the objective was to promote “those transportation facilities which best serve the need for which they are made available.” He deferred to Commissioner Armstrong and Marple.

Armstrong explained that in trying to move people, “we in the highway field have been up against the very real problem of trying to do that in a way that will solve the problem, that is, it is one of trying to provide what people want.” The automobile age had introduced something to the American way of life “that all of us like quite well, and that is the freedom of movement of the individual.” He said:

And if we provide facilities that people won’t use, it doesn’t solve our problem. So in this plan the approach has been to try to realistically analyze what we are up against, what we think people will do if they have facilities, what their choice might be. And I don’t think we are going to, by any means, end up with a big sea of concrete.

The plan provided “a reasonable balance” for the region:

I think the approach has been quite sound, approaching it from the standpoint of first the travel that is done in automobiles by folks who will not be living within any reasonable distance of a mass transit system, they would still have to drive considerable distances in their automobiles, and they would probably prefer after they start, to come on downtown, if there are reasonable facilities available.

In addition, the plan considered people who used their automobiles during the day, such as salesmen. “Then the remainder was analyzed on the basis of a choice between driving an automobile and riding the rapid transit.” He emphasized:

There is no magic in this thing. You can’t say here is a better way to do it for the downtown area, and expect people automatically to agree.

We are quite independent, I think, in our individual thinking, and the growth of the automobile use in America has resulted because of that. So I think it is a realistic approach and one that is in the realm of a solution to the problem.

Marple, speaking briefly, said BPR did not have any basis for improving the methods used by the Mass Transportation Survey for projecting travel. He noted:

The report shows that the estimated volume that would be handled by mass transit coming to the downtown area in the peak hour will increase considerably between 1955 and 1980. That is somewhat contrary to the trend that we have experienced before.

I would think that we might well expect a lower percentage of traffic to be handled by mass transit in the Washington area than in some of the other cities because of the nature of the proposed land utilization. [pages 695-699]

On November 13, Darwin Stolzenbach represented the Interfederation Council of the Greater Washington Area, a group comprising 361 local citizens organizations. The council endorsed the rapid transit system, including plans for a Federal Corporation to get work underway. He said the council was worried that negotiating the interstate compact could take 5 to 10 years and felt that “such a delay in getting on with the planning and development of an integrated transportation system would adversely affect the welfare of all the citizens of this area.”

The council wanted the agency resulting from the compact to “have the power to make decisions on the establishment and operation of specific regional highway and transit facilities, whether or not all the local authorities agree.” The members were concerned that the survey had “placed a disproportionate emphasis on private auto transport as opposed to other forms of transportation, and failed to consider seriously public policies that would tend to increase the utility of mass transit relative to the automobile.” [pages 774-780]

Former District Director J. N. Robertson, now chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, testified in support of the survey, the mass transit

plans, and the corporation-compact sequence of development. However, given projected population increases, “it is obvious that both highways and transit facilities will be inadequate”:

Therefore the board of directors urges that the present highway program in its entirety be vigorously pushed to completion before the 1980 date, if possible, and that none of the highway funds be diverted either directly or indirectly for any purpose other than that of highway construction. [pages 786-787]

Engineer Commissioner Welling opened the afternoon testimony. The District commissioners supported the mass transit elements of the survey plan and creation of a compact to establish an organization to build it. Given the time needed to create such a compact, the commissioners suggested that the District or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers might serve as the construction agency. The commissioners emphasized that “payment therefore shall be predominantly with Federal funds in relation to the full financial obligation imposed by the survey as a whole.” The benefits of the system were “grossly disproportionate to the relative benefits which could accrue to the District,” considering real estate to be consumed by the facilities and disruption to established communities and community facilities.

The District could not commit to the entire plan, which the commissioners believed represented “the outer limits of a regional transportation system from which there will evolve practical action programs of lesser magnitude.” The commissioners supported the rail rapid transit plan, but “if the Federal Government—or the region—does not intend to make massive financial contributions toward providing transportation facilities in the District,” the area should consider more modest alternatives. [pages 833-834]

[The discussion of the Joint Committee hearings was informed by daily articles by George Beveridge and Grace Bassett in *The Evening Star*: “White House Backs Rapid Rail Plan Here” (November 9), “Rapid Transit Estimates Too Low, Hearing Told” (November 10), “Limit Transit Agency to D.C., Virginia Asks” (November 11), “Chalk’s Transit Plans Stress Private Funds” (November 12), “Regional Unit Backs Rapid Transit Idea” (November 13), “Metropolitan Area Transit System Cost Upheld by Planner” (November 14)]

### **Introducing Peter S. Craig**

Professor Schrag explained that the reaction to the report revealed that District residents, particularly those in the path of the suggested freeways, “were having second thoughts about highways, only a short time after the passage of” the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956:

If the Inner Loop was designed to save the center of the city by building a wall around it, it necessarily abandoned those neighborhoods outside the wall to the ravages of the automobile.

As an example, he cited residents of Cleveland Park, located in northwest Washington along Connecticut Avenue near Rock Creek Park:

First developed in the late nineteenth century and named after President Grover Cleveland, who kept a summer residence there during his first term as president [March

4, 1885 to March 4, 1889], the neighborhood had been largely built up by the end of the 1920s. In the 1950s, it was home to white professionals—lawyers, doctors, journalists, and not a few members of Congress—and their families, whose large, detached houses were dwarfed by thick oaks and punctuated by private schools. Bartholomew saw in these houses the straightest path between the booming suburbs of western Montgomery County and downtown, just the place for the six-lane southern spur of Interstate 70, to be called the Northwest Freeway. Cleveland Park disagreed.

One concerned Cleveland Park resident was Peter S. Craig, who would become one of the District's most persistent anti-freeway fighters. A graduate of Yale Law School, he had moved to Washington in 1953 as a junior attorney in Covington and Burling, then and now one of the city's most powerful law firms. He lived in Georgetown for a year, and in Fairfax County after that, but moved to Cleveland Park, "attracted by the ease of getting downtown via the Wisconsin Avenue streetcar," according to Professor Schrag:

After seeing a map of Bartholomew's plan in the *Washington Star* [sic], David Sanders Clark of Tilden Street began pounding doors, warning neighbors of the multilane highway. One of his knocks was answered by Peter Craig . . . . Horrified by the prospect of a freeway ripping through his neighborhood, he quickly agreed to help Clark fight it.

Residents banded together to fight the proposed freeway by forming the Committee to Oppose the Cross-Park Freeway, later renamed the Northwest Committee for Transportation Planning:

In 1959 such a group was quite novel; not until 1962 and 1963 would such freeway complaints become widespread nationwide. But the professionals of Cleveland Park knew how to make themselves heard, and at the hearings on the Mass Transportation Survey in 1959, Craig castigated the Highway Act of 1956 for forcing cities to choose between 90 percent federal funding for highways or no aid at all for transit. "[I]n my heart, I feel certain that Congress never intended that the Federal-aid highway act would be used as a device for burying our cities in concrete."

Chairman Bible acknowledged that "the impact of superhighways on many of the city's best residential areas and parks has brought many thoughtful citizens to the appreciation that such improvements are not an unmixed blessing."

The rapid transit element of the new plan proved far more popular than the expressways and parkways, especially if subways were included to minimize surface disruption:

Typical was the reaction of District commissioner Robert McLaughlin, who worried about both the construction cost and collateral effects. He pointed out that the District would lose land to the freeways, which would then abet the flight to the suburbs by "middle and high income families," leaving the District with a greater proportion of poor people. A subway would be preferable, he suggested, and in any case, if the federal government wanted to cut freeways through the District, it should expect to pay for them. The city would not fund its own destruction. [Schrag, pages 40-41]



## **The I-70S Hearing**

On June 14, 1960, the Subcommittee on Public Roads, Senate Committee on Public Works, held a hearing on the location of Interstate Route 70 South (U.S. 240) in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me.) chaired the hearing. Chairman Muskie explained the purpose of the hearing:

This subcommittee is concerned principally with two points: First, whether the selection as recently announced by the Bureau of Public Roads was made in accordance with the procedure set up by the cooperation between departments, and I am referring particularly to the language in section 103(d), reading as follows:

The routes of this system shall be selected by joint action of the State highway departments of each State and the adjoining States, subject to approval by the Secretary as provided in subsection (e) of this section.

We are interested also in determining whether or not there is a statutory obstacle to the selection of what might otherwise be the best route in terms of the best interests of the area and the people concerned.

He asked the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Senator Case, for his comments. Senator Case said he had called for the hearing after reading news reports saying BPR had approved a route for I-70S to the inner loop that “would injure the tax base of the city.” The subcommittee wanted to be certain that BPR had followed the statutory requirement that route selection for multi-State routes was to be by the joint action of the State highway agencies of adjoining States and the Secretary of Commerce, represented by BPR.

He also wanted to know if the deadline for submitting the next ICE to Congress should be extended to allow more time to consider the route.

Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy was the first witness. Since 1956, he said, BPR had made considerable progress in establishing locations for most Interstate highways, including those crossing State lines:

However, there are a few cases where such detailed locations have not yet been established. The Interstate System concept was developed with a corridor area as being the consideration for a highway between principal points of origin and destination of traffic . . . . The law, as we interpret it, indicates that in selection of a route within a corridor we shall determine it in the most direct manner practicable – which is practical – and we do have a corridor for the area between Frederick, Md., and downtown Washington which is generally called the route 240 location. There is no detailed agreement as to the specific location of this highway as it extends from Pooks Hill into downtown Washington.

The two jurisdictions had agreed on a route between the two points and the most direct corridor should be established under the legislation:

However, we recognize that there may be a deviations [sic] in physical location of the detailed route within that corridor or even extending outside of a most direct corridor if detailed engineering studies reveal that it is impossible or not practicable to go in the most direct manner.

One force driving the discussion was the next ICE. While working on the next ICE, BPR had not received any indication from either jurisdiction that “there is no practical, reasonable way of following a direct corridor between Frederick and downtown Washington.” For apportioning Interstate construction funds, the ICE would estimate the cost of the route that followed “the direct corridor in view of the fact that it is not demonstrated that it is impractical physically and otherwise to develop a route along the direct corridor.”

Tallamy had met with highway officials from Maryland and the District as well as NCPC about the route. He told the subcommittee that the meeting included “general discussions . . . as to the possibility of moving the corridor to the east of Rock Creek Park location, running more or less directly from downtown Washington to Silver Spring and thereby connecting with an outer loop, and through the outer loop going westerly to the Route 240 corridor.”

However, Tallamy did not want to let local needs preempt the national purpose of the Interstate program. The basic purpose was “to provide for expeditious and efficient movement of people and goods from one region to another.” In doing so, “the law recognizes that to the extent that it is practical and feasible, we should give equal attention to local needs . . . but we should not, in our interpretation of the law, give primary consideration to local needs and make the Interstate System movement of traffic secondary to local needs.” He added:

I advised them that so far as the estimate of cost is concerned that I saw no reason for them not to follow an alinement in the general Wisconsin Avenue corridor because that is the more direct one; it is the one which will move interstate system traffic most directly from Frederick to downtown Washington, to connect with the inner loop and nothing was presented which would indicate that there was not a practical way of accomplishing that. There appeared to be a practical way of accomplishing it, although I made it very clear that adjustments in any specific location within the Wisconsin Avenue corridor could certainly be done in the future.

He recognized that future engineering studies, deliberations, or considerations might demonstrate that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was impracticable:

But until such time as a decision can be made on sound engineering and economic considerations, as the planning basis, until we are convinced on such a basis, we feel we have to follow the most practical and direct, as we see it, route.

He concluded:

I would like to say in closing, Senator, that in my opinion the law is adequately flexible now to permit proper engineering and city planning and economic judgments on the location of highways. The problem that we have now is that still further engineering and

economic and city planning studies would have to be submitted to us to demonstrate that it is not practical and by using the word “practical,” I mean in a broad sense, to follow the direct route which is the route which we feel under the law should be built if practicable. So far no evidence has been indicated to us that it is not practicable. But I do think the law as it is written now is liberal enough to permit adequate consideration of all the engineering and economic factors in making the location. [Location of Interstate Route 70 South (Maryland and District of Columbia), Hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works, United States Senate, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, June 14, 1960, pages 1-11]

John B. Funk, the new Chairman-Director of the Maryland State Roads Commission, testified next before the committee. Following Bonnell’s resignation on February 15, Governor Tawes had appointed Funk in May 1959; he took office on June 1. A Virginia native, Funk was a civil engineer who had served in the Maryland State Senate (1939-1946) and as Secretary of State in 1947 under Governor Lane. He was chief engineer of the State Department of Public Improvements, a department he had helped organize, until 1950. At the time of his appointment as chairman of the Maryland State Roads Commission, he was Director of Public Works in Baltimore County. [“Tawes Appoints Funk As Highway Director,” *The Sunday Star*, May 3, 1959]

Funk testified that his agency was primarily interested in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, but he recognized that Montgomery County “by its zoning, by its land use, by . . . policy has concentrated its people in a Wheaton-Silver Spring corridor to a great extent and as they move westward, that particular segment west of Wisconsin Avenue, zoned and established a land use density which is very light.” Generation of traffic west of Wisconsin Avenue, therefore, would probably remain light. The county’s policy would be undermined by construction of I-70S in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor.

The State was leaning toward the Silver Spring alignment because the county was directing development into that corridor. Funk wanted to resolve the disagreement to avoid confusion that would occur if the State had to protect right-of-way in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor “and then a determination is made at a later date for some other corridor.” Time remained to study the best location because the State’s 5-year highway construction program did not include the extension of I-70S beyond Pooks Hill. [pages 11-16]

Director Aitken of the District’s Department of Highways and Traffic testified that in 1956, the city had employed a consultant to study the location of an Interstate highway between the Potomac River and Rock Creek. The best location from Maryland was along the river “and coming into the inner loop down near where Rock Creek flows into the Potomac River.” Following a public hearing, the District commissioners adopted that route. It was not necessarily the most direct route, but it was the best alignment considering “grades, cost, the impact on the area it traverses, esthetics, and the relationship of such facilities to the areas to which they extend.”

BPR accepted the river alignment for the first ICE in 1958. However, during a meeting with Tallamy, NPS, and District and Maryland highway officials in April 1958, the NPS objected to

the alignment because it was planning the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River. The District then began studying other alignments as far east as the North Capitol Street corridor, but also the Wisconsin Avenue corridor in the city. One line followed Wisconsin Avenue “clear down to Glover-Archbold Park,” while another “came across around White Haven,” but the department settled on “a line just to the west of Wisconsin Avenue, and in back of Observatory Circle and into the inner loop.”

The North Capitol Street corridor, which better matched Maryland’s apparent interests, was being considered for an eight-lane roadway, but only four lanes were under consideration for Wisconsin Avenue because of the expense of building through this affluent, heavily developed area. In the end, the District commissioners rejected the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, prompting Aitken to pursue the North Capitol Street corridor for I-70S.

Asked why BPR was counting the Wisconsin Avenue corridor as the route of I-70S, Aitken said the meeting Tallamy had mentioned took place on March 17, 1958:

I proposed this North Capitol Street corridor and indicated in a summary sense . . . the length, the cost, the traffic needs, and I had pictures showing a comparison between the properties affected on the two lines . . . . Despite this presentation and my recommendation, I still received the decision for the direct line.

That was the basis for the District’s alignment in the ICE. Aitken did not feel bound by Tallamy’s decision for the ICE and was continuing to consider the North Capitol Street corridor while Maryland, he said, did the same. However, the District had not budgeted funds for a detailed study of the North Capitol Street freeway, in part because of uncertainty about whether BPR would approve it. He believed that if Maryland joined with the District in recommending the North Capitol Street corridor, BPR would consider it. He added:

Well, sir, from my discussions with many people in Northwest Washington, I think that they would feel very much relieved if the estimate did not include an estimate on a line through their property or through their neighborhood. I suspect that they would feel that the prospect, then, of the interstate going somewhere else would be much better.

Joseph Barnett, who was now BPR’s Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Division of Engineering, attempted to clarify what Tallamy had said:

Sir, the important point of Mr. Tallamy’s testimony has been overlooked in your question to Mr. Aitken about how long it will take to make the North Central estimate. He has got to get the North Central estimate location approved by the Bureau first and to do that Mr. Tallamy would expect to have some evidence that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor location is not feasible. That doesn’t just include costs. It includes a lot of other things. We have requested the Highway Department to make that study for a long time and they have just not made it. [pages 16-34]

Chairman Gingery of the National Capital Regional Planning Commission testified along with commission members from both States and the District. Harland Bartholomew, NCPC chairman,

and Engineer Commissioner Welling participated in the panel. Asked whether, if forced to choose one, the commission would select the Wisconsin Avenue or North Capitol Street corridor, Bartholomew said:

Our commission believes that in the public interest, both routes need to be built and both are going to be needed very badly, so that it is not a question of either or, but a question of whether we can get both.

He conceded that both could not be included in the ICE (i.e., be eligible for Interstate construction funds). The heaviest traffic demand, he said, would be in the north-central corridor, slightly less in the Northwest corridor. In that case, he was asked, why not select the north-central route for I-70S. He replied:

Because you have to understand the entire mass transportation plan, to understand our recommendation in that regard. We do not consider that it is feasible to cross up various of these routes in a helter-skelter pattern merely because there happens to be some particular funds under a program available at this time.

He thought shifting the northeast Interstate (I-95) to the north-central corridor made more sense than shifting the Northwest route to north-central. “It does not involve such a great deviation. It would serve relatively the same area where the northwest route does not serve a similar area.”

Bartholomew explained that with 3 million people in the metropolitan area, “there will be full warrant for express highways.” He was concerned that as population increased between Rock Creek Park and the Potomac River, “this proposed deviation to the north [via North Capitol Street] will not satisfy that traffic demand and as the population increases and buildings come, the traffic will attempt to come down to the central part of the city.” He was not concerned about the term “direct” as discussed by Administrator Tallamy earlier in the day. “I am concerned however with the satisfaction of the traffic demand between Rock Creek Park and the Potomac River”:

Now, the satisfaction of the traffic demand for this entire area is not going to be satisfied by a distorted deviation of this route, 70-S, over through the Silver Spring district. Nobody in their right mind here—that is, to the west of the National Health Institute for instance, is going to go out Wisconsin Avenue, to the outer belt, clear over to Silver Spring and then endeavor to come down via the north central route.

There is a tremendous local demand as well as the through traffic, that comes on the interstate route from Frederick. There is going to be a tremendous local demand generated in this entire Northwest section which can only be satisfied by a route which comes approximately through the center of that area. The demand is not going to be satisfied by any rapid transit line, even though we have a good interstate highway with a subway, which will operate in an open cut from Tenley Circle, let us say, to the north.

This is the age of the automobile and we cannot ignore it. People are going to have cars and they are going to wish to drive them.

He hoped to encourage some people to shift to transit, but as the population grew, an Interstate in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was needed. The traffic in Northwest bound for the central city “is not going . . . clear out to the outer belt and over around Silver Spring in order to come down the north central corridor.”

The Northwest routing had been selected “by necessity.” Given the inevitable population increase, not building I-70S through Northwest “is going to have a much more severe effect on the development of the Northwest area than any damage that may be done by the proposed 70-S.”

Opponents, he said, say, “Please push this off on to somebody else; just so long as you leave it out of our area.” The complaint was not fair because it ignored the public interest. “I don’t think they themselves are aware of the fact that if their district gets more and more crowded with traffic on their local streets, that it is going to have an adverse effect upon their housing.”

A change in Federal law was not needed, Bartholomew said. He had worked on route selection in enough cities to know any thought of a statutory change was based on a “misconception of what can be done.” He concluded his remarks by saying:

I do not believe that you can solve this problem in the Northwest area by ignoring it and attempting to push it off on somebody else. The problem is there and it must be solved by direct action and not by trying to ignore it.

Gingery said he was against extending the ICE deadline. Maryland and the District had been working for 2 and a half years on the location of I-70S, which he referred to as Highway 240. He recalled the meeting in July 1959 when President Eisenhower asked, at the start, why officials could not do something to improve the route. A year and a half later, they still had not reached agreement on a connection. [pages 34-52]

The final witness was Peter Craig, representing the Northwest Committee for Transportation Planning. He said the committee “represents 3,500 residents of the District who are both concerned and distressed over what we believe to be an overemphasis on freeways in the Nation’s Capital.” Some members would be affected by the Northwest Freeway, but most would not. They objected to what they “believed to be a terrible error in transportation planning.”

In a move that would be characteristic of Craig’s anti-freeway work, he submitted several lengthy, legalistic, detailed statements for the record. “I believe the committee will find them instructive on the issues posed by this hearing.” The statements covered:

The Northwest Freeway Controversy  
Statement of Peter S. Craig  
Comments and Proposed Amendments to S 3193 Submitted by Northwest Committee  
For Transportation Planning  
Legal Memorandum on the Proposed Northwest Interstate Highway  
Report on Location of Interstate Route 70-S, June 1, 1960

In the committee report, the statements began on page 62 and ended on page 98.

In his oral statement, Craig said the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 Act “not only authorizes but indeed properly requires that the Bureau of Public Roads give controlling weight to the decision of the local Maryland and District authorities that Route 70-S should be located in the north central rather than Wisconsin Avenue corridor.” Both jurisdictions favored the north central corridor.

He pointed out that the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would take over 2 miles of public lands, including portions of Rock Creek and Hazen Parks. It would “result in a severe loss not only of the property taxes also of income and sales taxes to the District of Columbia, since it would mean taking a wide belt of land now beneficially used for residential areas and successful business areas.” It also would undermine rapid transit:

A subway line is also planned in the North Central Corridor but because of the demand in the central area, which is twice as great, if any corridor can support the competing services of subway and arterial freeway, it would appear that it would be the north central area.

He objected to earlier statements that Northwest residents were only trying to move the freeway to somebody’s else’s backyard. “This is wrong and it is also unfair” since Maryland and the District agreed that a freeway in the north central corridor “has to be built to meet the present needs in the area.” They all had rejected the Wisconsin Avenue corridor:

The real question, therefore, is whether there should be just the North-Central Freeway in which case it would be 70-S, or whether there be two huge freeways, both the North Central and the Northwest and on this Maryland and the District residents appear agreed there should be only one. In our judgment, a Wisconsin [Avenue] Freeway would be a monument to waste and destruction. At a time when Washington needs urban renewal and prevention of any new blight to halt the flight to the suburbs, it would subject the one major area of the District that has escaped decay to the destruction of parks, playgrounds, schools, hospitals, churches, and private homes that only an auto and truck highway can cause . . . .

If, in this instance, the combined judgment of Maryland and the District cannot stop the construction of a freeway that is neither needed nor wanted, then, most certainly, the Federal-Aid Highways [sic] Act should be amended to clarify the intent of Congress.  
[pages 99-102]

A few days after the hearing, Tallamy relented. Reportedly with encouragement from the White House, he dropped his insistence on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor and indicated that BPR would consider a routing east of Rock Creek Park – the so-called North Central corridor. For purposes of the ICE, the city would estimate the cost of building I-70S/U.S. 240 in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, but that was only for purposes of establishing the apportionment formula for Interstate construction funds. The ultimate corridor would be determined after further study.

In view of the shift, Senator Case said that he would not pursue a change in Federal-aid law to clarify that directness was not the only criteria for locating an Interstate route. At the same time,

Tallamy knew that Senator Case and Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me.) were working on a proviso to ensure BPR kept open the location of the U.S. 240 entrance to the city, even though they did not favor a specific routing. Director Aitken said the District would employ a consultant to study alternative locations. He also promised to work with Maryland and BPR officials to settle on a plan. [“U.S. Ends Fight On 240 Route,” *The Evening Star*, June 19, 1960]

On June 22, the Committee on Public Works inserted Senator Case’s language into the report on the Federal Highway Act of 1960. The language explained that as a result of the recent hearing on the location of I-70S, the committee became aware that BPR and State highway officials appeared to believe that the provision directing them to use “direct routes where practicable” might be interpreted to mean “where possible” – that is, where a road could be built, regardless of any other factors.

In the case of Maryland and the District of Columbia, this interpretation appeared to prevent consideration “of the best route from the standpoint of traffic service, minimum cost for rights-of-way and minimal disruption to property use and value.” However, the language about directness “where practicable” should be interpreted in light of language in Section 116(b) of the 1956 Act. Section 116(d) explained the policy of ensuring prompt and early completion of the Interstate System within 13 years, “and that the entire system of all States be brought to simultaneous completion.” This language was followed by:

Insofar as possible in consonance with this objective, existing highways located on an interstate route shall be used to the extent that such use is practicable, suitable, and feasible, it being the intent that local needs to the extent practicable, suitable and feasible, shall be given equal consideration with the needs of interstate commerce.

In view of this existing statutory language, the committee did not recommend a change in law to address the “directness” issue in Maryland the District of Columbia, “but does recommend to the attention of the responsible and respective agencies that full consideration be given to the provision cited.”

To make the point as clear as possible, Senator Muskie added language referring directly to the controversy about the Wisconsin Avenue corridor as discussed during the hearing. The language stated that the committee was aware that BPR, NCPC, and the two highway agencies were compiling data for the next ICE:

The tentative use of the Wisconsin Avenue corridor for the making of the cost estimate for completion of the Interstate System, to be submitted to the Congress in January 1961 as required by law, does not and should not in any manner preclude the eventual consideration of some other location for this section of interstate highway should further studies indicate that another location would be more in accord with the general directives of the law, and the public interest. The committee is further advised that the hearings resulted in clearing up some uncertainties on procedure and in producing a spirit of cooperation that, it is believed, will bring about earlier selection of a fixed route than had seemed likely. [Federal Highway Act of 1960, United States Senate, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress,



2d Session, Report No. 1725, June 24, 1960; “Senators Back Corridor Foes In Road Fight,” *The Evening Star*, June 23, 1960]

(Senator Muskie, who was known as an environmentalist, lived in Bethesda at 5404 Ridgefield Road. Thus, the outcome of the debate over routing would affect his daily commute while Congress was in session.)

### **National Capital Transportation Act of 1960**

On March 14, 1960, Chairman Bible and Representative Broyhill introduced identical bills, drafted by the Bureau of the Budget, to aid in development of a unified and integrated system of transportation for the national capital region. The Declaration of Policy and Purpose stated:

Sec. 102. The Congress finds that an improved transportation system for the National Capital region is essential for the continued and effective performance of the functions of the Government of the United States and of the District of Columbia, for the orderly growth and development of the National Capital region, and for the preservation of the beauty and dignity of the Nation’s Capital. The Congress further finds that improved transportation of persons requires coordination of the planning, financing, construction and administration of highways and public transit and railroad facilities; and that improved transportation also requires coordination with other public facilities and with the use of land, public and private.

The Congress, therefore, declared that the Federal Government had a responsibility to work with State and local officials in the region to develop “a unified and integrated system of transportation of persons in the National Capital region.”

The National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 called for creation of a Federal agency called the National Capital Transportation Agency (NCTA) to determine routes for a rapid rail transit system. NCTA would be headed by an Administrator (salary: \$20,000) and Deputy Administrator (\$19,000), both to be nominated by the President subject to Senate confirmation. Neither was to engage in any other business, “but shall devote himself to the work of the Agency.” The President also was to appoint a five-member Advisory Board, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to advise the Administrator on general policies; policies in connection with acquisition, design, and construction of facilities; fees for use of facilities; planning and administration; and such other matters as the Administrator may refer to the board.

NCTA was to develop a Transit Development Plan “indicating the specific location and extent of facilities in which the Agency will participate for the transportation of persons within the National Capital region, a timetable for the provision of such facilities[,] and comprehensive financial reports including costs, revenues, and benefits.” The agency also could contribute funding for construction of freeways, parkways, and other arterials to allow room on the right-of-way for transit facilities.

In addition, the agency:

. . . shall cooperate with government agencies to facilitate coordination of location, design, and construction of freeways, parkways, and other arterial highway facilities with the Transit Development Program. The purpose of such coordination is to assure the comprehensive development of transportation facilities best suited to meet the objectives of this Act and to achieve maximum benefits from moneys available for such purposes. The responsibility and authority for location, design, construction, and operation of freeways, parkways, and other arterial highway facilities shall remain with the government agencies having jurisdiction thereof, but all Federal agencies' plans for location and design of highway facilities shall be forwarded to the Agency, and all State and local agencies' plans for location and design of highway facilities may be requested by the Agency for its review and comment. The Agency shall cooperate with all planning agencies of the National Capital region and the appropriate government transportation regulatory agencies including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission in the development of transportation facilities and, wherever feasible and desirable, develop joint plans with such agencies . . . .

(Maryland, Virginia, and the District had joined the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia and the adjacent counties in the two States in a compact establishing the transit commission to regulate the area bus companies' fares, routes, and connections. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission began operation in March 1961.)

The agency could initiate proposals "for regulating and coordinating the flow of traffic . . . to promote the optimum use of the highway network and other transportation facilities."

With the consent of the governors of Maryland and Virginia, the agency could begin construction of transit facilities, pending creation of an interstate compact for a successor agency to take over and complete the work.

Chairman Bible, in introducing the White House bill, said, "I hope Congress, before the end of this session, will act on the transportation legislation . . . . It is likely there will be many differences of opinion. So it is up to Congress to develop these ideas fully through hearings." Representative Broyhill called the bill a "very sound approach."

After conferring with Chairman Bible and Chairman McMillan, Engineer Commissioner Welling said, "The draft legislation represents a masterful job of reconciling many of the divergent points of view expressed in recent months. At the same time, it offers an effective, well-founded proposal for a greatly augmented transit service." He added, "There may be legal and jurisdictional angles which will be debated. But the need for improving transit facilities in the area is so great that I would like to see the essentials of this latest proposition moved promptly forward." [H.R. 11135, March 14, 1960; S. 3193, March 14, 1960; Bassett, Grace, "Transit Agency Bill Filed in Both Houses," *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1960; Lindsay, John J., "Sen. Bible Urges 'Prompt Action' On Area Rapid Transit Proposal," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 15, 1960]

On June 14, 1960, the Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems approved the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. The committee report explained that the Mass

Transportation Survey “produced abundant evidence that a new system of high-speed express transit service is essential to preserve the District of Columbia and its environs as a good place in which to live and do business, and as a beautiful and dignified Capital City of our great Nation.” Moreover, the Joint Committee found “well-nigh universal support for a rapid transit system.” This support spanned all Federal, State, and local governments, business and civic groups, labor unions, planners, transportation experts, and average citizens.

The day when private enterprise could provide a modern rapid transit system and operate it at a profit “has long since passed.” The District of Columbia, which did not have the authority to issue bonds, could not take the necessary steps. “It is squarely up to the Federal Government, the largest employer and landowner in the metropolitan area, to take the first step.”

Members of the Joint Committee did not mean to imply that the Federal Government should subsidize transit in the area:

There is reason to expect that, if the Federal Government will make its credit available to create such a system, it will receive its money back, with full interest. It is true that the Transportation Plan predicted that annual operating revenues of a rapid transit system, while they would be sufficient to pay all operating costs and some principal and interest, would not cover all capital costs. But the prospective deficit might be turned to a surplus if a somewhat more modest system were built initially, or if a somewhat higher fare were charged.

The Bureau of the Budget, recognizing this fact, told the joint committee that, over a period of 50 years, a rapid transit system would not only pay its operating costs, but would repay a large part of its capital costs, and perhaps eventually all of them. [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, United States Senate, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, Committee Print, Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, June 15, 1960, pages 5-6]

The bill established a “National Capital Transportation Agency” (NCTA), headed by an Administrator and Deputy Administrator, to review the Mass Transportation Survey, make any needed changes, and carry out the detailed engineering and design work to identify the best locations for the rail lines. It would submit a transit development program to the President and Congress, and begin building and operating the transit facilities until the local jurisdictions complete an interstate compact to set up an agency to replace NCTA.

The measure established a prohibition on freeway construction in northeast Washington:

A proviso prohibits the construction of any new freeway or major parkway in a large sector of Northwest Washington until the use of railroads and subways has had a full trial. This proviso would prohibit the construction on Interstate Route 70-S along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, or along any alignment west of 12<sup>th</sup> Street NW. It would also prohibit the construction of the closely connected Glover-Archbold Parkway. Such highways might offer serious competition to the use of subways and railroads to carry

people between downtown Washington and the western portions of the outer District of Columbia and Montgomery County . . . .

The joint committee believes that the use of existing railroads and new rapid transit lines to carry people between downtown Washington and the suburbs may permit a substantial reduction in the number of highways that must be built into the city, leading to a substantial saving in public funds and avoiding the harmful effects often attendant on the construction of freeways through residential areas. In any case, any additional highways that will eventually be built should be deferred until the railroads and rapid transit lines have had an opportunity to develop their full patronage, since experience has shown that a new highway provides competition that no rail line can meet.

This provision did not specify an end-date for the moratorium, but was not a permanent ban on freeway construction in northwest Washington. “Once the use of rail transportation has had a fair trial, the prohibition terminates.” If rail transportation proved successful, “the highway agencies will no doubt prefer to spend their money elsewhere.” If, however, a new freeway is needed, “they will be free to request appropriations and, if these are granted, to build under the usual procedures.” If a subway is not built to serve the northwest quadrant, rail transportation “will still have had a ‘fair trial’ within the meaning of the provision, and the highway agencies should be free to proceed with their own plans for the area.”

One reason for the ban was BPR’s decision that, under its interpretation of Federal-aid law, I-70S must be routed west of Rock Creek Park:

Since revised cost estimates on the Interstate System, based on the latest ruling, are to be submitted to the Bureau in August, the freeway might become immovably fixed in the so-called Wisconsin Avenue corridor before the new Agency has even had a chance to consider the use of rail transportation to serve that area, unless Congress intervenes.

The bill also called for the use of freeway medians for rail transportation. The Joint Committee’s report cited three freeways that were “now under construction or in the advanced planning stage”:

- I-66 in Virginia from the Potomac River to the Capital Beltway – “This freeway should be designed to incorporate express transit facilities in a wide median strip, and to include bus stations and other facilities for high-speed, high-volume transit service.”
- Anacostia Expressway in the District south of the South Capitol Street Bridge – “This highway also should be designed and built with median strips wide enough for express transit service, and with provision for bus stations.”
- George Washington Memorial Parkway in Montgomery County, Maryland – “The transportation plan calls for express bus service on the parkway, requiring not median strips but bus stations off the parkway.”

In the case of the Anacostia Expressway and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the report continued, construction was about to begin. Officials needed to know as soon as possible whether transit lines would be included within the right-of-way. “While the joint committee

believes that no land acquisition or construction should be authorized until it has been well substantiated and Congress has approved it, these three highways do pose a special problem.” The bill, when enacted, “should be taken as an indication of an intent by the Federal Government to aid in the provision of express transit facilities in conjunction with freeways and parkways, and those agencies should allow for such facilities in their current planning and design work, so far as may be possible.” [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, pages 9-10]

The Joint Committee was concerned about construction of a 12<sup>th</sup> Street expressway tunnel across the National Mall from Constitution Avenue to Independence Avenue. This corridor was an ideal location for a subway line, but the expressway tunnel may block construction of a subway tunnel under the National Mall at this location. Alternatively, building the expressway tunnel now and the subway tunnel later would mean this area of the National Mall would be “dug up not once but twice, thereby causing an additional disruption of traffic and delaying the time when the Mall will be free of obstructions.” Some construction of the expressway tunnel was underway, the Joint Committee recommended that the District of Columbia and NPS “give serious consideration to rescheduling the completion of the Expressway, taking temporary measures to restore the flow of traffic, and the appearance of the Mall, and working with the new Agency in the preparation of a plan for any subway to be built in the 12<sup>th</sup> Street alignment.” [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, pages 10-11]

The House and Senate considered the bill on June 27, each considering somewhat different versions of the bill. The House took up the bill first. It included the prohibition of freeway or parkway construction in northwest Washington:

*Provided*, That no freeway, or new parkway more than two lanes in width, shall be built within the District of Columbia west of Twelfth Street, Northwest, and north of either the north or the west legs of the proposed Inner Loop Freeway, the proposed Potomac River Expressway, or the proposed Palisades Parkway, until after the Agency shall have reported to the President that the use of rail transportation to carry passenger traffic to points northwest of downtown Washington has had a fair trial.

Representative George H. Fallon (D-Md.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Roads of the Public Works Committee and one of the primary authors of the 1956 Act, questioned the moratorium, asking how long it would be in effect. Chairman McMillan of the House Committee on the District of Columbia explained that the Joint Committee had spent a great deal of time on this point. The committee had been advised that construction of U.S. 240 in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor was not contemplated for at least 5 years. “I notice the Senate amendment to a similar bill provides for a 2-year freeze and, so far as I am concerned, I have no objection to it being 2 years.”

Chairman Fallon suggested that the delay meant that the freeway, if needed, “is going to cost more than \$100 million. It will cost double that.” Chairman McMillan said that because Maryland and the District could begin planning the freeway, but were not planning to build it in the next 5 years. Therefore, a 2- to 5-year delay in construction pending a decision would not affect the cost. Chairman Fallon responded that since Maryland and the District had rejected the

Wisconsin Avenue corridor as the proper place for the freeway, they would not be doing any planning for it.

He also objected to the assumption that the results of rail and rapid transit in the corridor would be known in 2 years. “It will be many years before the railroad and the subway will be completed, so that there will not be any highway built in the northwest section of Washington and Maryland, probably one of the most difficult traffic problems as anywhere in the country; so that there will be no highway construction for at least 10 years.” He added:

I might say further, I hope that this does not set a precedent for all urban areas of the Nation, and that they give up the idea of bringing traffic in and out of the city by automobile. I hope that it does not set a pattern for all other urban areas.

Chairman McMillan agreed, but added, “I also hope that the people of the cities will discontinue trying to build freeways in the metropolitan areas that cost \$10 million a mile.

Representative Gross objected to the bill. He listed the officials the bill called for and their proposed salaries. “I will say to my colleagues that if you vote for this bill you are voting to spend \$500,000 of the taxpayers’ money gathered from all over the country to set up administrative agencies that will serve the interests of the District of Columbia and the States of Virginia and Maryland. This is another cute little raid on the taxpayers of all the country.”

Despite his concern, the House passed the bill by a vote of 72 to 42. [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, *Congressional Record-House*, June 27, 1960, pages 14561-14576]

Less than 2 hours later, Chairman Bible introduced S. 3193 on the Senate floor. As Chairman McMillan had stated, the bill’s moratorium on freeway and parkway construction in northwest Washington had been amended:

*Provided*, That no freeway, or new parkway more than two lanes in width, shall be built within the District of Columbia west of Twelfth Street, Northwest, and north of either the north or the west legs of the proposed Inner Loop Freeway, the proposed Potomac River Expressway, or the proposed Palisades Parkway, before July 1, 1962; and the Agency shall not later than January 10, 1962, submit to the President for transmittal to Congress, its recommendation as to whether any such freeway or parkway should thereafter be built.

The only objection to the bill came from Senator Morse, who objected to the absence of a provision in the bill covering labor relations. He warned:

If the Senate today passes the bill without laying down at least the framework of a labor policy which is going to exist once operating personnel start to be hired by any operating system which may result from passage of such a measure as this, we shall be sowing the seeds today, for labor unrest in the Capital Transit System . . . .

He offered an amendment to reassure workers and their unions that worker protections were in the law:

*Provided, Before the Agency moves into the operating stage, Congress shall establish for the Agency a labor relations policy, defining labor's right to organize, to bargain collectively, to arbitrate disputes, and to safeguard job rights."*

He explained the rationale for the amendment:

It will make it perfectly clear that the operating Agency cannot use the law as a subterfuge to adopt what could become a union-busting bill, if a situation arose, in a future Congress, under which some operating facility might want to use it so. I think it is necessary to include such a check in the law . . . .

The amendment simply provides that the transit development program to be developed by the Agency shall be referred not only to the transit companies but to the unions representing the workers as well.

Chairman Bible agreed to the amendment.

With that one change, the Senate approved the bill by standing vote. [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, *Congressional Record-Senate*, June 27, 1960, pages 14486-14505]

Conferees appointed to resolve differences between the two bills reached agreement on June 30. Regarding the moratorium on freeway or parkway construction, the conference committee retained the moratorium but extended it until July 1, 1965, adding that "the Agency shall not later than January 10, 1965, submit to the President, for transmittal to Congress, its recommendation as to whether any such freeway or parkway should thereafter be built." The committee also retained the Morse amendment on labor relations. [Conference Report, National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, U.S. House of Representatives, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 2061, June 30, 1960]

The House and Senate approved the conference committee report on July 1. In the House, Chairman McMillan introduced the conference report in the routine manner often used for a noncontroversial bill. The only dialogue was with Representative Gross, who requested a brief explanation of the differences between the House-passed version of the bill and the conference committee report. Representative Broyhill replied:

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, in conference the Senate receded from practically all of its amendments and accepted the House version almost in toto. The main amendment that was adopted by the Senate was to eliminate the feature of the House bill that required further authorization on the part of Congress for any construction that took place; merely requiring an appropriation. They receded from that amendment and agreed to the original House version. That was the main difference between the two bodies. Another difference was in the House version we restricted the construction of freeways and expressways in Northwest Washington until the subway system had received a fair trial. The Senate required a 2-year waiting period, and we compromised and made it a 5-year waiting period. The rest of the changes are minor.

Representative Gross asked if the conference committee retained the same appropriations in the bill “for the commission or whatever it was, the advisory board,” an apparent reference to the salaries he had criticized during the June 27 debate. Representative Broyhill replied that, “There was no difference between the versions of the two bodies in that regard.” As a result, the conference committee did not change the language.

Representative Gross asked, “So far as expenditures are concerned?” Representative Broyhill replied:

Well, the main difference, as I tried to explain was that we required further authorization before any land acquisition or construction could be commenced. The Senate just struck that portion and just required an appropriation. The Senate receded from that and adopted the House version, which was far more restrictive.

With that lone colloquy, the House approved the conference report without a recorded vote.

In the Senate, Senator Case raised concerns about the moratorium. “I personally regret the freeze on highway construction in the northwest part of the city is made as long as it is.” He was concerned that until the matter was resolved, “there will be some uncertainty in the minds of property owners, developers, business interests, schools, hospitals, and churches centering upon just where the connection for Interstate route 70-S will come into the city.” He recognized that compromise was needed on the issue, and that the compromise in the bill was reasonable; he was speaking only for the legislative record.

He also was concerned that the moratorium would block the Glover-Archbold Parkway. Because the fate of the parkway was in the courts, he wanted to go on record in support of the parkway. If it emerged from the trial, he hoped that “a resolution of the legal points involved . . . would be noted by the agency in its study, and that matter might receive separate and special attention.”

With Senator Case on the record, the Senate agreed to the conference report without a vote. [National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, *Congressional Record-House*, July 1, 1960, pages 15493-15496; Coordinated System of Transportation for National Capital Area-Conference Report, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 1, 1960, pages 15379-15380]

The final bill included the language from Section 102 on the congressional finding that an improved transportation system for the area “requires the planning on a regional basis of a unified system of freeways, parkways, express transit service on exclusive rights-of-way, and other major transportation facilities.” It included language urging NCTA to give “special consideration” to, among other things:

Early development of a subway from Union Station capable of rapid dispersal of passengers from the railhead to the principal employment centers in the District of Columbia and its immediate environs and capable of being extended to serve other parts of the region.

This language was immediately followed by the “*Provided*” language imposing a moratorium on freeway and parkway construction in northwest Washington.



The bill also retained the Morse amendment on labor policy.

### **NCTA Gets Underway**

On August 17, 1960, President Eisenhower asked Congress to appropriate \$500,000 for NCTA in a planned supplemental appropriations act for fiscal year 1961. The funds were needed before he could name an Administrator and Deputy Administrator to begin operations.

On August 26, the House of Representatives approved a bill that cut the NCTA appropriation in half, largely because Chairman Albert Thomas (D-Tx.) of the subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations considered the planned expenditures wasteful. The bill also limited NCTA to a 25-employee ceiling, instead of the 54 employees included in the White House plan for getting the agency up and running quickly. Chairman Thomas was concerned that NCTA would use the funds to undo the work of the joint committee that prepared the Mass Transportation Survey. [Deane, James G., "Transit Agency Fund Chopped To \$250,000," *The Evening Star*, August 26, 1960]

Federal officials and mass transit advocates urged restoration of the full amount, which the Senate did when it passed its version of the bill on August 28. However, the House measure prevailed in conference committee. Congress completed work on the supplemental appropriations bill on August 31, then adjourned on September 1.

With funds assured, the White House announced the appointment of H. Holmes Vogel as the NCTA administrator. The President sent the nomination to the Senate for confirmation along with the names of the members of the advisory board, including Harland Bartholomew. With Congress having left town to campaign, confirmation of the nominees would not be possible; they would act on the basis of recess appointments.

Vogel, 62 years old, was a vice president of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. A Republican with a long history of involvement in civic affairs, he had been on the board of directors of such organizations as United Givers Fund, Maryland Utilities Association, Washington Criminal Justice Association, the Salvation Army, and the Better Business Bureau. His salary at NCTA would be \$19,000 a year. [Pierce, Charles D., "Vogel May Get Transit Post," *The Evening Star*, August 18, 1960]

He told reporters, "This job is more than just a challenge to those of us who will be connected with it. It is going to be a model for mass transportation planning for communities throughout the entire Nation." NCTA's primary job was to send Congress recommendations on the proposed transit program. "I do not intend to prejudge any of this. Making these decisions will be the job of the agency in the months ahead." NCTA would begin, he said, by updating the Mass Transportation Survey. "What we have to do is take an objective look at the entire report from the standpoint of transportation." [Gimble, Gilbert, "New Agency Head Sees Transit Plans as Model," *The Evening Star*, September 1, 1960]

President Eisenhower signed the supplemental appropriations act on September 8 (P.L. 86-722). On September 15, he signed a Joint Resolution granting "the consent and approval of Congress

for the States of Virginia and Maryland and the District of Columbia to enter into a compact related to the regulation of mass transit in the Washington, District of Columbia metropolitan area, and for other purposes” (P.L. 86-794). As noted earlier, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission began operations in March 1961.

Vogel took his oath of office on September 16 in the District Building.

On November 1, Vogel met with the advisory board to discuss ways to get NCTA off to a running start. They agreed on:

- Purchase of 50-foot median strips for use by express buses on I-66 and I-95 in Virginia, as well the proposed third route to Baltimore.
- NCTA would purchase land along the Anacostia Freeway and the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Maryland for “pretty fancy” bus stations.
- Determine how to improve and expand existing bus and commuter railroad service.
- Identify subway lines that, optimistically, begun operating in 1968. As directed by Congress in the National Capital Transportation Agency Act, NCTA would study a subway between Union Station and downtown Washington. [Landauer, Jerry, “Transport Unit Goes Into Action,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 2, 1960; “Mass Transit Plan Backed by Agency,” *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1960]

At the time, NCTA did not have funds for the first two goals.

President Eisenhower, with only a few weeks remaining in office, formally nominated Vogel and the members of the advisory board to Congress at the start of 1961. With President-elect John F. Kennedy awaiting inauguration, Congress chose to await the new President.

### **President Kennedy’s Interest**

Presidents have traditionally not focused on District matters, but President Kennedy took an interest in the city’s affairs. As a member of Congress beginning in 1947, he had lived in Georgetown at 3307 N Street, NW.; he and his family departed from there for his inauguration on January 20, 1961. The house is located a few blocks from Wisconsin Avenue on the east, Georgetown University on the west, and several blocks north of Canal Road, M Street, the elevated Whitehurst Freeway, and the Georgetown waterfront.

One of his best-known initiatives was revitalization of Pennsylvania Avenue. By the time of his inauguration on January 20, 1961, the avenue connecting the Capitol and the White House had become a shabby street lined by pawnshops, souvenir stores, and boarded up buildings. The result was the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, which strived to restore the avenue to a “grand and majestic avenue.”

Less well known is President Kennedy’s role in the transportation life of the District and other elements of its daily life. As Professor Schrag explained:

Under previous administrations, and at the start of Kennedy’s term, matters concerning the District of Columbia had been passed to whichever White House aide was available.

Area residents had long wanted one person to handle such questions, and in 1962 Kennedy agreed, naming Charles Horsky adviser for national capital affairs. [Schrag, page 45]

Horsky, a Montana native, had graduated from Harvard Law School, moved to Washington during the New Deal of the 1930s, and then joined the influential law firm, Covington and Burling, where Peter Craig became an associate many years later. During the 1950s, Horsky was president of the Washington Housing Association, where he lobbied for relocation assistance for residents displaced by government projects, including freeways:

He had been alarmed to learn that the D.C. Highway Department was planning to displace thousands of people to build the Inner Loop without provision for relocation, and further alarmed by the release of the Mass Transportation Survey in November [1959], though his testimony before Congress consisted of a quiet plea for more emphasis on rapid transit that was easy to ignore.

President Kennedy attended Horsky's swearing in ceremony on September 28, 1962, for his \$20,000 a year post. The President said, "I don't think we have paid enough attention to the District." The new position was not intended to supplant the District Commissioners, but to assist them. The President hoped Horsky would "bring to my constant attention" local problems requiring Federal action. As an example, he cited school dropouts and said that in a nonindustrial city such as Washington, he wanted to be sure schools provided the necessary skills, including vocational skills for dropouts. The District's three commissioners attended the ceremony for Horsky.

Horsky, who lived at 1227 Pinecrest Circle in Silver Spring, Maryland, replied that with the support of the President and the three District commissioners, "we can and will make this a Nation's Capital of which you can be proud and all of us can be proud." After the ceremony, he told reporters that his duties would involve the entire region, not just the District of Columbia.

Horsky's office was in the Executive Office Building where, as Schrag explained, "his White House letterhead brought him more notice." [Schrag, page 45; "Kennedy Aide Takes Office," *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1962; Clopton, Willard, "Horsky Sworn in a JFK D.C. Adviser," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 29, 1962]

On March 3, President Kennedy nominated C. Darwin Stolzenbach as NCTA administrator and Joseph G. Matthews as deputy administrator, a post that President Eisenhower had never filled. Stolzenbach, who had lived in the Washington area since 1934, had a degree from George Washington University and had served in the Federal Government as an economist and an Asia expert. At the time, he was an economist and senior staff member of the Johns Hopkins University Operations Research Office in Silver Spring. As Schrag explained, "At a time when operations research and systems analysis were being adapted from their military origins to civilian problems, Stolzenbach's economic credentials qualified him to manage a major engineering project." Stolzenbach lived with his wife and three children in a two-story brick home at 10515 Meredith Avenue in Kensington,

He was a controversial choice. As a resident of Montgomery County and president of the Montgomery County Planning Association, he had opposed the Northwest Freeway in 1958. A year later, Stolzenbach testified before the Joint Committee on behalf of multiple citizens associations, saying as Schrag summarized:

[The] region needed more than “a system that merely superimposes mass transit on top of an already preconceived regional highway plan,” and, in words that would be later used against him, that “highways and mass transit are and will always be competing facilities for mass transportation.” In other words, more transit meant fewer freeways. This was enough to earn Stolzenbach the lasting enmity of the highway lobby, as well as the Montgomery County political establishment.

According to Schrag, Stolzenbach’s Cleveland Park allies recommended him to the Kennedy Administration and he was nominated “over the objection of the Democratic Central Committee of Montgomery County, but with the endorsement of D.C. Democrats.” [Schrag, pages 45-47]

The Cleveland Park residents who had lobbied to include a moratorium on the Northwest Freeway in the 1960 Act also had tried to give NCTA a veto over local freeway plans. The legislation watered the veto down by providing only that NCTA should evaluate transportation plans, alternative facilities, and kinds of service, a requirement that Stolzenbach interpreted as giving him veto power.

Matthews was assistant to the vice president of the Association of American Railroads, a post he had assumed in 1957. He was born in Sheffield, Alabama, held a law degree from Blackstone College of Law in Chicago, and had served in the Army’s Transportation Corps during World War II before joining the Southern Railroad System. Matthews was an active leader of the Democratic Party in Virginia; he lived in Alexandria at 417 Wake Forest Drive. His position came with an annual salary of \$18,500.

Administrator Vogel announced his resignation the same day as the nominations.

The Kennedy Administration also had plans for Peter Craig, as Professor Schrag described:

Peter Craig, one of the loudest voices against expressways in 1958-1960, declined a job in the new administration, but he did gain listeners. Turning down the chance to become NCTA general counsel, he suggested his Covington and Burling colleague, Ed Seeger, for the job and kept in touch with Seeger as he continued the highway fight. Horsky, at the White House, was equally easy to get on the phone. For example, when the District of Columbia Highway Department officials tried to withhold data from Craig, Craig simply contacted Horsky, who scolded the engineer commissioner for denying Craig’s rights “as a citizen of the District. [Schrag, page 47]

Seeger was sworn in on May 31, 1961.

At BPR, President Kennedy appointed Rex M. Whitton to the post of Federal Highway Administrator. Whitton was born on a farm in Jackson County, Missouri, worked his way through the University of Missouri, graduated in April 1920 with a bachelor of science degree in

engineering, and began working for the Missouri Highway Department 11 days after graduation. His initial salary was \$110 a month as a levelman on a 15-mile stretch of road in Johnson County, but he rose through the ranks to become Chief Engineer in 1951. He was president of AASHO in 1955, a post that occasionally brought him to Washington to testify before Congress in support of what became the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.

In Missouri and as head of BPR, he was dedicated to building the Interstate System by its scheduled completion date in the early 1970s, but by the time he took office in 1961, freeway revolts were common in the country's big cities. Whitton initially took the point of view, shared by many long-time highway engineers, that the reason for the opposition was that the critics did not understand the benefits their cities would receive when the Interstate System was completed. He joined with the highway community in public relations initiatives to promote the benefits of highways while countering what referred to as the myths and misinformation about the freeways; in this role, he probably attended more opening ceremonies of Interstate highways than anyone in history, each opening an opportunity to speak glowingly about the Interstate System. [Larson, Thomas D., "The Man Who Saved the Interstate System," Highway History Web site, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/whitton.cfm>]

While in Washington, Whitton and his wife lived in an apartment building at 4201 Cathedral Avenue, NW., in the Cathedral Heights neighborhood of alongside Glover-Archbold Park. (The building is now called the Towers Condominium.) Despite his freeway advocacy, he and his wife used freeways only when he was in a hurry. "We take the back roads," he explained. "That's the finest way to travel unless you're in a big hurry to get somewhere." He and his wife collected antique glass and, as he told a reporter in 1964, ". . . you don't find antique shops on the big new interstate highways."

That same year, President Kennedy also appointed a new chairman to the NCPC. Elizabeth Rowe, who had grown up in the District's Adams-Morgan neighborhood and now lived in Cleveland Park, had been on the commission she would now lead. Her views had been formed in part by her service on the D.C. Auditorium Commission after her friend, since the 1930s, Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson had appointed her in 1954. While on the Auditorium Commission, according to Gutheim and Lee, "she noticed the 'spaghetti' of bridges and approaches planned to span the city and affect many settled areas." Professor Schrag said, "she had been horrified by three-dimensional models of proposed highways in downtown Washington." She joined NCPC with "an idyllic view of the city as a collection of neighborhoods, defined by tree-lined streets and handsome buildings." This vision was in contrast with NCPC's highway-oriented concepts of the Bartholomew era. [Gutheim and Lee, page 296; Schrag, page 45]

### **Thinking About the Future**

On June 11, 1961, NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council released the Year 2000 Plan. It was intended to provide a framework for change over the next 40 years.

The report projected the basics of the region in 2000, and described how to plan for the inevitable changes. Population would expand from the present 2 million people to 5 million. Employment

would increase to 2.2 million jobs, from the current 940,000. Already, 350 square miles had been consumed by development, but by 2000, the growth will have expanded to 1,700 square miles.

The region was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the country, and a good place to live:

But, like every metropolis, it has problems – traffic congestion, water pollution, vanishing open spaces, crowded schools, rising taxes, obsolescence, blight.

The main reason is *growth*. People keep coming to Washington, and the people who are already here keep having children. The region's population will double within a generation through natural increase alone. Growth means more people making more demands on a limited amount of land, on limited amounts of water and air, on public facilities that can only be expanded slowly and at considerable cost, and on public revenues that never seem to grow as fast as the need for them . . . .

Our future depends, in a word, on the *design* of the region – on the creation of a pattern that will produce the next possible environment for ourselves and future generations. Good design will reduce traffic congestion, protect water supplies, provide adequate space for parks and recreation, create efficient commercial centers and livable residential neighborhoods produce a suitable setting for the Nation's Capital, meet the needs of new industry, and reduce the costs of local government . . . .

The guiding policies for development must look far beyond the near future, which will largely be shaped by decisions already made, to a time when needs and conditions are different from today. The 40-year period has been chosen because great changes are sure to take place, and these changes can be very greatly influenced by public policies.

One thing was clear. "The need for action is urgent."

To achieve the goals in a diverse region with overlapping jurisdictions, officials and planners had two levers. Jack Eisen described them in the *Post* as:

The construction or withholding of the transit routes, and the location of outlying Federal office centers.

The Year 2000 Plan called for:

- Shift of Federal "employment centers" to city-like communities along the corridors or spokes. The centers would have apartments and other features to justify construction of transit.
- Local governments would use zoning, acquisition of land, and other ways to restrain residential development within the "wedges" between the spokes.
- Federal offices in the central core – Capitol Hill, the Mall, the Federal Triangle – should be completed. Additional Federal office space should be put in clusters of buildings around what the plan called MetroCenter, "the heart of the Nation's Capital City." New buildings housing agencies with "purely operational functions" should avoid the

“monumental” style of recent additions. Locating these buildings in “clusters” in the central business area would create “prestige centers” that would encourage increased density to contain the commercial area within current boundaries.

- Central Washington would decline in importance but still provide offices for 50 percent of the area’s government employees. Use “large-scale public and private” urban renewal techniques to support redevelopment.
- Encourage “small urban open spaces” around new government, institutional, commercial and apartment buildings.
- Build public rail transportation parallel to highways in spoke-like patterns. The four lines described in the Mass Transportation Survey should be built along with two additional routes.
- Freeways now planned should be built, but no more except for a freeway into southern Prince George’s County, Maryland.

Uncontrolled sprawl was the biggest danger. As development spread outward, transit would not be able to serve the less densely populated areas. “Someone has called this the Los Angelization of the Washington area,” NCPC Executive Director Finley said. “I don’t think this is intended to be a compliment.”

He said that in presenting the Year 2000 Plan, “Our role is to clarify the issue, and let the politicians and the people make the decisions. But the report will make it more difficult for the politician not to face the future and make the decisions.”

He anticipated that as planners and area officials studied the plan, they would see it as a basis, first, for discussion, but eventually for “a concert of policies” that they could adopt.

Gutheim and Lee explained the wedges and corridors concept:

Drawn along the proposed rapid transit routes and a parallel highway system, the radial corridor policy plan expressed the concept [that] the central city should be the primary focus or hub of the metropolitan region. The corridors were to be created by linking major development centers; each corridor or spoke would be separated by wedges of open countryside. In design this would produce something similar to the idealized nineteenth-century radial transit city, a snowflake pattern where open space was readily accessible to the urban and suburban population . . . .

Diagrams of the radial corridor plan showed more specifically how the radials would embrace clusters of public buildings and services, private office buildings, shopping centers, various housing and apartment types, industrial complexes, schools, and community centers, all of them linked by the kind of urban “greenways” popularized in Philadelphia’s redevelopment planning.

Wedges of open space on undeveloped Federal tracts, such as the Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland, should be preserved through acquisition or other means.

The Year 2000 Plan abandoned the idea of shifting government offices to the east of the Capitol, a concept that had been included in the Mass Transportation Survey and other planning documents. The plan recommended, instead, construction of apartment buildings for about 10 blocks between the Capitol and Lincoln Park.

[“Year 2000 Plan Sets Area’s Growth Aims,” *The Sunday Star*, June 11, 1961; Gutheim and Lee, page 289; Eisen, Jack, “Sprawl Growth Perils District of 2000 A.D.,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 11, 1961; “Planning Ahead For 2000 A.D.,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 22, 1961; italics in original]

Not everyone liked the Year 2000 Plan. At the second annual Community Appearance Conference of the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, speaker Victor Gruen, an influential architect best known for systemizing the shopping center to the possibilities of the Interstate era, was asked about the plan. He called it “a little plan, full of inherent contradiction, and schizophrenic.” The “radial corridors” were “nothing but a schematic drawing of the growth pattern which our metropolitan areas have followed in the past.” The 40-year plan was “killing, from the outset, any chance of reshaping the metro center into a truly compact organism.”

Gruen questioned some of the plan’s assertions about transportation, as the *Star* summarized:

He said the National Capital Planning Commission’s plan “professes” that only public transportation can fully serve the central area, but added that it “proposes new superhighways from the corridor towns, thus putting the two modes of transportation into direct competition.

Quoting the plan as saying most automobile users will be converted to a transit system “only after congestion on the highways reaches intolerable levels,” Mr. Gruen commented:

It seems to follow that if the highways would not be built at all, then the rapid transit system would have a chance to exist economically before intolerable levels of traffic on the highways are reached.

General Clarke, also on the program, was asked to comment on Gruen’s views. “I did not hear all that Mr. Gruen said, but I am afraid that he and I do not see eye to eye on this. I am prepared to support the concepts outlined in the Year 2000 Plan.”

General Clarke, in his presentation, defended the city’s highway plans in the context of improving the city’s appearance:

In my opinion, traffic is more unsightly in congested streets of a neighborhood than it is on expressways screened from the eye and ear. [“40-Year Plan Denounced as Schizophrenic,” *The Evening Star*, January 5, 1962]



## Defining the District's Freeway Network

An extensive freeway network had evolved from Bartholomew's earliest projections. In a letter dated June 30, 1960, to Aitken, from BPR Commissioner Armstrong confirmed the descriptions and numbers of the designated Interstate System routes in the District for purposes of compiling the next ICE. The District's routes were:

- 66 – From the D.C.-Virginia line at the west end of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to a junction with FAI Route 95 in Washington.
- 70S – From the D.C.-Maryland line en route from Frederick, Maryland to the inner belt in Washington.
- 95 – From the D.C.-Virginia line at the south end of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge to the D.C.-Maryland line en route to Baltimore.
- 266 – Extending from a junction with Interstate Route 66 in the District of Columbia to the D.C.-Virginia line en route to a junction with Route 66 in Arlington County, Virginia.
- 295 – From the D.C.-Maryland line at the vicinity of Oxon Run to a junction with FAI Route 95 in Washington.
- 495 – On the Woodrow Wilson Bridge from the D.C.-Virginia line to the D.C.-Maryland Line.
- 695 – Portion of south leg of inner belt from FAI Route 95 to FAI Route 295.

The letter added a paragraph about I-266:

There is hereby designated Interstate Route 266 extending from a junction with Interstate Route 66 in the District of Columbia to the D.C.-Virginia line en route to a junction with Route 66 in Arlington County, Virginia. The general location is shown on the map dated May 25, 1960, prepared by the District of Columbia, except that for purposes of preparation of the estimate of cost to complete the Interstate System in accordance with Section 104(b)5 of Title 23, U.S.C., the location to be estimated shall be via Key Bridge.

Later that year, on October 21, Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy wrote to Aitken approving the city's request to modify the I-295 description to read:

We approve, effective this date, the removal of the Anacostia Freeway between the Anacostia Bridge (11<sup>th</sup> Street) and the District of Columbia-Maryland line, as the location of Interstate Route 295. This approval will permit transfer of Interstate funds previously authorized for projects on the Anacostia Freeway, as requested in your letter of September 16 to Division Engineer Hanson.

On June 20, 1961, Administrator Whitton approved a modified description of I-695. His letter to Aitken provided that:

695. South leg of Inner Belt from FAI Route 66 at the east end of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to FAI Route 295 in the vicinity of 11<sup>th</sup> Street, S.E., excluding the coincident section of FAI Route 95.

These were general descriptions, rather than precise definitions. For example, the description of I-70S could apply to a link along the Potomac River, along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, or east of Rock Creek Park in the North Central corridor.

### **Transition at NCTA**

Shortly after being nominated as NCTA Administrator, Stenzenbach talked with reporters. He considered the Mass Transportation Survey to be the framework for NCTA's studies, but did not consider it "to be a fully detailed blueprint." In particular, he questioned the survey's balance between freeways and rapid rail transit. NCTA, he said, should be "the voice of those who favor mass transit as a means of funneling off" the heavy traffic on the roads.

He emphasized that he is not against highways. He worried, however, that too many highways would create a series of "Chinese walls" dividing the city. Moreover, an over-emphasis on freeways would turn the Washington area into a vision of Los Angeles, which has many freeways but "still the cars move bumper to bumper." As a result, freeways would be part of the transportation system, but the system would not rely on them. "A highway system," he said, is like a bottomless pit." The *Star* summarized his view:

The more highways built, the more traffic they generate; the more traffic, the greater the need for parking facilities, he believes. And as a consequence of highway construction, the city "gets more and more chopped up," he said.

At any rate, Mr. Stenzenbach stressed, the various alternatives will be examined in developing a balanced transportation system and these factors will constantly be placed before all the planning agencies and governing bodies in the Washington region.

In developing that balance, he said, "I would like to try some experiments," as the *Star* described:

Convince the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to try running more commuter trains in the Maryland area and have O. Roy Chalk put D.C. Transit buses at the stations to wait for incoming trains and take commuters to designated Government building centers.

"I don't know if it would work or not, but I think some things should be given a try at least," he said. [Gimble, Gilbert, "Chinese Walls' Feared In Highway Building," *The Sunday Star*, March 5, 1961]

These remarks prompted the District's Aitken to tell reporters that solving congestion would "vary from city to city," but in every case, freeways must play an important role. While "highways cannot do the total job," modern freeways carrying buses and automobiles "can go a long way toward meeting mass transportation needs." He stressed that already, freeways had helped eliminate unsightly slums and blighted areas in the southwest quadrant and other parts of

the District. That was because highway engineers design freeways to be “functional and still attractive.”

In response to a question on WWDC radio’s Report to the People program, he said he lamented the “unfortunate” use of “catch phrases” such as “Chinese Walls.” Such phrases could harm the vital Interstate freeway program that should “not be tilted or warped by catch phrases.”

Unlike Stolzenbach, Aitken was not concerned that the Washington area would turn into another Los Angeles. The two cities were different, with centralized employment in Washington while most employment in the Los Angeles area was decentralized.

Aitken had never met Stolzenbach, but looked forward to getting together with him soon to discuss “broad policies” for mass transit planning. [“Aitken Stresses Role Of Freeways For Area,” *The Sunday Star*, March 12, 1961; “Aitken Hits Attacks on Freeways,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 12, 1961]

The Kennedy Administration would not file the NCTA nominations with Congress until April 27, but the Senate District Committee held a hearing and approved both on March 24. The goal in the speedy approval was to get NCTA, with its new leadership, moving as fast as possible.

Chairman Bible told Stolzenbach that his job would be difficult, as the *Post* summarized:

The agency is charged with planning, winning approval of and finding means to finance a suitable mass transportation system for the Washington area.

Bible also agreed that the major part of the problem will be finding the money to build the transportation system for the expanding metropolitan area.

Bible, who helped draft the legislation establishing the Agency, said he expected it to “move ahead with top speed” despite the admitted complexities of the job.

Senator Beall illustrated one of the complexities:

Beall told Stolzenbach that he had some misgiving about maintaining a 5-year “freeze” on parkway construction in Northwest Washington because of the undesirable – particularly uncertainty – it is causing in the future of the Glover-Archbold Parkway and related highway construction.

Beall said he was interested in taking a “new look” at the Northwest highway freeze and would ask the District Committee staff to determine whether new legislation is needed to “end or change it.”

Stolzenbach replied that he did not consider the ban to be permanent and “it is far from being a ban on all highway construction.” NCTA would review the moratorium as part of its coordination with other highway and planning organizations to find the best solution to the area’s transportation problems.

Having approved the two nominees, the committee would have to wait until receiving their formal nominations to take them before the Senate for confirmation. [Lindsay, John J., "2 Chiefs of Area Transit Agency Win Senate District Unit Backing," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 25, 1961]

Even before the paperwork arrived in the Senate, Matthews asked that his name be withdrawn. Jack Eisen reported in the *Post* that Stolzenbach and Matthews had been under consideration for the top spot in NCTA "until a few hours before the President made his announcement on March 3":

Stolzenbach, a Marylander, won his main support from District Democrats. Matthews, a Virginian, had broader political support, including backing from both Virginia and Maryland political figures.

According to the *Star*:

Mr. Matthews . . . was understood to have agreed to take the second spot in the agency if he could veto any major decisions made by Mr. Stolzenbach. Mr. Stolzenbach reportedly accepted the arrangement.

The plan apparently fell through, however, when Mr. Stolzenbach sought to name an individual employed at the Johns Hopkins University Research Office in Bethesda as his special assistant. Mr. Stolzenbach had been a senior staff member at the research wing of the university prior to his nomination by President Kennedy.

Eisen reported that the White House was "acutely embarrassed over the incident." Further, Matthews' resignation "revived efforts by some of Stolzenbach's foes in Montgomery County to head off the nomination." Stolzenbach was unperturbed, telling Eisen that the plan was to move as fast as possible to complete the tasks that Congress set before NCTA, without seeking deadline extensions. As Eisen added, time was "beginning to run out" on deadlines such as the requirement that NCTA submit "recommendations for organization and financial arrangement" to the President by November 1, 1962. "Already seven of those 28 months have slipped past."

Any delaying in forwarding the recommendation "could mean that hopes for getting the area's first subway line running by 1968 also may be set back." [McKelway, John, "Transit Agency Aid Quits in Row Before He's Officially Nominated," *The Evening Star*, March 29, 1961; Eisen, Jack, "Matthews Quits Rapid Transit Job," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 30, 1961; Eisen, Jack, "Problems of New Transit Agency May Mean Delay in Subway Plan," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 31, 1961]

The White House finally forwarded Stolzenbach's nomination to the Senate on April 27. The Senate confirmed his appointment on May 4 without discussion or debate. [National Capital Transportation Agency, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 4, 1961, page 7302]

On May 12, 1961, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas administered the oath of office for Administrator Stolzenbach at NCTA's headquarters at 926 Jackson Place, NW.

At a press conference after the swearing in, Stolzenbach said he planned to visit other cities that had or were planning rapid transit systems. He would visit San Francisco in the following week and then travel to Philadelphia and Toronto. He also would meet with area officials, including the governors of Maryland and Virginia.

He said that NCTA was not simply a mass transit agency. “We have to create a practical plan for a metro form of organization so that all the beneficiaries . . . can participate both in its management and paying for it.”

He also planned to visit Seattle in 1962 to see the monorail that was being erected from downtown to the entrance to the 1962 World’s Fair. Stolzenbach said that whenever he talked to people who were not in the transit field, they ask about monorail. Thus far, it had seen used mainly as an amusement ride, as in Disneyland. He wanted to know all about it. NCTA “certainly” had not ruled out monorail as an option for the Washington area. “I think we ought to become the world’s expert on monorail as fast as possible.

In the immediate future, NCTA would initially seek authority to acquire median strips in freeways for transit, with I-66 in Virginia and I-95 between Baltimore and Washington being prime candidates because officials had not yet agreed on their routing.

Stolzenbach predicted that construction of a downtown subway could get underway as early as 1964, with operation beginning in 1968 or 1969. He acknowledged that there was “still some question” whether a subway is needed, but he planned to give special attention to the subject. The goal was a “balanced system,” with the difficult question being how to decide where balance existed. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Transit Unit Seeks New Right-of-Ways,” *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1961; “Transit Chief Sworn, Plans Monorail Study,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 13, 1961]

On June 16, the White House announced that Warren D. Quenstedt was the President’s choice to be Deputy Administrator of NCTA. The 50-year old Quenstedt was an attorney with the firm of Smith, Hennessey and McDonald. Since 1946, he also had been an independent insurance broker and agent. The Virginia native lived with his wife and two children at 1319 Park Terrace Drive in Alexandria.

Quenstedt was a transit booster. The *Post* quoted him as saying, “Even if the Potomac River were roofed over with bridges,” highways could not do the whole job.

Stolzenbach was “most pleased” with the nomination. “I know him and I like him.” [“Quenstedt Is Chosen As Transport Deputy,” *The Evening Star*, June 16, 1961; “Quenstedt Gets Post in Transport,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 17, 1961]

Following a routine June 27 confirmation hearing, the Senate District Committee sent the nomination to the Senate floor on July 10. He was confirmed in a brief colloquy the following day by unanimous consent of the few people on the Senate floor at the time. [National Capital Transportation Agency, *Congressional Record-Senate*, July 10, 1961, page 12256]

(Quenstedt had been the Democratic challenger to Representative Broyhill in the 1956 election. The race turned on many issues, including civil rights and schools. However, Quenstedt also charged Representative Broyhill with being ineffective in Congress, as the *Star* reported:

In a separate television appearance over Station WMAL last night, Mr. Quenstedt continued his attack on the legislative record of his opponent.

Mr. Quenstedt recalled that “more Potomac River Bridges” were part of Representative Broyhill’s campaign platform four years ago.

“Well, what do we have?” asked Mr. Quenstedt. “We have the same number of bridges as we had in 1952, but we have more people using them . . . . How long does it take to plan a bridge? How long does it take to build one?”

He was particularly critical of Representative Broyhill’s role in the central area – or Roosevelt Island – bridge. “Here Joe Broyhill’s record is one of inconsistency and confusion,” said Mr. Quenstedt. “Repeated attempts to get action here have failed mainly because Joe Broyhill first opposed a tunnel in favor of a bridge and after it looked like this would become a reality, he suddenly threw the whole matter into a turmoil by advocating construction of a tunnel. How long must people of the 10<sup>th</sup> district put up with this failure to produce? We have no new bridges and we have no tunnels despite Joe Broyhill’s four long years in Congress.” [“Broyhill Cites Democrats to Defend Record,” *The Evening Star*, October 13, 1956]

(In November, Representative Broyhill defeated Quenstedt – 53,148 to 40,553.)

### **The Cost of Right-of-way**

By the early 1960s, the District’s extensive freeway network was facing problems, including what to do with people displaced by the planned highways. The 1950s urban renewal plan had nearly wiped out southwest’s African-American and low-income neighborhoods, leaving room for Zeckendorf’s vision of the area. Because virtually the entire area had been leveled for urban renewal, the Southwest Freeway was an exception to the revolt against freeways that was underway around the country. No one was left to object to the destruction of their homes or businesses.

By contrast, other Interstates in the Washington area and around the country were proposed to be built in the midst of neighborhoods and business development that had not been cleared. The desire to protect homes and businesses was at the heart of the freeway revolt.

From the earliest years of the Federal-aid highway program, States had been responsible for providing right-of-way. The Federal Highway Act of 1921 explicitly exempted the “rights-of-way” from Federal-aid highway fund reimbursement. Because Federal-aid funds could not be used in cities, State highway agencies often relied on adjacent property owners to donate the land in exchange for access to the new or improved road.

During World War II, Congress began to modify the Federal role in highway right-of-way acquisition. The Defense Highway Act of 1941, enacted just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, authorized Federal reimbursement up to 100 percent for acquisition of right-of-way for defense access roads and up to three-fourths of the cost for acquisition on projects on the strategic highway network. Where States could not provide the right-of-way due to restrictions in their constitution, PRA was authorized to acquire the land. For regular Federal-aid highway projects, Federal law in 1943 and again in 1944 modified the definition of "construction" to include the cost of right-of-way, with the restriction to one-third of the cost. Provisions were not made to help home owners or businesses relocate. [*America's Highways, 1776-1976, page 357*]

When construction of the Interstate System began, old ways of right-of-way acquisition no longer worked. Full control of access meant that adjacent property owners were no longer willing to donate property. Under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, BPR would pay 90 percent of the cost of right-of-way acquisition, but not the cost of relocation or help to displace to find new homes or locations of businesses.

On February 28, 1961, just 5 weeks after taking office, President Kennedy sent a Message to Congress on the Federal Highway Program. It began, "Our Federal pay-as-you-go highway program is in peril" and focused on funding options for putting the program back on a sound financial footing. Completing the Interstate System "at least as fast as originally scheduled is essential to our economy." He opposed "stretching out or cutting back" the program, two options that critics had suggested. Instead, he recommended making a temporary 1-cent increase in the 3-cent gas tax permanent.

The President's message also addressed urban development issues. He directed Secretary of Commerce Luther H. Hodges, whose department included BPR, and Housing and Home Finance Administrator Robert C. Weaver "to increase their joint planning at every level, to improve coordination of urban renewal and freeway construction plans in the same area, and to invite the cooperative efforts of State and local highway and housing officials and private experts."

Moreover, Federal urban renewal law, enacted in 1949, required that every contract for Federal assistance include provisions assuring the availability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing at reasonable prices in suitable locations for all families displaced by urban renewal projects. This law did not apply to the Federal-aid highway program. President Kennedy recommended legislation to help families displaced by highway construction find "reasonable housing at reasonable costs, a problem that he said "has been largely overlooked."

Secretary Hodges and Administrator Weaver submitted their recommendations to the President on March 28, 1962. "Transportation," they said in the transmittal letter, "is one of the key factors in shaping our cities." Their report covered many topics, including the need for Federal aid for mass transit. The report included several recommendations for urban highway programs, the most important of which involved planning:

Beginning not later than July 1, 1965, approval of Federal-aid highway programs for projects in any metropolitan area should be made contingent upon a finding by the Secretary of Commerce that such projects are consistent with adequate, comprehensive

development plans for the metropolitan area or are based on results of a continuing process carried on cooperatively by the States and local communities and that the Federal-aid system so developed will be an integral part of a soundly based, balanced transportation system for the area involved.

Secretary Hodges and Administrator Weaver also recommended relocation assistance for those displaced by highway or mass transit projects. They wrote that according to BPR, 15,000 families and 1,500 businesses will be displaced each year in the next 6 to 8 years by Interstate construction:

Under the federally assisted urban renewal program, families must be assured the availability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing when they are displaced by demolition, code enforcement, and other urban renewal activities. Also the moving expenses of families and businesses are paid from Federal urban renewal program funds. For families needing such assistance, the average payment is about \$65. The average payment to businesses is about \$1,150.

In order to alleviate hardship caused by public action and to provide equity in treatment, provisions similar to those for urban renewal should be made in the Federal-aid highway program and also in other federally assisted programs causing displacements.

Hodges and Weaver also recommended additional funds for research and demonstration projects in urban transportation and especially mass transportation. "It is essential to stimulate and support experimentation with new equipment and systems to test their practicality and demonstrate their effectiveness in improving and reducing the total cost of urban transportation." ["Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1962," *Congressional Record-Senate*, September 13, 1962, p. 19339-19343]

On April 5, 1962, President Kennedy submitted a message to Congress on "The Transportation System of our Nation." The message began:

An efficient and dynamic transportation system is vital to our domestic economic growth, productivity, and progress.

The message was a broad statement that covered a wide range of topics, including freight shipments by land, air and water; international aviation and maritime issues; and labor relations for transportation workers. Among many recommendations, however, the President reiterated his concern about "the problems of families displaced by new highway construction." He cited Secretary Hodges' estimate that 15,000 families and 1,500 businesses were being displaced by Interstate construction each year.

In the interest of equity, President Kennedy recommended that "assistance and requirements similar to those now applicable to the urban renewal program be authorized for the Federal-aid highway program and the urban mass transportation program." The White House would submit legislation "to authorize payments not to exceed \$200 in the case of individuals and families and \$3,000 . . . in the case of business concerns or nonprofit organizations displaced as a result of



land acquisitions under these programs." (The payment for businesses could be higher based on moving costs.)

The President's message continued the pressure to find decent, safe, and sanitary homes for those displaced by highways. A June 1962 *Post* editorial illustrated the problem affecting the District's planned expressways:

After having waved off warnings for years the District Building, to its great surprise, is faced with a crisis. It cannot build further expressways until it is able to relocate the families displaced. And it has no very clear idea how to accomplish that feat.

The District had another problem:

Several new officials with a dislike in principle for highways took office just as the threatened neighborhoods were beginning to seek political spokesmen. Two of the three [District] Commissioners now decline to defend even their own highway budget requests, as though relocation were a hopeless task.

Horsky, not yet in his White House post, did not see the issue as impossible of solution. The editorial quoted a statement he had made a few days earlier:

I do not believe, that the relocation and housing problems to which government has suddenly waked up are insoluble—I do not believe we need abandon any of our fundamental plans—for the Inner Loop or anything else. The relocation and housing problems are ever so much more difficult than they should have been, but they can be met and solved. We can relocate and rehouse people displaced by government action, including highway building, if we are willing to recognize what has to be done, and then get together to do it.

The editorial concluded that, "there is no reason either to postpone highway planning or to delay a comprehensive housing program." ["No Excuse for Delay," *The Washington Post*, June 15, 1962]

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-866), which President Kennedy signed on October 23, included two important provisions his message had requested. Section 5 addressed the growing concern, cited by the President and many critical articles, about relocated individuals and businesses. Before approving a project, the Secretary would have to receive assurances that the State highway agency would provide advisory assistance for displaced families. He also was required to approve Federal-aid participation in relocation payments by the State to displaced individuals, families, business concerns, farms, and nonprofit organizations. The new law adopted the \$200 limit for individuals and families and \$3,000 for business or nonprofits that the President had proposed.

Even more important was Section 9, "Transportation Planning in Certain Urban Areas." It addressed the President's call for a means of ensuring that Federal-aid highway and mass transportation projects were part of a comprehensive and balanced urban transportation plan. The provision added Section 134 to Title 23, United States Code:

It is declared to be in the national interest to encourage and promote the development of transportation systems, embracing various modes of transport in a manner that will serve the States and local communities efficiently and effectively. To accomplish this objective the Secretary shall cooperate with the States, as authorized in this title, in the development of long-range highway plans and programs which are properly coordinated with plans for improvements in other affected forms of transportation and which are formulated with due consideration to their probable effect on the future development of urban areas of more than fifty thousand population. After July 1, 1965, the Secretary shall not approve under section 105 of this title any program for projects in any urban area of more than fifty thousand population unless he finds that such projects are based on a continuing comprehensive transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by States and local communities in conformance with the objectives stated in this section.

This section launched modern transportation planning by calling for what became known as the “3C” process (for continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative). The 3C process remains the core of Section 134, which now contains nearly 20 subsections.

This emphasis on metropolitan planning was one outgrowth of changes in attitudes toward the Interstate System. Once the impact on cities became real in the 1950s, city officials and others began calling for a moratorium to rethink the idea of urban expressway or consider canceling the controversial segments. The 3C planning process was seen as a way of rethinking the urban transportation network.

The problem local official faced was that aside from the 3C process, they would lose the Interstate funds if they did not use them to build unwanted Interstate segments. The funds would simply be shifted to other areas, including rural areas, where Interstate highways could be built.

Congress returned to the subject of relocations in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 (P.L. 86-657). The legislation included the first mandatory payment program for those who must relocate because of a Federal-aid highway project. The goal was to provide every citizen with decent, safe, and sanitary housing and to reduce the inequities of a strict application of the fair market value concept to right-of-way acquisitions. The 1968 changes were at the heart of the landmark Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646, Uniform Act), which covered all Federal agencies involved in right-of-way acquisition.

### **Awaiting NCTA’s Report**

The District, BPR, and Members of Congress proceeded with confidence that the freeway plans could be modified to mollify critics and then would be built. They thought the critics, as the *Post* editorial suggested, were misguided and misinformed.

This view was reflected in comments by Senator Jennings Randolph (D-WV), chairman of the Committee on Public Works, and a longtime road supporter dating to his days in the House of Representatives, during consideration of the proposed Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1962. (As discussed earlier, while in the House of Representatives in the 1940s, Randolph had played a key role in the debate over replacement of the Highway Bridge.) The proposed legislation would

provide a permanent program under the Housing and Home Finance Administration for aid to mass transit. He was responding to a NCTA request to delay action on the East Leg of the Inner Loop, the Northeast Freeway, a massive interchange “C” linking the Inner Loop with the Southeast Freeway via the East Leg, and the Three Sisters Bridge until NCTA completed studies due on November 1, 1962.

Senator Randolph said he was “much concerned about the consequences and disputes growing out of the quest for a utopian ‘balanced’ transportation system in urban areas.” Instead of “striving for so-called balance,” planners should be focusing on “an all-modes and all-facilities system based on progress, adequacy, and ability to meet needs.” He stressed that when he said “adequacy to meet needs,” he did not mean only rail and bus transit. The term also embraced accommodating the automobiles and commercial trucks that “will continue to virtually clog the highways of urban areas, no matter what is done in the field of mass transit by bus or rail.”

He strongly opposed halting planned freeways “while there is a search for a transportation system with a magical term,” namely balance. Instead of searching “for a will-o’-the-wisp ‘balanced’ transportation system embracing all appropriate modes of transport,” they should be searching for “something practical.”

He had to agree with a *Post* article that morning that described the Nation’s Capital as a place “where highway and transit partisans have been locked in a bitter dispute that has brought the city’s freeway program to a near standstill.” More so than any other urban area, the District was plagued by “the vexing problem growing out of exercises in semantics and of highway stagnation as a consequence of the efforts of mass transit advocates of delay.”

That very day, in fact, he had discussed the subject in a letter to Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV), chairman of the Subcommittee on District of Columbia, Committee on Appropriations. Referring to NCTA’s request for delay of the four projects, Senator Randolph said those trying to delay the District’s freeway program “apparently are obscuring a number of facts which should be brought into focus”:

The program was based on the balanced transportation system called for by the Mass Transit Survey Report, 1959, and approved by the National Capital Regional Planning Council. The proposed freeway network for the District of Columbia has been designed as part of a transportation system that is expected to include rapid transit by rail and nonrail. Actually, if there should not be brought into being a rapid transit program, the proposed freeway planning will of necessity have to be much enlarged.

Those who sought delays in highway development on the premise that “there is a question of highway versus nonhighway facilities” were subject to “an unfortunate mistake” because their view now threatened freeway construction and could threaten the rapid transit program. In establishing NCTA and directing it to study transit needs, Congress was calling for “the second part of the overall transport plan” because the highway phase had already begun.

Another misunderstanding was that transit could substitute for highways. Rail transit was being planned to accommodate commuters, but that was only one aspect of modern transportation.

Chairman Randolph said “an ever-growing volume of motor vehicle traffic of all types” must be served, and unless it was, the Washington area “will be faced with a staggering problem of traffic congestion.” Delaying the highway program until Congress decided on a subway system would mean that “no provisions will have been made for ever-mounting motor vehicle traffic that is not and never will be susceptible to subway travel.”

He urged Senator Byrd to ensure that the District’s highway program is “kept on schedule” in legislation appropriating the District’s matching share for Interstate and other Federal-aid highway projects:

Delays doubtless will lead to ultimate added costs rather than savings. Another probable byproduct of delays doubtless will be further deterioration of the downtown section and a resultant loss in revenues. And there should be avoidance of the possible loss of Interstate Highway System funds. [“Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1962,” *Congressional Record-Senate*, September 13, 1962, p. 19380-19381]

(Congress adjourned without approving the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1962. It was revived in the next Congress and, with some modifications, approved by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 9, 1964. The landmark Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-365) provided the foundation for all subsequent Federal-aid for transit.)

Congress did not take Senator Randolph’s advice. The House had deleted FY 1963 funds in compliance with a last-minute split among the District commissioners, two of whom had asked for delay until the housing issue could be resolved. The Senate, according to Senator Byrd, went along with the House because the commissioners had not asked his subcommittee to restore the funds. The subcommittee retained \$300,000 for the Three Sisters Bridge, contingent on NCTA’s support for the bridge.

### **Battle over the Inner Loop Freeway**

The National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 had called on NCTA to continue the work begun by NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council in the Mass Transportation Survey:

. . . and shall include further studies as may be necessitated by changed conditions, the availability of new techniques, and the response of Government agencies and the public to the transportation plan adopted by the Commission and Council. The Agency’s studies shall also include evaluation of the transportation system recommended in the transportation plan, and of alternative facilities and kinds of services.

In addition, NCTA was to complete a report to the President by November 1, 1962, containing “recommendations for organization and financial arrangements for transportation in the National Capital region”:

*Provided*, That any recommendations submitted by the Agency shall provide as far as possible for the payment of all costs by persons using or benefiting from regional

transportation facilities and services, and shall provide for the equitable sharing of any remaining costs among the Federal, State, and local governments.

In early 1960s, opposition to the Inner Loop began to grow as the District prepared to move forward. And Inner Loop had been part of the city's thoroughfare/freeway plans since the mid-1940s – a way of keeping through traffic out of downtown. The 1959 Mass Transportation Survey confirmed the concept by not only endorsing the Inner Loop but expanding it into a double loop as shown in BPR's September 1955 Yellow Book.

By then, however, cities around the country were experiencing protests against urban Interstates as well as the demand for mass transit as a substitute. In Washington, opponents could look to the pending NCTA report as grounds for delaying action on the freeways.

On October 5, 1961, NCPC took the surprise action of voting 4 to 2 to defer approval of four projects connected with the Inner Loop until NCPC's next meeting:

- East Leg running north-south between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets, SE.;
- Interchange "C" connecting the Southeast Freeway, the East Leg, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge;
- Center Leg, a north-south route under the National Mall just west of the Capitol; and
- South Leg of the Inner Loop between the Lincoln Memorial and the Southwest Freeway.

Commissioner Alexander C. Robinson III, an architect who lived in Cleveland, Ohio, and had joined NCPC in fall of 1959, had proposed the delay:

I've watched the damage done in other cities and I'm wondering whether there aren't better ways. I believe we are justified in taking another look at this, in the light of what is happening elsewhere, and finding out whether we really need all the Inner Loop projects that have been proposed, and whether we may not be spoiling the City of Washington.

NCPC staff had recommended approval of the four projects, but the majority of NCPC members decided to withhold action.

Lt. Colonel H. O. Webb, the District's Assistant Engineer Commissioner, voted against Robinson's motion. "If these projects are recommended to be cut out, this just further delays the planning of the work." He was confident NCPC would approve the projects for inclusion in the District's budget. By the time of NCPC's next meeting, he added, the four links would have been considered during a planned public hearing on the District's 1963 budget proposal to Congress (Colonel Carl H. Bronn of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was the other "no" vote.)

While deferring action on the Inner Loop, NCPC approved including \$3 million in the District's 1963 budget request for the start of construction of the Three Sisters Bridges. [Lewis, Roger J., "Damage by Inner Loop Feared by Planners," *The Evening Star*, October 6, 1961]

Shortly after NCPC's decision to delay action, other groups expressed their views on highway projects versus other needs in the city. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and others attending the budget public hearing on October 10 urged the District to shift money from the

Highway Department's "hog-wild" construction program to school construction. District funds for highways came from its highway fund, but these commenters observed that the city used general revenue to supplement the highway fund to pay for items such as street lighting and traffic police. They wanted the city to use the general funds for schools and for the highway fund to repay the city for general revenues used for highway purposes.

The PTA's Dr. Ellis Haworth told the District commissioners that if the Highway Department were allowed to continue with its plans, they would "leave the District with no land privately owned." He said, "The whole question reduces to a matter of relative values: People versus highways." Mrs. Rolland G. Lemensdorf, legislative chairman of the Ben Murch Home and School Association, added that, "the fight for our civilization will not take place in new cars on new highways; it will take place in the minds of men."

Arnold Sternberg of the District Democratic Central Committee suggested that some sewer projects the city was financing with general revenue should be charged to the highway funds. He cited the sewer work that would be included in the four Inner Loop freeway projects included in the budget.

The *Star's* coverage of the hearing added:

At the end of the day-long hearing, a weary Engineer Commissioner Frederick J. Clarke, who has jurisdiction over the Highway Department, rose and remarked wryly: "Well, back to the drawing board."

Speaking seriously, Gen. Clarke said he believes that the highway program recommended is "properly balanced." ["Roads Funds Transfer Sought for D.C. Schools," *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1961; "Divert Funds For Schools, District Urged," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 11, 1961]

The Fine Arts Commission issued a statement saying the Inner Loop system would cause "irreparable damage to the city's appearance." The commission appreciated NCPC's decision to defer action. Chairman Finley said:

The Commission of Fine Arts has never approved the Inner Loop . . . which we feel will be destructive to the beauty of the city. The commission has advocated instead, an underground rapid transit system which, if adopted, we feel would meet our traffic needs without irreparable damage to the city's appearance. [Lewis, Robert J., "Fine Arts Unit Hits Plan for Inner Loop," *The Evening Star*, October 18, 1961]

The American Institute of Architects also urged the city to adopt rapid-transit instead of the Inner Loop. "If we adopt the rapid-transit solution as a first resort—instead of as a last resort—we may never have to go ahead with any part of the Inner Loop system that is not now under construction." ["AIA Asks Rapid Transit Priority, Opposes Loop," *The Evening Star*, October 21, 1961]

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City called for "a thorough evaluation of the probable impact of the Inner Loop on the appearance of the National Capital and the lives and property of

its inhabitants.” At the same time, the Northwest Committee for Transportation Planning issued a 50-page study opposing the Inner Loop and calling for a “complete re-evaluation” of the District’s highway program. “The Inner Loop and related street widenings and arterial freeways would not solve traffic congestion problems, but would create an even worse strangulation of automobile traffic,” according to the report. [“3 Groups Join Protest Of Inner Loop Plans,” *The Evening Star*, October 27, 1961]

In reaction to NCPC’s deferral of a decision, the *Star* described “a chain reaction among groups who have opposed freeway construction.” Nevertheless, the District commissioners voted on October 28 to include funds in the 1963 budget for freeway construction. The request included \$700,000 for the Inner Loop. A District highway official said, “Our highway program faces its most critical period.” Engineer Commissioner Clarke hoped that the “swelling of sentiment” against freeways would not block construction of the Inner Loop. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Funds for Inner Loop Are Sought by D.C.,” *The Sunday Star*, October 29, 1961]

NCPC met on November 9 to consider the deferred highway projects. Engineer Commissioner Clarke defended the Inner Loop, saying its critics lacked facts. “I do not know of any facts or studies which are available today upon which one could logically base a request for reconsideration.” Opposition by NCPC “would be a renunciation” of its responsibility to provide sound planning guidance. “It would create an atmosphere of uncertainty throughout the region and a loss of faith in the guidance of the National Capital Planning Commission and the Regional Planning Council,” as reflected in the Mass Transportation Survey.

He responded to those who objected to the Inner Loop on aesthetic grounds by saying that the District had appointed an advisory board of architects to review all designs. He also supported rapid transit:

In this manner, we can provide, on a timely basis, the highways that are needed in addition to rapid transit. At best rapid transit is a substantial number of years away but also needs to be energetically planned and developed.

He continued, “The fact that freeways are designed to correct ugliness and congestion should in the long run tend to overcome most, if not all, the short run disadvantages so often cited by those directly affected.”

If NCPC approved the delay, the same groups pressing for delay now would “press for continual delay or abandonment.” He added, “Delay, once initiated, could well be prolonged until the crisis in transportation dictated that a crash program be undertaken.” Failure to build the freeways would “make the city a less desirable place to live and visit in and thereby reduce business activity, property values, and offer further encouragement to the growth of slum areas.”

Testifying during the hearing, NCTA’s Stolzenbach called for a 1-year delay in new freeway construction to allow his agency to re-evaluate all transportation planning for the region. Delaying the Three Sisters Bridge was “absolutely essential if any serious re-evaluation is to be made” of the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey. The Year 2000 Plan “postulates a whole new

set of assumptions as to the future growth of the region,” requiring NCTA to rethink all decisions:

Do we want a strong central city? Do we want to limit urban sprawl? If we do, we have to design a transportation system to accomplish these goals. The 1959 transportation plan made no such effort. It is merely a stepping stone.

The studies NCTA was undertaking would determine which freeway projects should continue:

The important point is that the agency and others concerned with regional planning should have a year’s time in which to develop recommendations. There is no pressing need for either of these projects [the Three Sisters Bridge or interchange “C”]. Both are links connecting roads whose construction will not begin until fiscal year 1966 – four years from now.

On the other hand, construction of these two projects will mean that the 1959 transportation plan has become a reality.

BPR’s Joseph Barnett, an alternate member of NCPC, said that failure to complete the Inner Loop would mean that the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway leading into the K Street Expressway would no longer qualify as part of the Interstate System – they would not be connected to it. Without them, the District faced the “horrible prospect” that trucks would have to be allowed on the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge and the roadways around the Lincoln Memorial. Without the North and West Legs of the Inner Loop, I-66 would not have an entrance into the city. Barnett said NCPC had a responsibility “to support, rather than hinder, the agencies now executing the very plan we ourselves helped to create and which we approved” in the Mass Transportation Survey. Not doing so would be “sheer folly and a waste of funds.”

Downtown Progress, formally the National Capital Downtown Committee when established by downtown businesses in July 1959, supported the Inner Loop, saying that failure to build it could mean the death of downtown. The freeways would “identify clearly the boundaries of the urban renewal areas in the downtown” and help finance the cost of renewal. (Established over 2 years earlier, Downtown Progress was an organization of businessmen working under the auspices of the Federal City Council and NCPC.)

Finley of the Fine Arts Commission told NCPC that, “The city is being changed to fit the standard pattern of highway engineers, rather than to conform to the Washington plan – so long established.” He felt that Congress had given NCTA a “mandate” to re-evaluate the “entire transportation plan for Washington and the surrounding area.” He said, “That mandate should be carried out.” As for the Inner Loop, it would “not only mar the beauty of Washington but will be destructive of the L’Enfant Plan.” Rapid transit would be “the most effective and least damaging means of providing access to those parts of the city where Government buildings or commercial interests are located.”

Finley said that the beauty of the National capital “should not be sacrificed by cutting the city into islands in an effort to meet the traffic needs of local inhabitants or those who live in nearby



suburban areas.” He urged the District Highway Department to submit a scale model of the Inner Loop “showing the full extent of the proposed changes and citing also the number of houses and families to be displaced, the loss in taxable property and the added expense to the city in maintaining these freeways.” These were facts the public and the Congress deserved to have when “faced with such vast changes in the city’s appearance, accomplished piecemeal.”

NCPC voted unanimously on October 10 to approve the Inner Loop projects. The vote on the Center Leg was unanimous, but the new NCPC chairman, Mrs. Rowe, abstained; she later said she opposed the Center Leg. (The White House had announced her elevation from member to chairman on October 9 while NCPC’s all-day hearing was underway.) The vote for interchange “C” was tied to three stipulations. Before NCPC would approve advertising for bids, NCPC wanted to see a model of the interchange and the East Leg to ensure it would “enhance the beauty and livability” of the city. The architectural treatment also would be subject to NCPC approval.

With NCPC’s approval, the District was free to include funds for the projects in its 1963 budget proposal. The District had intended to do so in any event, since NCPC’s views were only advisory, but its support was helpful during congressional review of the budget requests.

Commission members Robinson, who had requested the deferral of a decision, C. McKim Norton, and A.M. Woodruff issued a statement saying, “No fresh evidence has been presented yet which casts any doubt on the validity of the general concept of the Inner Loop.” However, Robinson said that planners would “watch very carefully just what the impact of the loop is going to be on the city.” He appreciated the opportunity to reconsider the plan. “It has been a most useful timeout.”

NCPC took no action on the Three Sisters Bridge, leaving in place its October approval of the District’s budget request to begin construction in place. [Gimble, Gilbert, “Clarke Assails Effort to Delay Loop Freeway,” *The Evening Star*, November 9, 1961; Gimble, Gilbert, “Planners Approve Inner Loop Projects,” *The Evening Star*, November 10, 1961]

(On November 9, in the midst of the hectic NCPC hearing, a letter designating Mrs. Rowe as chairman arrived around 2 p.m. Daniel H. Shear, NCPC’s general counsel, read the letter to the record-breaking crowd, which applauded the announcement that she now was chairman. Later, she told reporters, “I was shaking in my shoes but I tried not to show it.” The *Star* reported:

Her first day as chairman was one of the busiest and most controversy-filled commission meetings of recent years. It took up the much-debated Inner Loop expressway issue, and was forced by the wealth of testimony to postpone a final decision until a second-day session this morning.

“In spite of the differences of opinion expressed on the Inner Loop question, there was not any name-calling or wrangling—and for this I was very glad,” Mrs. Rowe said. “I would hate to have to gavel anyone down.” [Lewis, Robert J., “Mrs. Rowe Presides Over Planners On Hectic Day, But Keeps Aplomb,” *The Evening Star*, November 10, 1961]

In an editorial, the *Star* concluded that the flareup of opposition between the October and November NCPC meetings “has done more good than harm.” That was because NCPC had approved inclusion of the Inner Loop projects in the 1963 budget request:

Had the commission suddenly turned about-face and asked pointlessly for delay in what it long since had tacitly approved, it would have invited a storm of protest capable of doing great injury to the commission’s own prestige and lessening its influence at a time when it should be strengthened.

One advantage of the month-long delay was that the highway planners now “have been made fully aware that a considerable body of public opinion is increasingly skeptical” of their claims for urban freeways.” Highway engineers had “doubtless” explored and disposed of, to their own satisfaction, criticisms about displaced families, the land to be seized, aesthetic impacts, and the “huge expenditure required.” However, the engineers need to seek better understanding by the public. The editorial concluded:

What is done in Washington must be the best that can be done. If the many agencies involved, including the Planning Commission and the Fine Arts Commission, work together with that end in view, there is considerable assurance that only the best will be acceptable. [“Wise Decision on the Loop,” *The Evening Star*, November 11, 1961]

### **Trying to Get Started**

With the NCPC clearance, the District commissioners approved the routes for the East Leg of the Inner Loop and the Northeast Freeway on November 14. The *Star* reported:

The route of the east leg, which includes a massive interchange near its southern end, will run between Tenth and Eleventh streets S.E. from the Anacostia River to Tenth street and Florida avenue N.E.

The Northeast Freeway shoots northward from the east leg to tie-in with the third route to Baltimore. It will run just east of Gallaudet College and then run parallel to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks in Brookland before reaching the District line.

The approved budget proposal for 1963 included \$1.5 million for engineering work on the Northeast Freeway as well as \$3 million for right-of-way acquisition. It also included \$700,000 for engineering work on the East Leg, \$1 million for acquisition of right-of-way, and over \$2 million to acquire right-of-way for interchange “C” as well as \$3 million for its construction.

With this funding, the city expected to begin construction of the East Leg and the Northeast Freeway in July 1964, subject to congressional approval of the District matching funds. Aitken promised “we will make a sincere attempt to make them esthetically acceptable. They will be designed to make surrounding areas livable.” [“City Heads Approve Two Highway Links,” *The Evening Star*, November 14, 1961]

Despite these actions, Stolzenbach took his request for a delay on the Three Sisters Bridge and interchange “C” to the Budget Bureau. He met on December 11 with the bureau’s Phillip S.

Hughes, District commissioners Walter N. Tobriner and General Clarke, and NCPC chairman Rowe. However, the bureau rejected the request to remove funding for the projects from the District's 1963 budget request. ["U.S. Insists On Highway Projects Here," *The Evening Star*, November 15, 1961]

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City also refused to give up. Late in December, the committee's chairman, Neill Phillips, wrote to Rowe urging NCPC to withdraw approval of "all pending highway projects" in the District, particularly the four Inner Loop projects included in the District's 1963 budget proposal. NCPC, Phillips wrote, should direct its staff to study land-use in the District and how transportation projects of the past 20 years had affected the city's fiscal affairs. The Inner Loop and all future projects should be evaluated based on their total impact on the District and surrounding communities. This would be in contrast with the District Highway Department, which "expedited" projects by "several years" and considered them only based on impacts on motor vehicles. In addition, NCPC should consider planned highway projects in consultation with NCTA.

The committee's road committee had drafted the letter. Peter Craig, a member of the committee, said the Committee of 100 would discuss the issue in January. ["Planning Unit Asked to Halt Loop Backing," *The Evening Star*, December 29, 1961]

On January 15, 1962, the Committee of 100 held a special meeting to reconsider its letter to NCPC. Harland Bartholomew told the 50 members in attendance that the letter to Mrs. Rowe contained what he called "misinterpretation" and "mis-statements." He said NCTA was not created to develop a new transportation plan but only to proceed with the transit development program. NCPC's William Finley agreed with committee members who were concerned about the beauty of the city. He urged the committee to remain concerned with the "beautification and design" of freeway and rapid transit projects. However, NCPC was not reconsidering its decision to approve inclusion of Inner Loop projects in the 1963 budget proposal.

Toward the end of the 2 and a half hour debate, Bartholomew offered a motion urging close cooperation among NCPC, NCTA, and BPR in developing a transit program. In the end, the committee adjourned soon after, leaving the motion without a vote and leaving the letter to NCPC as the Committee of 100's position. ["Road Stand Unchanged By Federal City Unit," *The Evening Star*, January 16, 1962]

On February 16, the Committee of 100 adopted a resolution urging NCPC, NCTA, and BPR to make "every concerted effort to work out" a transportation plan for the area. [Lewis, Roger J., "Biddle Urges Support Of Roosevelt Memorial," *The Evening Star*, February 17, 1962]

On January 25, Downtown Progress released its plan, "Downtown Streets and Places," for transforming central Washington's downtown core. Doxiadis Associates, headed by internationally known city planner Constantine Doxiadis of Greece, had developed the plan.

As Gutheim and Lee explained:

Downtown Progress was prompted by what ailed the downtown. Not only was retail activity leaving the downtown, but also the downtown was expanding to the northwest, from the White House westward to Rock Creek Park. In 1963 Architecture Forum reported that although \$228 million of new construction occurred west of 15th Street, only \$32 million was invested east of 15th Street. Corporations and trade associations facilitated the shift of downtown along K Street, Connecticut Avenue, and Farragut Square, where land was cheaper and easier to assemble.

The plan, developed at a cost of \$500,000, called for a subway and expressways, the use of rapid transit buses, and a system of 10-seat jitneys operating every minute. Several streets would be rebuilt in tunnels (14<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets) between E and H Streets below the central shopping district. The area would be reserved for pedestrians and jitneys. Other streets would be combined in one-way pairs that, along with the Center Leg, would free the central area of through traffic. The plan supported the Inner Loop in its entirety.

The plan went beyond transportation in calling for a Massachusetts Avenue visitors' center near Union Station and a new central library, convention hall and exhibit space, law school, churches, and an apartment complex in Mount Vernon Square East and South.

In January 1963, one small part of the plan was launched. D.C. Transit Systems, the city's bus company, began operating a jitney or minibus on F Street, NW., with 14 more due to extend the route to G Street in midsummer. The company planned to operate them in a loop on the two streets between 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets. The fare was 5 cents.

Downtown Progress's plan called for F and G Streets to be predominantly for pedestrians and minibuses. Parking garages would be built on E and H Streets to accommodate the vehicles that would no longer be permitted on F and G Streets. The sizable passageways or arcades between F and G Streets would provide easier access for shoppers. Downtown Progress saw the pedestrian zone as a demonstration for full-scale implementation of the idea in other parts of the city. Expansion was dependent on construction of subway lines along F and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, construction of the Center Leg Freeway along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, adoption of one-way streets, provision of underpasses for streets in the downtown core at 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets, and tunnels for truck deliveries to F and G Street stores.

In the organization's third annual meeting at the Statler Hilton Hotel on January 31, 1963, Executive Director Knox Banner said "the key requirement" for further elements of the plan was congressional action to declare the downtown core an urban renewal area:

Only under an urban renewal plan will it be possible to construct the public improvements, to accomplish the needed zoning changes and to provide positive guides for the co-ordination of public action and for the development of private property that will be required to accomplish the revitalization of downtown.

According to Gutheim and Lee, the plan was more descriptive than effective:

Although no direct result can be ascribed to the action plan, it consolidated many recommendations and observations of the early 1960s and described the downtown at the time: a place with waning businesses, declining property values, and a poor appearance. The action plan also made the case for designating the downtown an urban renewal area so that public powers could bring about land acquisition and clearance.

[Lewis, Robert J., "Plans Drafted To Modernize Business Area," and Gimble, Gilbert, "One-Way Street Plans To Get Prompt Action," *The Evening Star*, January 25, 1962; Lewis, Robert J., "Minibus Test Begins Change for Downtown," *The Evening Star*, January 31, 1963; Gutheim and Lee, pages 293-294]

On January 31, Miss May Craig, a reporter known for asking tough and oddball questions at presidential press conferences since the early days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, asked President Kennedy:

Mr. President, visitors who go out to visit Lincoln Park on East Capitol Street are dismayed to find it a slum. Congress has authorized and the National Council of Negro Women will erect there a memorial stadium and a statue of the great woman educator, Mary Bethune. Now the transit company [sic] proposes to put an eight lane freeway between the park and the Capitol, cutting it off. Could you inquire into that, and see if the freeway could be put further out beyond the park?

President Kennedy replied, "Yes, I will," with the transcript noting: "[Laughter]." He added, "You're very gentle today, Mrs. Craig."

The President's aides asked the District Highway Department for information on the issue. The District provided the information comparing the costs and impacts on homes of the three East Leg routes that had been studied. The chosen route was the least costly and disruptive of the three. ["White House Gets Loop East Leg Data," *The Evening Star*, February 21, 1962]

Miss Craig's question also prompted the Capitol Hill Community Council to follow up with a letter to the President opposing the planned location of the East Leg, which would eliminate Lincoln Park. In addition, J. Richard Earle, the president of the Capitol Hill Southeast Citizens Association sent a telegram to the President on February 23 asking him to turn down the East Leg route proposed by the District commissioners. No decision, Earle said, should be made before NCTA releases its report. The chosen Eleventh Street route "fails to provide for the convenience of patrons and relief of heavy street traffic" from motorists using the National Guard Armory, D.C. Stadium, and the roads to Annapolis and Baltimore. The route should be moved east to service these facilities and freeways. ["Capitol Group Hits Road Plan," *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1962; "Kennedy Receives East Leg Route Citizen Protest," *The Evening Star*, February 23, 1962]

On March 13, those two associations met with three others to unite in opposition to the East Leg of the Inner Loop. Their initial goal was to delay planning, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the East Leg, including interchange "C," until NCTA released its report. The *Star* reported:

Last night's discussion brought out agreement on the need for an Inner Loop system, but the proposed Eleventh street route was unanimously rejected. A majority felt a route along the Anacostia River to the East Capitol Street Bridge would cause less tax loss, property depreciation and rehousing difficulty. However, the group decided not to seek a specific route now.

The Public Interest Civic Association, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, and the Southeast Kiwanis Club also joined the fight. ["Inner Loop Route Opposed by Citizen Delegates," *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1962]

District highway officials reached out to the groups to counter the criticism of the East Leg routing. On March 13, Lloyd A. Rivard, assistant chief engineer for planning and programs, addressed the Southeast Business's Association and Southeast Council of Citizens Association. The East Leg, he said, would be depressed 20 feet for much of its length. "This will minimize noise and unsightliness." He added that the highway system would "benefit everyone in the D.C. area."

On March 21, General Clarke went to St. Luke's Church to address 300 Capitol Hill residents, mostly members of the Capitol Hill Community Council. The *Star* described his presentation:

Brandishing a pointer at charts of the loop, the Commissioner indicated a black line stretching between Tenth and Eleventh streets, seven blocks from where he stood.

"This area is comprised of property which has less value historically and financially than the alternate nineteenth street route."

He added, "It's cheaper":

Gen. Clarke outlined the history of the plans for the loop, showing color slides of property on the Eleventh and Nineteenth street locations. The slides, said Gen. Clarke, were shown to the Commissioners as evidence to support the property value theory which in part influenced their decision.

The Commissioner faced an hour-long question period in which citizens claimed that the current trend of restoration on Capitol Hill, if allowed to continue eastward, would increase general property value in the neighborhood.

Residents had been encouraged by the White House review that Miss Craig's question to President Kennedy had prompted:

The President directed an inquiry, but a letter from the White House to the council read to the group last night, indorsed the Commissioners' plans for the east leg. ["East Leg Held Not Disruptive," *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1962; "Hill Community Hears Clarke Defend East Leg," *The Evening Star*, March 22, 1962]

General Clarke did not convince the Capitol Hill Community Council. On April 2, its president, Paul Beatley, asked the Public Interest Civic Group to join its efforts to shift the route of the East

Leg. He told the group that only a concerted effort could stop the planned path. The group accepted the invitation unanimously. ["United Effort On Loop Advised," *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1962]

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City continued its opposition on April 25, again urging NCPC to reject acceleration of construction plans for I-266 (the Potomac River Freeway including the Three Sisters Bridge) and I-95, "which would include the East Leg of the Inner Loop and the Northeast Freeway [extending] from the proposed Interchange 'C' at the foot of Eleventh street N.E. north through the eastern part of the city and provide a third route to Baltimore." The plans were, the committee stated, "completely premature." ["Committee of 100 Hits Expressways Speedup," *The Evening Star*, April 26, 1962]

As the House District Appropriations Subcommittee prepared to open three days of hearings on the District highway budget on May 22, District officials received an advance warning about what to expect. Representative Frank W. Burke (D-Ky.) inserted a 30-minute colloquy into the *Congressional Record* on May 21 with Representative Basil L. Whitener (D-NC), a lawyer from Gastonia and a State legislator who had been elected to the House in 1956. According to Schrag:

He was a freeway skeptic, having represented law clients displaced by highway construction. Moreover, his administrative assistant was a train buff who urged his boss to support rail transit. [Schrag, page 48]

Representative Burke was a member of the District Committee's Subcommittee on Traffic, Streets, and Highways, of which Representative Whitener was chairman. "At this moment," Representative Burke said, "proposals are pending in the Congress which will determine the future of the Capital City for generations." He wanted to take this time "to make abundantly clear exactly what is involved" in the District commissioners' request for financing of highway construction.

He summarized the District's highway proposals. In January 1961, the commissioners asked for \$9.8 million for highway expenditures in FY 1963, to match \$13 million in Federal-aid highway funds for a total expenditure of \$22.8 million. In January 1962, the commissioners asked for \$10,723,000 of District funds to combine with Federal-aid highway funds for a total of \$64,758,000 for 1963. "The striking fact" is that in 12 months, the District commissioners had increased their request for 1963 by nearly \$23 million, "and the important factor to note about this frantic effort is that a similar increase is proposed for each of the next 5 fiscal years." He added, "There is a great deal more involved here than expenditures of large sums of money."

As Representative Burke began discussing NCTA's legislative mandate, Chairman Whitener asked him to yield. He recognized that Representative Burke was "sounding a warning here about a matter which can have serious repercussions in the District of Columbia," especially in view of the "many unresolved issues with reference to the mass transportation policies which we shall follow in the future." From discussions with NCTA, Chairman Whitener understood "they are ambitious to have a program which will move great masses of people with great speed in and out of the District of Columbia." Details were yet to be worked out:

It seems to me, however, that until we have a fixed policy established as to what mass transportation steps will be taken, it is rather difficult for anyone to project his mind into the future and determine just how many of these expressways or superhighways, which swallow up so much valuable taxable property and displace so many people, should be adopted as a policy with reference to vehicular traffic.

Representative Burke agreed. With NCTA not scheduled to report on the balance of transit and highway needs and present a mass transit program until November, "I think the gentleman has put his finger right on the key matter involved here in this greatly accelerated proposal for highway construction."

Chairman Whitener said:

I think it is no secret that the chairman of our committee has suggested to the subcommittee that within the next few weeks we commence a study of the street and highway problem here in the District. No one can seriously question that some changes and some improvements need to be made.

He was not taking a position on whether Congress should stand completely by, but rather urging that Congress make haste "with judgment and with discretion." Proceeding in the haste of the District commissioners and other governing authorities in the city might lead to "things which would not be in the best interests of the public and things which we would hope [the city] would not do which would prove to be inordinately expensive and not bring about the results which we all, I am sure, join with the Commissioners in hoping they will bring about."

Returning to congressional intent with NCTA, Representative Burke explained that Congress "stated that an improved transportation system for the National Capital requires, with planning on a regional basis, a unified system of freeways, parkways, express transit service, and other major transportation facilities." Implicit in this mandate was that "additional highways should be built in accordance with a program which would allow the National Capital Transportation Agency to perform effectively the job which Congress gave it":

Under the accelerated highway program which would be undertaken if the Congress approves the current District budget request, construction would very likely make obsolete the November report of the National Capital Transportation Agency even before it is completed.

The request for interchange "C" was an example. The District requested \$3.2 million to begin construction in 1963:

Once this key interchange is committed, the whole interloop pattern is established to a degree which would be beyond reasonable adaptation no matter what might be discovered by virtue of the transit study which the law requires be delivered to Congress in less than 6 months. To take 40 acres of completely urban, intensely developed, densely occupied land in southeast Washington at this time is a step which should not be taken until everyone is completely certain that it is a proper step.



The result would be the displacement of large numbers of families and loss of valuable properties from the tax rolls – all so interchange “C” can “be built ahead of its originally proposed date for suggested reasons which are wholly inadequate.”

Displacement of people was a serious problem:

Those who have been forced from their homes by highway construction, by the construction of public buildings and by urban renewal programs present one of local government’s most vexing problems, and yet in a pell mell rush to accelerate the highway program[,] multiplication of the problem of relocation is obviously done for no adequate reason.

He emphasized that he was not opposed to the District’s highway program; he was saying only that “the proposed acceleration which would be brought about by the budget requests is poorly timed and extremely unwise.” He cited the expressways to be built just west of the Capitol grounds and between the Tidal Basin and the Washington Monument:

It may be necessary to build every one of these roads; it may be necessary to displace the additional thousands of families who would be involved; it may be necessary to remove these millions and millions of dollars worth of property from the tax rolls; it may be necessary to surround and bisect the very heart of Washington with highways, but it is not necessary to commit the District government to these specific plans from which deviation would be almost impossible, in advance of the submission to the Congress of the report of the National Capital Transportation Agency next November. One is tempted to say to the Commissioners, “What’s the big hurry?”

When the District’s budget for 1963 was considered, the Members of the House should understand that the proposed acceleration of highway expenditures involved “obviously the tying down of future major roads.” Not approving the accelerated funding would allow “full benefit to be taken of “NCTA’s report “so that all of the planning for every means of moving persons and goods in the District be used to its fullest benefit.” [Governing the District of Columbia, *Congressional Record-House*, May 21, 1962, pages 8836-8828]

## **The Switch**

On May 22, the District Appropriations Subcommittee, headed by Representative William H. Natcher (D-Ky.), began public hearings on the full range of the District budget. On this first day, however, most of the 33 witnesses addressed the freeway debate. Subcommittee members did not reveal their views or even question the witnesses. The *Star* summarized the witnesses, such as:

F. Joseph Donohue, Citizens Traffic Board—If the program for freeways is destroyed it will destroy the core of the city. Don’t slow it down.

Peter Glickert, Capitol Hill Southeast Citizens Association—Traffic problems have been created by poor planning. The east leg of the Inner Loop should be placed on the west bank of the Anacostia River.

Eugene I. Kane, D.C. Trucking Association—Expeditious construction of the proposed freeway system in the District is essential to the continued growth and development of the Metropolitan Area, and most important to the preservation of the downtown section of the city.

Arthur E. Miller, American Automobile Association—Both freeways and subways are needed. But I cannot stress too strongly the importance of completing the Inner Loop without any period of delay.

Mrs. Harold Hinton, Georgetown Progressive Citizens Association—The Three Sisters Bridge should not be built. It would only serve to draw more traffic into Georgetown and we've got all we can take now.

Peter S. Craig, Northwest Committee for Transportation—We support the city-wide revolt against the hasty construction of freeways. Recommendations by NCTA should be awaited. By moving ahead, tax revenues for schools and public welfare will be diverted.

James H. Flanagan, Vice President, D.C. Transit—Highway plans should be approved. Rapid bus service over freeways is a prime requisite if more people are to be persuaded to leave their automobiles at home and use transit.

Among the divided voices, the *Star's* Lee Flor highlighted two first-day witnesses. One was Mrs. Polly Shackleton, a member of the executive committee of the Democratic Central Committee. During testimony on May 23, she made clear to the District Appropriations Subcommittee that her group was not simply waiting for a balanced system:

Not only are we deeply concerned about the overall dollar cost—which is way out of proportion to the funds proposed for the education, welfare, recreational, and health needs of the District—but we are shocked by the inhumanity and utter ruthlessness of this highway program.

Because of the impact on displacees, she urged the subcommittee not to fund five projects:

1. Interchange "C"
2. Potomac River Freeway
3. Three Sisters Bridge
4. Northeast Freeway
5. East Leg, Inner Loop Freeway

She added:

I do wish to make clear that we are not opposing these expenditures because we are against progress, or, as has been bruited about, that philosophically we just are 'agin highways."

Clearly a solution must be found for the area's transportation problems. "Certainly this is what Congress had in mind when it created the National Capital Transportation Agency and directed it to establish and coordinate a balanced transportation program." In defiance of this congressional intent, the District proposed to accelerate these projects. She speculated that "one of the tricks of the trade when massive long-range highway programs are projected is for the roadbuilders to get

certain key elements such as interchanges and bridges into place as quickly as possible, thereby committing [sic] irrevocably the overall program.” But whatever the motivation, she said:

I think there is far too much at stake, in human terms, to assume at this juncture that the Highway Department’s solution to the area’s transportation problems is correct, much less that it is the only solution.

If the Highway Department was correct, why did Congress go to the trouble of creating NCTA; was it “a useless gesture”?

Although NCTA was not going to report until November, NCTA had already publicly opposed the Three Sisters Bridge and interchange “C.” In a statement on November 9, 1961, to NCPC, NCTA said, “delay of these two projects is absolutely essential if any serious reevaluation is to be made of the 1959 transportation plan.”

Mrs. Shackleton applied the same reasoning to the Potomac River Freeway, which was so closely linked to the Three Sisters Bridge. The District Highway Department, she said, was “quite responsive to the assumed needs of automobiles,” but exhibited “no concern over the effects of its program on one of the Nation’s Capital [sic] most compelling human needs—the need for decent, safe, and sanitary housing for its residents.” At a time when housing for low-income families was “at crisis stage,” the District already planned to evict 90 families from the Ellen Wilson public housing project to make way for the Southeast Expressway. It was too late to stop that project, but not too late to delay the East Leg and Northeast Freeway.

She said the District had not revealed how many people would be displaced by the East Leg, but the Washington Urban League’s block-by-block analysis based on the 1960 census reveals that the East Leg and Northeast Freeway would displace about 10,680 people. “Where will these people go to find decent and sanitary housing in the District of Columbia?” [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1906, June 22, 1962, pages 1325-1328]

Flor also cited Harland Bartholomew, once again primarily an urban consultant. He said that postponing the freeway projects until NCTA reports its findings in November would be “the height of absurdity.” He did not believe NCTA would devise a radically new plan, and any differences between that plan and the Mass Transportation Survey’s plan could easily be settled.

The District, Bartholomew added, should take advantage of the additional appropriations Congress had authorized for the Interstate System. L’Enfant’s 1800 street plan stands as a monument, but must be updated to meet modern needs. Doing so would inevitably disrupt some aesthetic values, families, and businesses, but good design can enhance appearances and relocation initiatives can help families and businesses. He added that the Inner Loop will not be the disruptive force its critics claim. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, pages 1385-1389; “House D.C. Unit to Explore Potential of 1-Way Streets,” *The Evening Star*, May 23, 1962; Flor, Lee, “Debate on D.C. Roads Flares at Budget Airing,” *The Evening Star*, May 23, 1962]

During the evening public hearing on May 23, citizens offered views on a variety of subjects. A few speakers addressed the freeway program, with most supportive, while a few urged delay.

However, the big freeway news was a shocking reversal reported on May 24 on page one of the *Star* and on page one of the *Post* on May 25. The District's Board of Commissioners had attended a closed session of the Appropriations subcommittee on May 21 to discuss the 1963 budget. Reporters saw General Clarke arrive carrying rolled highway maps he planned to use to defend the 11<sup>th</sup> Street routing of the East Leg.

As reported on May 24 based on an anonymous subcommittee source, Commissioner Tobriner told the District Appropriations Subcommittee that he had changed his mind. He now wanted to halt plans to build the East Leg of the Inner Loop in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. He wanted to shift the freeway to a location west of the Anacostia River. Such a shift would require major rethinking on the design of interchange "C," which the *Post* called "the massive interchange which would be the capstone of the Inner Loop."

The following excerpts of the discussion, released in June, is from the three District commissioners' testimony before Chairman Natcher and Representative John J. Rhodes (D-Az.):

Commissioner Tobriner: I do feel that some pause ought to be given to the location of the east leg. Of two routes considered, the Eleventh street route is the best. There is a third choice which would dislocate fewer families. This would go along the [Anacostia] parkway, past the stadium, into the Arboretum and back to the other line of the Inner Loop.

Chairman Natcher: Do you want the \$546,700 for interchange "C" and \$170,000 for the east leg held in abeyance?

Tobriner: I would have to say so, sir.

Representative Rhodes (R-Az.): How many families will be displaced by the two projects?

General Clarke: About 350 families

Tobriner: That is only part.

General Clarke: Mr. Tobriner speaks, of course, as only one member of the Board of Commissioners.

Tobriner: The possibility that the National Capital Housing Authority will catch up with the dislocatees is very remote.

General Clarke: Very frankly, we are talking of a three-year delay as a minimum in the highway program, with much disadvantage to our neighboring States who are building to meet us at the District line. While Mr. Tobriner has discussed his concern about the displaced families with me, I must admit I am caught by surprise by his recommendation that we abandon the program completely.

Commissioner John B. Duncan: Being unprepared, the only thing I could ask at this time is an opportunity to think it through further and submit a statement for the record.

He later informed the subcommittee, "After giving this matter a great deal of thought, I agree with Mr. Tobriner":

Representative Rhodes: To clarify the disagreement, is Mr. Tobriner opposed to interchange "C." [sic]

Tobriner: No. I am in favor of a redesign so it will be a T-shape interchange. The original interchange would take about 38 acres, and the redesign about 22 acres.

Representative Rhodes: Mr. Tobriner, this makes me wonder what you are for. I know what you are against. Tell us what you are for.

Tobriner: I am for a redesign of interchange "C" and the running of the east leg up the parkway along the Anacostia River.

Representative Rhodes: Mr. Duncan, what is your stand?

Duncan: I do not look toward discontinuing a total highway program which we all have believed is a good program. There should be a temporary delay while a restudy goes on.

Representative Rhodes: How long has the Inner Loop been under study?

Director Aitken: The Inner Loop study was released in 1959.

Representative Rhodes: Mr. Tobriner, are you in favor of the center leg of the Inner Loop?

Tobriner: Deep down in my heart, I am considering the possibility of abandoning the center leg.

Later, Representative Rhodes asked when the budget proposal was prepared:

Duncan: In November.

Representative Rhodes: I guess all three of you supported the budget.

Tobriner: We did.

Representative Rhodes: Have those people just recently moved in there?

Tobriner: No, sir. I was not aware of the extent of the dislocation last November.

Representative Rhodes: Is your change in position political?

Tobriner: No. It is the greater part of my duty to reflect the opinion of a substantial and respected part of the population of the city.

Representative Rhodes: This plan was prepared in 1959. The opposition should have known the routes. You should have known, Mr. Tobriner. I think you have lived here all your life. You should have known the number of people in the area. I, for one, do not appreciate having the problem shifted to the shoulders of the committee at this late hour.

The action was not called for. We are entitled to feel, when a budget is submitted to us the budget is final as far as the Commissioners are concerned. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, pages 1081-1144]

This reversal was especially shocking since the Board of Commissioners had endorsed the 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor for the East Leg many times. The commissioners requested funds for the corridor in their January budget request for 1963, defended it in public comments ever since, and had endorsed the routing as recently as April 18 in a letter to the White House. The letter stated that the Anacostia River location would take the freeway through park lands, adding, "you must be aware of how carefully the National Park Service guards against encroachment, especially by highways." As a result, the city was not likely to secure NPS approval to build the East Leg along the river.

This surprise was, the source said, the first time in recent years that the commissioners had not presented a united front on any issue before the subcommittee.

Because Tobriner apparently had not discussed his reversal with the two other commissioners before the closed session, the subcommittee asked the commissioners to report back on their formal position on the matter. [“District Heads Ask Delay in Loop East Leg,” *The Evening News*, May 24, 1962; Eastman, Sam, “‘East Leg’ Freeway Facing Long Delay,” *The Evening Star*, May 25, 1962; “Why the Switch?” *The Evening Star*, May 25, 1962; Stern, Laurence, “Commissioners Split by 2-1 to Scrap 11<sup>th</sup> st. Route for Inner Loop East Leg,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 25, 1962; Flor, Lee, “House Unit Shuns Key Role In D.C. Road Controversy,” *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1962]

The editors of the *Star* were among the many people surprised by the turnabout. The same edition carrying the article about Commissioner Tobriner’s change of heart contained an editorial, “Attack on Highways,” written before the editors knew of the change. The editors warned readers:

There should be no misunderstanding about the intentions of those who are asking the House District Appropriations Subcommittee for a “delay” in the District freeway program. Their true goal is not to seek a brief postponement, but for a variety of reasons to scuttle as many as possible of the major radial and circumferential freeways which are essential—along with an effective system of rapid transit—to the growth and well-being of the Washington community.

The attacks were not new. The District commissioners had heard them all before and “wisely rejected” them. The criticism about the lack of funds to assist those who must be relocated was valid:

Fortunately, this conclusion has been reached by the Commissioners, who on April 14 ordered the development of a central relocation service. Since these expenditures are legitimately a part of the cost of highways, they should be borne in part by Federal highway aid funds, as President Kennedy has proposed for the Nation as a whole, and as already is provided by law for urban renewal.

Other than that, delaying the East Leg pending the NCTA report was not acceptable:

There is nothing on the record to suggest that the rapid-transit proposals to be submitted to Congress in November will affect the need for the inner loop. On the other hand, a delay in those portions of the inner loop which have come under such strong attack, including the so-called “Interchange C” in Southeast Washington, would disrupt the entire program of freeways. Of course the opponents of major highway construction in Washington know this. That is why they have selected their targets so carefully. [“Attack on Highways,” *The Evening Star*, May 24, 1962]

The next day, the editors reacted to the news of the two commissioners’ switch. In “Why The Switch?” the editors called the reversal “astonishing in view of their record with respect to this

project . . . especially in the case of Mr. Tobriner.” The issues today, the editors pointed out, “are the same as those that existed” at every point where they endorsed the location of the East Leg. The editorial asked: “What led Mr. Tobriner last Monday, without consulting his fellow Commissioners, to suddenly ask the House District Appropriations Subcommittee to kill the project?”

In view of Mr. Tobriner’s sudden concern about displacees, “we think the better course would have been to accept the appropriation, and simultaneously to make its expenditure dependent on development of an effective relocation program . . . .” As for the Anacostia River location, the fact that the route would be located almost entirely on park land raised real concerns about its prospects:

It is all very well to say that Congress by law could make these parks available for the freeway. But in view of the park-highway controversies of the past, we will be convinced that such a route is available when the legislation is signed and sealed—not before. [“Why the Switch?” *The Evening Star*, May 25, 1962]

The equally surprised *Post* editors called their editorial “An Error Compounded.” The decision was a “serious setback” that would delay the East Leg for “many years.” Although the plight of displaced families was the basic objection to the 11<sup>th</sup> Street routing, the change of position “does nothing to provide new houses for the families to be evicted by the hundreds.” District highway officials had “shown disregard” for these families, but “it is not the Highway Department that will suffer the consequences of further delay and indecision in the completion of a badly needed highway. The penalty will be inflicted upon the economic and cultural health of the city.”

While the 11<sup>th</sup> Street routing would displace about 930 houses, an Anacostia River routing would displace about 500 houses. The city’s public housing agency already had 8,000 families on its waiting list, suggesting the city would be able to make no provision for housing highway displacees, regardless of the final routing. “If this city wants to build roads, it is going to have to build houses.”

Further, the Anacostia River route should be “hastily abandoned” because it “constitutes a massive intrusion on park land”:

It must be observed that the Commissioners, who decline to run highways through a prosperous neighborhood park, like Glover-Archbold, seem distressingly ready to lay concrete through the parks available to the poor of eastern Washington.

The proper course of action for Congress was to provide regular appropriations for the East Leg, “but with the addition of a statutory requirement that no house may be taken until its inhabitants have been decently relocation, and their moving expenses paid, by the District. [“An Error Compounded,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 26, 1962]

City highway officials estimated that the Board of Commissioners’ decision would put plans back by 3 to 5 years before construction of the East Leg could begin. The engineering study the commissioners requested for the Anacostia River route was only one step in the process. They

would have to hold a public hearing and secure approval from NCPC, BPR, and NPS. They also might have to secure congressional action to overcome NPS reluctance to grant right-of-way through park land for the freeway. [Eastman, Sam, “‘East Leg’ Freeway Facing Long Delay,” *The Evening Star*, May 25, 1962]

On May 28, the *Star*'s editors were still looking for answers. The editorial pointed out that private citizens who oppose a project often propose an alternative, although usually without providing information to support the feasibility of the suggested location. “But for a District Commissioner to follow this procedure, as Walter Tobriner has done in the case of the east leg of the inner loop freeway, is unusual indeed.” He apparently conceded that legislation would be needed to overcome NPS reluctance to allow access to park land. Any assumption that such legislation could be obtained without the concurrence and support of NPS was “questionable”:

Anyone remotely familiar with the history of highway disputes in the Nation's Capital can attest to the traditional opposition of the Park Service to highway encroachment, and, for the most part, to the success of these positions.

Thus far, “we have been aware of no shouts of joy from the Interior Department at the prospect of an eight-lane freeway . . . coursing through the west-side parks of the Anacostia.”

The editors recommended that the Appropriations Subcommittee order the commissioners to present “firm evidence” that the river route could use park lands “without objection from park officials” and would meet Interstate standards. This evidence would be “essential . . . if the subcommittee has any thought of sustaining the Tobriner position.”

As for the concern about displaced families, previous studies of the river route found that about 60 [sic] families would be displaced if the Anacostia River routing were chosen. Thus, “the District government would have to develop precisely the same kind of relocation machinery to assist these displacees as it would to help those on the Eleventh street route.” The subcommittee should appropriate the funds requested in January for the 11<sup>th</sup> Street route of the East Leg, but condition it on a program of “adequate relocation procedures before any families are displaced.” The editorial concluded, “Fortunately, such a program is now in the process of development.” [“More Facts, Please,” *The Evening Star*, May 28, 1962]

(On May 25, Chloethiel Woodard Smith (“the city's foremost redevelopment architect”) called for demolition of the Whitehurst Freeway as the “necessary key to renewal of the Georgetown waterfront.” Her proposal was in a plan the Georgetown Canal and Riverside Council submitted to NCPC seeking renewal of the area. The council's report called the Whitehurst Freeway an “enormous obstacle” and “unattractive.” Smith also rejected the suggested four-lane addition to the elevated freeway. The report said that “Efforts to live with this major scar . . . are misguided.” Further, efforts to “minimize its impact” would be ineffectual or cost far more than demolition of the existing freeway:

An elevated 8-lane structure will eat up at least a tenth of the Georgetown waterfront area and will blight at least twice that amount.



She added, “There is no use talking about urban renewal of Georgetown’s waterfront so long as this obsolete elevated structure remains to blight the area permanently.” [Lewis, Robert J., “Georgetown Unit Asks Razing of Whitehurst,” *The Evening Star*, May 25, 1962]

As might be expected, the groups opposing the East Leg were pleased by the Board of Commissioners’ reversal. One of them was the Democratic Central Committee, which supported transit over freeways. Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., the committee’s vice chairman, said, “We’re delighted. Our position has been that the entire acceleration of the District Road program should be held up until we get the mass transit report. Then the two programs can be made to work together.”

He made clear that the Democratic Central Committee also opposed the Anacostia River route for the East Leg:

We fought the freeway for Glover-Archbald [sic] Park, and will fight harder against a freeway through Anacostia Park.

The neighborhood around Glover-Archbald [sic] is a high-income area. It’s much more important to preserve Anacostia Park for its low-income neighborhood.

NPS Director Wirth did not want to say whether he would oppose or support use of the park land. He said, “Sound planning requires looking at any proposal.” But he added:

I don’t see how they can get it through the John Philip Sousa bridge area, or by the Stadium and parking lot. Maybe they’ll put it on pontoons and float it up the river. [“Anacostia Park Route Opposed for Inner Loop,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1962]

Commissioner Tobriner relented in his opposition to the extent of saying that if safe, sanitary, and decent housing could be found for displaced families, he would join with General Clarke in approving interchange “C” and the routing of the East Leg in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, SE. On May 29, Tobriner and General Clarke met with Walter Washington, executive director of the National Capital Housing Authority. They learned that finding homes in the city for displaced families was not going to be easy. They said they were working on meshing highway construction with public housing availability, as well as “finding new sites for public housing.” They also wanted to encourage private enterprise to supply housing for low-income families.

They could not say when the highway projects might be resumed, but the *Star* reported on a report by the District Department of General Administration that shed light on the difficulties of coordinating highways and housing:

The report states that there is a waiting list of around 8,000 families for public housing. Around 515 of these families have first priority for vacancies because they have been displaced by Government action. The critical need is for three, four and five bedroom units. The rate of placement and waiting time for public housing for some of these high priority families is five years or more.

The report then states that an additional 10,611 families will be displaced by Government action in the next five years. [Flor, Lee, "D.C. Seeks to Dovetail Housing and Highways," *The Evening Star*, May 29, 1962]

On June 5 and 6, Chairman Whitener's House District subcommittee held hearings on the highway program. The subcommittee included Representatives Burke, Broyhill, and Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.). (The fifth member, Representative Fernand J. St. Germain (D-RI), did not attend the hearings.)

Edwin Seeger, NCTA's general counsel, and Director Aitken were among the witnesses on June 5. Seeger asked the committee to delay Interstate projects until NCTA released its report in November. As an example of how the analysis might change since the Mass Transportation Survey, he pointed out that the 1959 recommendations had not considered maintenance costs or tax losses from highway construction. NCTA was working on a comparison of these costs for highways and transit.

With the recent acceleration of highway plans in the District, NCTA could not be sure which decisions were final. However, he estimated that highways would remove 400 of the 2,000 acres currently on the District's tax rolls, while the subway, being underground, would not remove any property. Highway maintenance would cost between \$2 and \$3 million a year, but the subway would be able to pay for maintenance from farebox receipts. He added, in response to a question from Chairman Whitener, that NCTA believed the rapid transit system could pay for its construction costs from fare revenue over a 50-year period.

Representative Broyhill told Seeger that his comments on the role of NCTA on highway development were inaccurate. Congress, Broyhill said, had spent \$500,000 for the Mass Transportation Survey, then passed a law to develop the mass transit program. NCTA's role was not to rethink the highway program.

Aitken quoted from the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 to show that NCTA was not responsible for highway planning or development. The 1960 Act was focused on creation of a Transit Development Program and, as noted earlier, language extending its mandate to planning freeways had been dropped from Senator Bible's early version of the legislation. It now stated, Aitken reminded the subcommittee, that in planning the Transit Development Program, NCTA could acquire or construct transit facilities, including right-of-way for joint use with freeways:

The Agency may contribute funds for the acquisition of rights-of-way for, and the construction of limited amounts of freeway, parkway, and other arterial highway facilities, including construction incidental to the use and protection of such rights-of-way for transit facilities, to the government agencies having jurisdiction thereof if, in the opinion of the Agency, such contributions are necessary to the fulfillment of the objectives of this Act . . . .

The legislation also stated:

The responsibility and authority for location, design, construction, and operation of freeways, parkways, and other arterial highway facilities shall remain with the government agencies having jurisdiction thereof, but all Federal agencies' plans for location and design of highway facilities shall be forwarded to the Agency, and all State and local agencies' plans for location and design of highway facilities may be requested by the Agency for its review and comment. The Agency shall cooperate with all planning agencies of the National Capital region and the appropriate government transportation regulatory agencies including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission in the development of transportation facilities and, wherever feasible and desirable, develop joint plans for such agencies.

Aitken said his staff was refining traffic forecasts, but that NCTA staff had made some "assumptions" that might require minor changes in the 1959 plan. "The nub of the new assumptions do [sic] not require any major changes in the recommendations for highways."

He also addressed the claim that the District was accelerating the freeway program to get construction underway before the NCTA report. To complete the Interstate program on schedule, Congress had recently increased authorizations for Interstate construction, along with an increase in the excise tax on gas. The District's budget recommendations reflected the increased funds. ["Officials Trade Transit Arguments At Congressional Hearing on D.C.," *The Evening Star*, June 5, 1962]

On the second day of hearings, General Clarke discussed opponents of the highway program. Some wanted a delay until NCTA released its report in November while others wanted to delay the freeway program until the subway was in operation in the 1970s. "It will take a long time for rapid transit plans to be approved by all the reviewing agencies and by Congress."

The relocation problem came down to moving an average of 700 families a year between 1962 and 1974. Of these, about 350 families will need relocation assistance and of these, about 240 will need public housing. By keeping the problem in perspective, the city can solve it.

General Clarke also addressed the allegation about speeding up the program. Like Aitken the day before, General Clarke said the District was using the increased congressional authorizations to make up for earlier delays. The District's program was far behind the States, he said, and the city was trying to do what Congress indicated it wanted done when it increased Interstate funding.

Chairman Whitener said that delaying freeway work until November was "a very definite possibility." He explained that, "What worries me is what do you do with 28,000 people displaced by these highways." He added that, "We may try some gentle persuasion after talking with the House District Appropriations subcommittee, to hold up the projects." [Flor, Lee, "Road Jobs Delay By Congress Seen Definite Possibility," *The Evening Star*, June 6, 1962]

Chairman Whitener wrote to NCPC on June 12 to request clarification of its position on the Inner Loop, particularly regarding the availability of housing for families displaced by the project. On

June 14, after what the *Star*'s Robert J. Lewis called "a two-hour wrangle," NCPC unanimously adopted a resolution:

Every action we take necessarily has an impact on people, and when we are asked to approve a plan that will displace thousands of people from their homes, we must be sure that our decision is taken only after we have had an opportunity to examine alternatives to the solution of the transportation.

NCPC, the resolution continued, had approved the Inner Loop "in principle," but not specific locations for its segments. In view of "changing conditions," namely the housing issue, NCPC decided more time was needed before completing review of the Inner Loop. In short, NCPC wanted to wait for NCTA's November report. At the same time, the resolution conceded that "the east and south legs of the inner loop would be needed whether the rest of the inner loop was constructed or not . . . ."

The resolution directed Mrs. Rowe to inform Chairman Whitener that NCPC "recognizes that its responsibilities for comprehensive planning transcend consideration of traffic projects and transportation alone, and require dedication to both definition and achieve of desirable goals for the Nation's Capital and residents."

According to the *Star*, the "anti-expressway members of the National Capital Planning Commission won a battle." [Lewis, Robert J., "Inner Loop Delay Urged by Planners," *The Evening Star*, June 14, 1962]

The *Star* editors described the resolution as "a masterpiece of gobbledygook," but at least it made clear that the East Leg was needed. Now, the editors suggested, if Chairman Whitener wanted to be constructive, he would help the city develop the relocation machinery needed before advancing the freeway. ["Chance to Help," *The Sunday Star*, June 17, 1962]

On June 22, the Committee on Appropriations approved a report on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963. It covered, of course, many subjects, but in discussing the Inner Loop Highway System, the committee's annoyance came through stemming from the Board of Commissioners' reversal of position:

During the hearings the partisans of rapid transit and the proponents of the highway program used every political issue and every possible source of opposition to bring about confusion and disorder—all to the detriment of the Capital City. The rivalry between these two groups is dangerous to the future development of the city.

To add to the confusion, the National Capital Planning Commission decided recently that more time is needed before a final decision can be made on the Inner Loop highway system . . . .

During the hearings two of the [District] Commissioners requested that certain sections of the Inner Loop be held in abeyance at this time. This action of course was unexpected. Since the Committee is not a policymaking Committee, it does not intend to decide this issue at this time. However, to expedite this matter, following the report from the

National Capital Transportation Agency and the additional studies pertaining to routing and a proper removal of people displaced, if any, there will be an adequate amount in the [District] highway fund to solve this and other important problems which will confront the District highway officials in the near future.

Due to the indecision noted above, the Committee recommends the deletion of \$170,000 for the East Leg; \$450,000 for the Northeast Freeway, and \$546,700 for Interchange C.

The committee recognized the need for “every precaution” to be taken before freeway construction begins to protect people forced out of their homes.

Simply making the city more convenient for automobiles, as some critics charged, would be a mistake. “District officials must not place themselves in a position of being accused of attempting to handle traffic without any concern for the forces generating the traffic or for the manifold purposes that transportation, private and public, should serve.” Further, “Those who are opposed to highways and hope the temporary delay in the Inner Loop program will destroy the Freeway system should be disappointed.” The committee hoped that NCTA’s report in November “will assist in the solution of this problem.” [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, pages 3-4]

Despite deleting funds for the East Leg, interchange “C,” and the Northeast Freeway, the Committee approved appropriations for the Three Sisters Bridge, the Potomac River Freeway, the Center Leg, the Southeast Freeway, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge.

Commissioners Tobriner and Clarke issued a statement on deletion of funding for the East Leg-related projects. (Commissioner Duncan was on vacation.) They understood the committee to make two key points, namely that the NCTA report may help solve the problem and that Congress wanted adequate provision to be made for those displaced by freeway construction. If Congress did not pass the legislation under consideration for relocation help, the commissioners would continue “their efforts to provide legislation to furnish administrative machinery and moving allowances and to insure that adequate housing will be available for persons displaced.” These efforts would include a central relocation service and encouraging of private investment in low-income housing:

The commissioners feel confident that it will be possible to provide for these people while maintaining required progress in the highway system. [McKelway, John, “District Budget Cut \$9 million By House Unit,” *The Evening Star*, June 22, 1962]

### **Enter Chairman Natcher**

One of those concerned about the District’s freeway problems was Representative Natcher, who had become chairman of the Subcommittee on District of Columbia Appropriations, Committee on Appropriations, after the death of Chairman Louis C. Rabaut (D-Mi.) on November 12, 1961. While in Washington, he lived in the Berkshire Apartments at 4201 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.

Schrag described Chairman Natcher as “obsessive, stubborn, suspicious, and vain,” a former prosecutor “who grouched privately about left-wingers, beatniks, and the Warren Court.” One of his obsessions was his voting record:

Most famously, from his arrival in Washington in 1953, he never missed a single roll-call vote, eventually making it into the *Guinness Book of World Records* with 18,401 consecutive roll-call and quorum votes cast.

Representative Natcher, who had been born in Bowling Green in 1909, served in the House from August 1, 1953, until his death on March 29, 1994. He was buried in Bowling Green “with his voting card after serving more than forty years in the House.”

The chairman of the subcommittee was in “a position of essentially autocratic power.” This power was based in the constitutional requirement that all appropriations must originate in the House, but the District’s lack of congressional representation amplified the Natcher subcommittee’s power:

Natcher so dominated his subcommittee that it often dispensed with formal votes. The full appropriations committee rarely overturned decisions of a subcommittee, which was presumed to have the most expertise, and Natcher’s southern courtesy and loyalty to House norms made him popular throughout the House, further insulating him from fear of being overturned on the floor. A Natcher decision could be expected to stick, so without his approval, the District could not spend a dime.

He would play a critical role in the District’s freeway battles, but even opponents conceded he “was no stooge of the highway lobby.” He had initially opposed the Interstate System because he feared it “would give the Federal Government dictatorial control over roads in the States for all time to come,” and had voted against the House bill on its final day of consideration in 1955 on July 27. However, he had voted for the House version of the 1956 Act on April 27, 1956, when the bill passed 388-19. (The final version of the bill after conference with the Senate passed the House by voice vote).

He had a good reason beyond public policy for supporting highway construction in the District and elsewhere:

His popularity at home depended on his delivering tens of millions of dollars’ worth of river projects for Kentucky each year. He had gained that power by cultivating an alliance with the House Public Works Committee, the same committee that had ordered the freeways built. Any threat to that committee’s sovereignty challenged his own ability to provide for his constituents. [Schrag, pages 122-124]

On June 26, Chairman Natcher brought the District Appropriation Act, 1963, to the House floor. In discussing the Inner Loop plans, his introductory remarks went further than the committee report:

The rivalry between the partisans of rapid transit and the proponents of the highway program is dangerous to the future development of the city. The proposed freeway

system for the District is not a political issue and those who believe this to be the situation are in for a rude awakening. The confusion and disorder attempted by the pressure groups during the last few weeks will not accomplish the desired results.

The committee was concerned about the displaced families, an issue that must be addressed before the Commissioners can move forward with the highway system:

Again we most emphatically state that those who are opposed to highways and hope the temporary delay in the inner loop program will destroy the freeway system should be disappointed.

Representative Gross pointed out that the Jones Point Bridge was supposed to be a bypass for through traffic, but it had opened “and yet we find Independence Avenue still carrying the same truck traffic from New York and other points along the eastern seaboard on south, and no relief from the heavy traffic in Washington.” (The Jones Point Bridge, renamed the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, opened on December 28, 1961) “What is wrong?”

Chairman Natcher had to concede that Independence Avenue had “two traffic jams” the past week. “As soon as this freeway system is resolved, I can say to the gentleman that that heavy traffic will come off Independence Avenue.”

Perhaps, Representative Gross suggested, “somebody is fumbling the ball somewhere,” and he wondered if the problem was that “they do not have the roads in Maryland in anticipation of which the bridge was built.” Chairman Natcher replied, “I would certainly agree with my friend.”

Regarding the Inner Loop system, Representative Rhodes told his colleagues that NCTA’s study would be released in November, but that was not the only reason for withholding funds for the East Leg, Northeast Freeway, and interchange “C.” The committee also was concerned about the displaced families. “We feel the interim period can be utilized by the legislative committee and by the District Commissioners in an attempt to provide legislation to take care of the burdens which will fall on those people whose lives will be dislocated as a result of the construction.”

Representative William L. Springer (R-Il.) asked if the two legs of the Inner Loop were indefinitely put off. Representative Rhodes explained that the appropriations committee was not a policymaking committee. However, when two of the three commissioners who approved the budget request for the Inner Loop segments changed their mind, it “caused the red light to go on as far as we were concerned.” The committee concluded that the best idea was to give “those who are engaged in the business of studying plans like this a chance to restudy the whole situation.” He pointed out that routing the East Leg along the Anacostia River might save money and reduce dislocations “if the National Park Service will go along with it.”

Representative Rhodes had one other topic he wanted to discuss even though the bill did not address it. Another problem that “has been rather conveniently swept under the table for the last few years” was the link between the Inner Loop and Montgomery County, Maryland:

The Wisconsin Ave. corridor has been well closed and locked by action of Congress. As far as I can tell, there have been no plans brought forth, and none contemplated, for connecting with the rather extensive system of roadways being built by the State of Maryland in Montgomery County.

He hoped that “this problem will be the subject of study, and that the District Commissioners and the Highway Department will address themselves to these problems in the very near future.”

(Representative Rhodes would have a personal interest in the issue; he lived at 5502 Pollard Road in Bethesda.)

The House approved the bill without a recorded vote. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, *Congressional Record-House*, June 26, 1962, pages 11721-11732]

As the District prepared to solicit for bids to begin construction of the Southeast Freeway (along Virginia Avenue from South Capitol Street to the start of the proposed interchange “C” at 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SE.), city officials were trying to find ways to accommodate the families that had received notices to move out of their homes by the end of September. A team of private real estate firms and social workers was searching for housing, especially for low-income families. The team was focused on large families because enough housing was available for small families. W. Donald Calomiris of William Calomiris Investment Corporation, chair of the committee, said, “If we put our heads together, we can find homes for those people.” The committee could postpone searching for homes for residents of the 68 units at the Ellen Wilson Housing project that were to be removed; they would not be touched for several years. [Flor, Lee, “Bids Open This Month on First Contract For \$13.3 Million Southeast Freeway,” *The Sunday Star*, July 1, 1962]

Senator Clifford P. Case (R-NJ), the ranking Republican on the Senate District Appropriations Subcommittee, was meeting with officials to examine transportation planning in preparation for the subcommittee’s hearings on the District budget. Senator Case, described by the *Star* as “a veteran of disputes over transportation issues in the New Jersey-New York City area,” wanted to ensure transportation planning was coordinated for the Washington area. Over the course of a week, he talked with General Clarke and Aitken. Separately, he met with Stolzenbach of NCTA and William Finley of NCPC.

After reviewing a draft of the NCTA report, he revealed that it called for elimination of two thirds of the Inner Loop. The segments were the East Leg, interchange “C,” the Northeast Freeway, and the Potomac River Freeway. It also indicated that the Three Sisters Bridge “may be unnecessary.” Stolzenbach, the previous November, had asked the District to postpone these projects until NCTA released its report.

General Clarke was surprised by the report of Stolzenbach’s continued opposition to Inner Loop segments:

Mr. Stolzenbach has about 10 different transportation plans, some with and some without the Inner Loop, General Clarke said. “The only thing I know is that he has said that he knew ‘intuitively’ that highways would not be required.”



Five agencies, including the District, Maryland, and Virginia highway agencies and BPR, had been feeding information to NCTA's computers. "This is the basis," the *Star* summarized, for statement by highway planners that they know about the preliminary transportation agency report, and that preliminary traffic forecasts bear out the need for the Inner Loop."

Senator Case thought the area needed an "umpire" to cut through contradictory claims to protect property and prevent highway alignments that might serve traffic but harm the community. He pointed to urban renewal projects where communities had to develop a "workable plan" showing impacts not only on the affected neighborhood, but the whole community. Road builders and their powerful backers, in effect, dictated community planning by their selection of roads and alignments. He planned to introduce a bill that would give an agency, possibly the Housing and Home Financing Agency, the authority to withhold Federal funds until conflicts among highway, transit, sewer projects, and other projects are resolved. ["Study to Curb Road Projects," *The Sunday Star*, July 8, 1962; Lindsay, John J., "Sen. Case Sees Need for Planning 'Umpire,'" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 8, 1962]

### **A Blistering Report**

On August 3, 1962, the House Committee on the District of Columbia released a report titled "Accelerated D.C. Highway Program and One-Way Street Plan." The *Star* and *Post* used the word "blistering" to describe the report in which the committee demanded that the District halt several Interstate projects immediately and accused the District commissioners of "circumventing" congressional policy "by not, in the interim, deferring action, as requested by the NCTA on certain projects," and failing to give Members of Congress the information they need.

The report did not name the freeways, but appeared to be demanding a halt to the Potomac River Freeway, the Three Sisters Bridge, the East Leg of the Inner Loop, the Northeast Freeway, and interchange "C." In response to the District commissioners' change of position, the House had already voted to cut 1963 spending for three of the freeways, but funding remained in the appropriations bill for the Three Sisters Bridge and Potomac Freeway.

Chairman Whitener wrote that by accelerating highway building, the District commissioners were in direct contradiction of congressional intent for a balanced highway and transit system as called for in the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. The committee demanded that the commissioners delay freeway construction not already begun until NCTA releases its report. For Congress "to permit the District to act precipitously on its accelerated program" would be sheer folly since the NCTA report will be available for review when the second session begins in January. The goal was to avoid freeway construction that might preclude subway construction or be unnecessary if a subway were built. With the freeze, the only freeway construction that would be underway would be along the southern rim of the city from the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, SE.

The report also criticized District officials for not providing accurate estimates of highway spending. The estimates provided left out the cost of operation, tax losses from land

acquisitions, and the cost of relocating approximately 28,000 people. Evaluations of impacts had been “vague and incomplete,” with only “rough calculations” of properties that would be needed.

Traffic forecasts came in for particular criticism:

One of the most appalling revelations at the hearing [June 5 and 6] was the fact that no recent all-inclusive surveys have been made on which reliable forecasts of future requirements of the National capital region can be hinged.

Projections were made without estimating total trips or dividing those trips among bus, rapid rail transit, and automobiles. Estimates also did not calculate the number of occupants in each car. The District Highway Department’s explanation was “totally unbelievable.”

The report maintained that District traffic forecasters had not coordinated with NCTA despite the agency’s role in developing a balanced transportation system. The report pointed out that the Senate and House reports on the 1960 Act had said, “any attempt to meet the area’s transportation needs by highways and private automobiles alone will wreck the city.”

The subcommittee asked NCPC to stop acting on disputed freeway projects until NCTA released its report and the projects could be put in context. “The subcommittee wants to make it clear that it is neither anti-highway nor anti-rapid transit, not pro-highway nor pro-transit. It stands for a balanced transportation system.” At the same time, the report stated:

Unfortunately and sadly, it must be admitted that little or no heed has been paid to the adverse esthetic effect of this whole highway program, going as it does into the beauty of our lovely Capital, nor to the attendant loss of parks and recreational areas in the Nation’s Capital.

The report commented that General Clarke had “candidly admitted that highway planning has far outdistanced . . . relocation.” With 40,000 people waiting for public housing, the freeway program would add 28,000 more. The District was playing a form of musical chairs with relocatees by moving them into buildings scheduled to be demolished. This plan had “an Alice in Wonderland quality.” The idea “would be amusing were it not for the fact that it is to be inflicted on people who are least capable of caring for themselves.”

The subcommittee estimated that the city would lose between 300 and 400 acres of the 2,000 acres of taxable land remaining in the old Federal city. The District would lose \$1 million in tax revenue each year just from land that had been appraised for acquisition; the entire acquisition program would result in even more losses. These figures alone suggest that the highway acceleration program was a “decision made hastily, prompted by the unexpected availability of Federal highway funds.”

Further, the report strongly criticized a proposal to convert 16 miles of downtown streets to one-way pairs. The goal was to increase the current 21 miles of one-way streets by 80 percent, according to Aitken. “This is startling,” the report said of the proposal.

The *Star* summarized:

Washington is not Pompeii, House subcommittee men said. In old Pompeii, before A.D. 79, narrow streets demanded one-way restrictions. But subcommittee members said Washington, abundantly blessed with wide avenues, does not need the same plan.

General Clarke told reporters he was “most concerned that a subcommittee of Congress believed the District Commissioners were circumventing the will of Congress. This never was intended. As I conceive our job, it is to carry out the intent of Congress.” He promised to “study in great detail” the findings of the report.

In view of the House’s actions, General Clarke said the Senate would have to be the arbiter.

Reporter Grace Bassett reached Chairman Whitener by telephone at his home in North Carolina. He emphasized that the report was a deferral, not an end to the freeway projects. “It is not my intention to stop progress. But we want to progress in an orderly way.” He said the other members of the subcommittee agreed with him that highway-transit coordination was lacking here. They also shared his concern about dislocation of people.

Bassett pointed out that the “stinging criticism of highway builders” was the latest in a series of developments that appeared to doom, at least temporarily, the Inner Loop:

The House lifted \$1.1 million out of the city budget for Interchange C, the east leg and the northeast freeway, after Commissioners, 2 to 1, reversed themselves and urged deferral.

Then, Senator Case, Republican of New Jersey, announced he would make sure at Senate budget hearings, probably next week, that highways will not overbalance proposed rapid rail lines for the area . . . .

This view supports the National Capital Transportation Agency concern that accelerated highway building will jeopardize rail transit before its [sic] off the agency drawing boards.

All things considered, a delay or sharp cutback “seemed certain today.” [Bassett, Grace, “House Unit Demands Area Road Work Halt,” *The Evening Star*, August 3, 1962; Bassett, Grace, “Delay or Cutback Seen In D.C. Loop System,” *The Evening Star*, August 4, 1962; Carper, Elsie, “Hill Scores City’s Road Program,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 4, 1962]

### **A Matter of Jurisdiction**

The District commissioners and highway officials were convinced that the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 left highway responsibilities with “the governmental agencies having jurisdiction thereof.” However, the subcommittee’s report appeared to take the side of NCTA and the anti-highway forces who claimed NCTA had veto power over the highway program.

NCTA’s attorneys cited a provision they claimed conveyed veto power to the agency:

The Agency's studies include a continuation of the work begun in the mass transportation survey conducted by the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council . . . and shall include further studies as may be necessitated by changed conditions, the availability of new techniques, and the response of Government agencies and the public to the transportation plan adopted by the Commission and the Council. The Agency's studies shall also include evaluations of the transportation recommended in the transportation plan, and of alternative facilities and kinds of services.

The dispute left the "expressed intent" of Congress uncertain, as was the question of which projects the subcommittee wanted the District to halt immediately. Although lobbyists and citizens' groups were attacking five projects, NCTA had called for a halt only to the Three Sisters Bridge and interchange "C." Congress had authorized funds for the interchange in 1962, and had not opposed the project in 1963 – it withheld funds only at the request of the Board of Commissioners following its reversal of position.

The fate of the \$38 million Potomac River Freeway was uncertain. The freeway began at about the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, NW., was to go through a tunnel at New Hampshire and Virginia Avenues, northwesterly through the interchange at 27<sup>th</sup> and K Streets, and along the Potomac River on an elevated structure parallel to the Whitehurst Freeway to just west of Wisconsin Avenue. From there it would cross under the Whitehurst Freeway and Key Bridge onto the bluff in front of Georgetown University. The western half was linked to the Three Sisters Bridge, but the freeway would have to be built, with or without the bridge, to connect to the Potomac Palisades Parkway, which NPS was planning between Georgetown University and Chain Bridge.

The District had received and opened bids for construction of the eastern half of the Potomac River Freeway (27<sup>th</sup> to 31 Street, NW.). The design for the western half was dependent on the fate of the Three Sisters bridge. General Clarke said, "I don't think the subcommittee is against the Potomac River Freeway."

The issue of which projects would be funded would have to be considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee [Flor, Lee, "Freeway Fate Uncertain," *The Sunday Star*, August 5, 1962]

On July 10, the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, Senate Committee on Appropriations began hearings on the District's 1963 appropriations act, with Chairman Byrd and Senators Beall and Case present. The District's Board of Commissioners, along with other city officials, presented the budget proposal to the subcommittee. It covered all District activities, but their presentation did not prompt a discussion of the freeway impasses the city was experiencing. However, as the first day ended, Senator Case made a suggestion that reflected his recent discussions with parties to the dispute. Addressing Chairman Byrd, he said:

At an appropriate time I would like to ask your permission to ask Mr. Stolzenbach of the National Capital Transportation Agency to make any comments that might be helpful to us in regard to the whole highway and transportation program. I understand that his

Agency is not within the jurisdiction of our committee directly, but I think his testimony on the developments within the jurisdiction might be helpful to us.

Senator Byrd agreed. "I am sure we can arrange to do that." [District of Columbia Appropriations for 1963, Hearings on H.R. 12276 before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, part 1, page 116]

The *Star* said of Senator Case's request:

Mr. Stolzenbach, as a presidential appointee, and his agency as a congressionally created unit, do not fall under the jurisdiction of the District Appropriations Subcommittees. But Senator Case is determined to co-ordinate city highway programs with master development plans due to be given President Kennedy in November by Mr. Stolzenbach. ["Sharp Queries by Byrd Hit District Budget," *The Evening Star*, July 10, 1962]

Two days later, Stolzenbach met with President Kennedy at the White House for a half hour to provide a progress report on NCTA's work. Stolzenbach said that his report will recommend highways and rapid transit facilities. He and the President also discussed the idea of a subway from Union Station to downtown employment centers, a concept that was included in the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. "Stolzenbach told reporters, "it was a very delightful meeting."

President Kennedy said, "I am much encouraged by the progress being made by the agency in finding solutions to the region's critical transportation problems." He also indicated that NCTA's balanced transportation approach might provide ideas for other urban areas with similar transportation problems. [Flor, Lee, "President Pleased by Transit Progress," *The Evening Star*, July 12, 1962]

The *Star*'s editors were pleased that President Kennedy was "much encouraged," but regretted he did not disclose what he was encouraged about. "It should be encouraging to everyone, however, that the President apparently has dealt himself a personal hand in the confused and controversial Washington area transportation game." The real curiosity about the pending report was not the rapid transit element but the expectation, "most recently expressed by Senator Case of New Jersey, that the report will state that a number of Washington area highways, including portions of the inner loop, 'may not be necessary.'"

If Stolzenbach "has discovered new data" that justifies trimming back the planned freeways, the case "will be relatively simple." What would happen, the editors asked, "if his recommendations, rather than being persuasive, [would] merely add fuel to the ridiculous feud between the proponents of highways and the proponents of mass transit, which already has severely damaged both of these essential programs?"

The editors agreed with Senator Case about the "crying need for someone to co-ordinate these two programs after the NCTA report is issued." The White House might be a good place for that coordination. "A good place to begin is to insure that the November report will not simply

precipitate a divisive and harmful donnybrook.” [“Timely Intervention,” *The Sunday Star*, July 15, 1962]

On July 19, the Senate’s District appropriations subcommittee held a single day of testimony from outside witnesses, many of whom wanted to discuss the District’s Interstate freeway plans. The *Star* summarized:

Bitter denunciation of the District’s highway program broke loose again today as a Senate subcommittee continued its study of the District budget. Most witnesses applauded the House for postponing action on three key projects in the Inner Loop system. Others went so far as to request a moratorium on any new highway construction, even street widening.

In most cases, the witnesses presented their statements with limited or no questioning by the Senators Byrd, Case, or Norris H. Cotton (R-NH).

The first few witnesses urged the subcommittee to keep the freeway program moving forward. Charles E. Phillips of the Washington Board of Trade emphasized that, “Careful and competent engineering studies indicate the need for the inner loop plus radial highways, even with the full utilization of the contemplated mass transportation facilities.” The board supported the Inner Loop, which “would improve business conditions in this section of the city” and make downtown “more attractively accessible for doing business,” as Downtown Progress had said. Lionel Kaplan of the Automotive Trade Association, National Capital Area, and AAA’s Miller also spoke in support of the freeway network. [pages 495-501]

The first anti-highway witness was Hilliard H. Goodman of the Citizens Transit Improvement Association. His organization had been promoting rapid transit for the area for the past 7½ years. “By rapid transit, we mean rail rapid transit, which in our view is real rapid transit.” His group was concerned about freeways that would interfere with rapid transit development. The nearly complete Southwest Freeway, for example, would not, but the following would: Anacostia Freeway between South Capitol Street and the proposed new 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge; Southeast Freeway from South Capitol Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NE.; interchange “C”; Potomac River Freeway; Three Sisters Bridge; Northeast Freeway; and East Leg of the Inner Loop. [pages 501-504]

Polly Shackleton, the Democratic National Committeewoman, said the committee was “gratified” that the House had deleted funds from the 1963 budget for interchange “C,” the Northeast Freeway, and the East Leg. “We opposed those projects primarily because of the tremendous unresolved housing and relocation problems that would have been created for more than 10,000 District of Columbia residents.”

She urged the subcommittee to delete funds as well for the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway. Her organization’s opposition to these projects “stems not from philosophical opposition to highways.” In general, the highways were needed to help people move across the city. However, Congress had created NCTA in 1960 to coordinate a balanced transportation system and submit its recommendations to the President by November 1, 1962.

She was particularly concerned about the District's accelerated schedule for the Three Sisters Bridge. As recently as September 1960, the District scheduled the bridge for construction in 1966. Suddenly, in 1961, the bridge "was accelerated to top-priority status." Last November, NCTA had informed NCPC that the bridge should not be constructed in 1963 because, as NCTA put it, its construction "will inevitably create pressure for construction of the north and west legs of the inner loop, of Route 66, and a parkway through Glover-Archbold Park."

Delaying the Three Sisters Bridge and interchange "C" was "absolutely essential if any serious reevaluation is to be made of the 1959 transportation plan." She added that after the District submitted its budget including freeway matching funds, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mt.) had introduced S. 2436 to transfer the District's road right-of-way through the park to the Department of the Interior, which she implied would not approve the necessary extension of the freeway from the bridge.

She said that alternative ways to link I-66 to the Interstate System in the District "may prove more feasible and less disruptive than the projected Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac Freeway, north leg route." Spending millions of dollars to begin building a bridge "on an undeniably accelerated basis," would force the expenditure of many millions of dollars on other freeway links to the bridge "just 3 months before Congress received the report which it directed NCTA to prepare, especially in view of the fact that NCTA has already clearly opposed the construction of Three Sisters during fiscal 1963":

We see no reason for Congress to tie its hands by making a judgment before all the facts are in. And the cart which the Highway Department is asking Congress to put before the horse is enormously expensive – \$3 million for Three Sisters Bridge and \$18,768,000 for the Potomac River Freeway.

The District's money could better be spent "where the need is both clear and acute—on this city's children, who need and deserve more and better schools, teachers, and textbooks." [pages 518-521]

Throughout the day, witnesses opposed specific freeways, favored transit, expressed concern about displaced families, and urged the subcommittee to delay the District's plans until NCTA released its report in November. Supporters of the freeway system, such as Harold E. Wirth of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Washington and Eugene I. Kane representing the District Trucking Association, appeared to have a vested interest in automobile transportation. [The complete day's testimony from outside witnesses can be found in the hearing report, pages 489-600; also see "McKelway, John, "Speakers Disagree On Highway Plans," *The Evening Star*, July 19, 1962, for a summary of testimony]

On July 19, Acting Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr., withdrew NPS approval for use of park lands for the Three Sisters Bridge or its approaches. He was replying to a letter from Majority Leader Mansfield, regarding the bridge's impact on park values associated with Spout Run Park, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and Glover-Archbold Park. NPS, Carver wrote, had agreed to allow District highway officials to use the Spout Run access to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for the approaches to the Three Sisters Bridge, but on the

District side, the bridge abutment at the foot of Glover-Archbold Park would lead to construction of a parkway through the park. “The Three Sisters Bridge proposal is unique [because] this single highway proposal would wipe out the scenic treasure of the Potomac Palisades on one side of the river and point like a loaded pistol through the center of a critically needed park on the other.”

The Interior Department’s responsibility was “to preserve the park areas under its jurisdiction within the National Capital region.” In the absence of direction by Congress to the contrary, “there is no disposition on my part to consider that the standards to be applied here should be any different or any lower than those set forth for national parks and parkways generally”:

For this reason, the Department is opposed to the construction of the Three Sisters Bridge which so vitally involves important units in the park system of the National Capital and the palisades of the Potomac River.

He did not want the Department’s opposition to be “misunderstood as callous disregard for the very serious and vexatious traffic problems confronting this metropolitan area.” Virginia commuters were exposed to delays and safety hazards:

But the Three Sisters proposal represents only a makeshift attempt to secure relief with no apparent relationship to a coordinated master plan. Congress has provided for such long-range planning through creation of the National Capital Transportation Agency. Until that Agency presents its program, we cannot be certain that the Three Sisters Bridge is the compelling necessity that its advocates claim. Conceivably, premature commitment to that structure might be an impediment to a more comprehensive solution. It would seem inconceivable that, on such expedient grounds, we should consent to the destruction of the irreplaceable community assets represented by these park areas.

In closing, he acknowledged that a bridge at virtually any location along the Potomac River in the Washington area would involve park lands. “We believe, however, that the Three Sisters Bridge crossing involves the greatest potential destruction of park property of any site along the Potomac River in this area, and that alternatives can be selected with a minimal effect upon the park lands.”

On July 25, NPS Director Wirth informed Virginia Highway Commissioner H. H. Harris of Assistant Secretary Carver’s decision. Based on Carver’s letter, “I find it necessary to rescind the tentative approval I had heretofore given you for the use of park lands for the approaches to the proposed Three Sisters Bridge.”

The *Star* reported on the denials on July 27, indicating that Wirth had read Assistant Secretary Carver’s letter into the record during a hearing on July 23 before Chairman Whitener’s subcommittee. [“Interior Bars Three Sisters Span, Road,” *The Evening Star*, July 27, 1962; the letters will be found at: District of Columbia Appropriations for 1963, Hearings on H.R. 12276 before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, part 2, pages 1675-1677]



On July 31, as mentioned earlier, the District opened three segments of the Inner Loop Freeway system: The 12<sup>th</sup> Street expressway, the Washington Channel Bridge, and part of the Southwest Freeway.

Representative Gerald R. Ford, Jr. (R-Mi.) was one Member of Congress who did not agree with waiting for the NCTA report was. On August 6, the House was considering a resolution consenting to amendments to the Washington area's metropolitan transit regulation compact agreed to by Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. As debate on the resolution began, Representative Ford rose to discuss a related but different issue:

I think it is about time someone said that all the transportation problems of the metropolitan area of the District of Columbia are not going to be solved by this transit report that we are all waiting for with bated breath.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to think that there are at least some people in that organization who are not the ultimate and final authority on how some of us are to get from our home to our office and back again. I happen to believe that there are some people who have worked long and faithfully on highway and traffic problems in the District of Columbia who, in my opinion, have done a pretty good job under difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I am getting a little sick and tired of everything being held in abeyance in this area, waiting with bated breath for this great report which is about to be forthcoming . . . I just want to be on record right here and now to the effect that as soon as this report is made we are not all going to roll over and play dead waiting for Mr. Stolzenbach—I guess that is his name—to tell us what we are supposed to do . . . .

I do not like a lot of Johnny-come-lately's stepping in the picture and deciding that everything which has been done in the past is wrong and everything they propose is going to be right. I have said my piece, but if I am here next year I am going to look with a very, very skeptical eye at some of these long-haired ideas which I understand may be contained in the report. [Washington Metropolitan Transit Compact Amendments, *Congressional Record-House*, August 6, 1962, page 15600]

None of his colleagues reacted to his comments during the debate, which resulted in approval of the resolution in support of the amendments.

(Representative Ford and his family lived in Alexandria, Virginia, at 514 Crown View Drive. His daily commute when Congress was in session benefited from improvements to Shirl in southwest and southeast Washington. He still lived at 514 Crown View Drive when he became Vice President on December 6, 1973, and drove from there with a Secret Service escort to the White House to take his oath of office as President on August 9, 1974.)

Although Representative Ford's comment did not provoke his colleagues, Donald Gingery shared the contempt of Stolzenbach. During a meeting of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, he accused NCTA of not cooperating with the area's planning bodies. He

said that Stolzenbach had “preconceived notions” about the area’s transit needs and had “absolute disregard” for the views of the jurisdictions involved.

NCTA, Gingery said, was “run with no intent to co-operate with the States.” When planners asked NCTA about area transit plans, they receive “nothing but the most miserable gobbledygook” in reply.

He introduced a resolution calling for a meeting with the Governors of Maryland and Virginia to request they file suit in Federal court to require NCTA to spell out its plans; seek congressional action to amend the 1960 Act to add two administrators to NCTA who would be appointed by the Governors; and ask Congress to deny funds to NCTA until it cooperated with the surrounding jurisdictions.

As Vice Chairman Brewer pointed out, “We have complete control where it affects the State of Maryland.” He added that Stolzenbach “has tried to keep us informed the best he could” and hoped to give the commission a look at the transit plans before September 25. The Gingery resolution failed for lack of a second. [“Transportation Agency Hit as Unco-operative,” *The Evening Star*, August 9, 1962]

On August 10, the Senate subcommittee on District appropriations held an afternoon session on the Department of Highways and Traffic. Among those representing the District were: Aitken and his deputy director, Thomas F. Airis, along with Commissioners Tobriner and Clarke. As requested by Senators Case and Byrd, Stolzenbach joined the panel along with Seeger, NCTA’s general counsel, and E. Sherman Perlman, special assistant to the Administrator.

Stolzenbach was the first to address the panel. “Transportation facilities, whether one is talking about highways or subway systems, have a profound impact on the growth and health of our urban areas.” He discussed the history of transportation studies in recent years, leading to the Mass Transportation Survey. Instead of adopting the survey’s plan, Congress passed the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, which directed NCTA to evaluate the survey’s plan and consider alternative facilities and services. As stated in Section 102, the key requirement was for planning, on a regional basis, “a unified system of freeway, parkways, express transit service on exclusive rights-of-way and other major transportation facilities.”

Stolzenbach said that if that language “were not clear enough,” the House and Senate reports on the legislation spelled out the congressional intent. For example, the Senate report stated:

It is becoming increasingly evident that any attempt to meet the area’s transportation needs by highways and private automobiles alone will wreck the city—it will demolish residential neighborhoods, violate parks and playgrounds, desecrate the monumental portions of the Nation’s capital, and remove much valuable property from the tax rolls.

NCTA had not scrapped the Mass Transportation Survey, but had embarked on analysis of alternative rapid transit and highway systems “in an effort to develop a combined system which will best meet the future needs of the region at the least cost.”

As for freeways, NCTA had to consider the elements that were committed and those still open to review. “A year ago it appeared that much of the system, including the proposed inner loop and radials in north Washington, was uncommitted.” That changed when the District commissioners proposed “a sharply accelerated highway program” for FY 1963 that moved interchange “C” up by 1 year and the Three Sisters Bridge by 4 years. “Construction of these key projects would have the effect of forcing construction of much of the highway system proposed in the mass transportation survey.” As a result, allowing these accelerated projects to proceed in 1963 “would contradict the directive given the Agency by Congress.” It also would “prejudge the issue of what shall be the future transportation system in the National Capital region—the very issue which Congress reserved for its decision by the passage of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960.”

In response to questions from Senator Gale W. McGee (D-Wy.), Stolzenbach said NCTA had been working with highway agencies in the District, Maryland, and Virginia to estimate future traffic. This work had been underway for 2 years, but just recently a member of his staff had said the highway planners they were working with “were in complete agreement on all of the factors that were going into these traffic forecasts.” These factors would affect the balance of highway and transit proposed in the November report. “Quite obviously now, with the inferior transit service we have here, for many rides it takes twice as long to take the bus as it does to ride your car.” With a rail rapid transit system, that would not be the case. “We will relate it to the cost, the relative costs of riding public transportation versus driving an automobile, paying parking fees downtown.”

One of Senator McGee’s questions grew out of a study by Wilbur Smith and Associates that projected only a small percentage of traffic in outlying areas was downtown-oriented, thus reducing the value of rail rapid transit. Stolzenbach did not consider that a valid conclusion:

I cannot believe that if we have a rapid transit system it will not reduce the requirements for freeways because if you are going to get between 60 and 80 percent of the people who ride from suburbs to downtown peak hours [to] ride transit, you are . . . going to need the number of freeways that have been predicted.

The type of freeways under consideration “are not the kind of freeways required for the vast number of daily movements that are involved in a total daily county,” even though they were the type that BPR endorses for peak hour needs:

We certainly need more freeways, more highways. No question about it . . . I have been saying this ever since I have been in office. The question here is of the balance, and the balance has to be struck in relation to a large number of considerations: Costs, the disruption of the city, and meeting the peak hour requirements.

Senator McGee wondered about the role of buses if “we would have a rather well integrated freeway system and a minimal, maybe a minimal subway system downtown.” Would not buses on freeways make sense? Stolzenbach replied that NCTA would recommend many arteries to include bus transport, but buses entering the center “cannot do the job of distributing people in the downtown area rapidly and efficiently and if you require them to make too many transfers in

order to do this, they [commuters] are simply not going to ride transit and . . . solve the basic problem, which is to relieve congestion and to provide a more effective transit system.”

He was not prepared to unveil all the details that would be in the November report, but he said:

Buses have a role. Rapid transit has a role and the automobile has a role and the highways have a role. And I assure you that there is going to be a very substantial highway program recommended in our overall plan . . . .

We are zeroing in on it. We have some ideas as to the direction in which it is going . . . . Many of the major things are clear. We are trying to present a system that will stand up under a rigorous examination in terms of its economics, in terms of the things that it will do for this city.

When Senator Case’s question time came, he asked about the Three Sisters Bridge, “one of the things that have been concerning you as possibly prejudicing the results of your study if they are allowed to proceed.” He asked Stolzenbach if the bridge was the only project he wants the subcommittee to de-fund for 1963. Stolzenbach replied, “That would be my recommendation, yes, sir.”

Senator Case asked why NCTA objected to the bridge. Stolzenbach replied that as best he had been able to determine, “the principal justification for it is to provide a route for trucks to get into the District of Columbia from Route 66,” because they would not be able to use the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. The question, therefore, was how trucks would get into the District:

If the traffic figures don’t show the need for another bridge, it seems to me that we ought to examine very seriously whether we are just building this bridge for the sole reason of bringing trucks into the District of Columbia.

He assumed alternatives existed, such as directing trucks from I-66 via Jefferson Davis Highway to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge on Shirley Highway, a distance of about 2 miles. “This highway exists; with a very minimum of modification [Jefferson Davis Highway] could be brought up to interstate standard and provide a perfectly adequate interstate truck route connecting with 66.”

(In this area, the Jefferson Davis Highway parallels the Potomac River from Crystal City to Rosslyn. It was built in the 1940s as part of the Pentagon Road Network. On December 17, 1964, the State took over ownership and maintenance responsibility from BPR for the Pentagon Road Network. The highway was then designated State Route 110.)

Another factor was the Mansfield bill regarding the Glover-Archbold Park. If that bill becomes law, “I think that that rather effectively closes out that as one of the major circumferential highways in the region.

What about the Potomac River Freeway, which the House had funded. Stolzenbach replied, “I think whatever funds were in there for the Potomac River freeway we could not comment.” It was essentially an extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway “and we have had no question with this as a major freeway artery along the river there.” It was probably needed,

especially since Congress allowed funding for bus stations and parking lots along the memorial parkway. The Three Sisters Bridge was another matter. “We see nothing in the traffic estimates as far as we have gone that indicate the need for it and we feel again that there is no reason to make the decision now that you have to have Three Sisters Bridge.” [District of Columbia Appropriations for 1963, Hearings on H.R. 12276 before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, part 2, pages 1651-1667]

Senator Case invited Aitken to respond. Aitken said the Three Sisters Bridge was not exclusively for trucks. It “has formed a vital link in [the] proposed regional highway system ever since the publication of the 1959 mass transportation plan.” The need was solid since traffic across the river had increased from 100,000 in 1942 to 300,000 in the early 1960s. The river was a limitation on capacity directly affecting Virginia. Without additional bridge capacity, development of northern Virginia would be held back, but with it, would continue to attract Federal offices: “More Pentagons, more CIA’s, and so forth.” He continued:

The District might consider taking a completely indifferent attitude with reference to the needs and requirements of nearby Virginia, but there seems to be little doubt that a proper appraisal warrants action on a total metropolitan basis.

Insofar as practical, such action should be based on logic and practicality. The overall plan: It is ironic that some of the agencies contesting the Three Sisters Bridge are at the same time planning and advancing projects which require the Three Sisters Bridge, specifically, the National Park Service desires to close the East Drive between Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool.

NPS wanted to get as much traffic as possible from the Lincoln Memorial. “With this reduction in traffic, it becomes all the more apparent that the construction of the Three Sisters Bridge must be accelerated.”

The Cabin John Bridge and the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge were part of the Capital Beltway and would carry through traffic, but “only 3 percent of the passenger cars approaching this metropolitan area were interested in going past Washington.” The rest of the traffic remained within the metropolitan area. With those two bypass bridges on the fringes of the metropolitan area . . . we have a doubt at the moment as to whether these bridges will have a full capacity or will serve a full volume during peak hours, at any early date.” More information would be gathered when they both were in full service, “but the Three Sisters Bridge is a key element in the provision of this additional capacity.”

Senator Case asked Aitken what harm would occur if construction of the bridge were delayed until 1964. After all, by then, the District would have a better idea of how much traffic would use the Cabin John Bridge and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Aitken replied that traffic would increase regardless. “I could not honestly say that if we didn’t build a bridge this year or next year that the area or the traffic situation would be totally impossible.” For example, the Washington Channel Bridge, which had opened on July 31, was already carrying 25,000 vehicles a day. Aitken could not predict “an absolute disaster” if the

Three Sisters Bridge were delayed for 6 months or a year, but “I think it would be unfortunate because I think that the built-up demands for highways in this area, as elsewhere in the Nation, are tremendous, and even if you work at it constantly it is difficult to catch up.” [pages 1667-1673]

General Clarke said he was concerned that those who were advocating delay of the bridge until after the NCTA report was released “would regard a deferral action on the part of Congress as tantamount to a disapproval of the particular bridge.” He observed that Senator Mansfield had already said he would oppose the Three Sisters Bridge and that the House District Committee also had recommended deferral, “so I am a little reluctant to fly in the face of both of those.” However, “I feel I should tell you my feelings on it.”

In addition to what Aitken had said, General Clarke pointed out:

Ever since I came here I was concerned that we build usable segments of our highway system, that we not build pieces here and there, but we start in the center and build out. If you will look at the pattern of our highway development program we are tackling the most difficult areas in which to build in the heart of the city and then are trying to take it out so that it will be usable as it is completed.

As noted earlier, NPS was building the parkway to the District line. The next link was the Potomac River Freeway, which would require a bridge in the vicinity of Three Sisters Islands. Therefore, “we should begin the Potomac Freeway to make allowance for that bridge to be built, and should actually build some of the structures of that bridge. This is what these appropriations would do this year; they would allow us to get started on that.” The situation, he acknowledged, was complicated by the fact that NPS had withdrawn its concurrence in the use of park lands for the bridge on July 19 in response to a question from Senator Mansfield.

Senator Byrd asked about the views of Arlington County, Virginia. General Clarke said he had not received any direct contacts from the county but understood from news reports that the county wanted to defer action on the Three Sisters Bridge until after NCTA released its report.

When Senator Case pointed out that the use of Glover-Archbold Park for a parkway was in doubt in view of the Mansfield bill and NPS opposition, General Clarke replied, “We have had three separate agreements with the Park Service on how this land might be used, and they have withdrawn on each one of them, sir.”

Aitken added:

The 1959 MTS plan included Three Sisters and Glover-Archbold as part of what they called the intermediate loop [Fort Drive]. We subsequently dropped that . . .

The current plan, he said, did not “contemplate anything in regard to the Glover-Archbold Parkway. He explained the current plan, known as M-7, that avoided Glover-Archbold Park:

Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, for background this plan is identified in our records as "M-7." We started out with plan A, and this is indicative of how many plans we have

drawn to get to this point. [Referring to a map] This indicates the present Whitehurst Freeway. It crosses under Key Bridge, ties into Canal Road and Key Bridge and into M Street. This lower red line shows the location of the second proposed freeway. At this point, that is at about 31st Street, it would be about at the same level as the present Whitehurst, continuing westerly it loses elevation and curves under Whitehurst at approximately 33d Street. By the time the new freeway gets to Key Bridge it is under the present Whitehurst Freeway. Continuing to the west, the present connections to Key Bridge would be removed. Outbound, that is Whitehurst Freeway, would be extended on to the northwesterly – above the canal, above Canal Road, up on the bluff in front of Georgetown University . . .

Inbound traffic would come off Three Sisters Bridge. This is up in the air above Canal Road, curving to the right, and continue in an easterly direction on the bluff, below the outbound roadway, and extend easterly to this point just about south of Georgetown University. Canal Road would have only inbound traffic on it at this point, and such traffic would have an opportunity to get on the freeway, or stay on M. Street.

Old Canal Road likely will be an extension of one roadway to serve the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and it ties in directly with this freeway, and with M Street in Georgetown, so the traffic has a choice. Prospect Street would be extended to the west, and tie into a parking area at Georgetown University. This has been worked out with the university, and they support this plan. In the vicinity of the lower end of Glover-Archbold Parkway – I should back up and pick up M Street about a block west of Key Bridge. At this point traffic westbound on M Street would curve to the right and go up on the bluff to the right of the freeway, that is, between the freeway and the Georgetown University road, continuing westerly on the bluff and above the freeway, tying in at a point out just southwest of the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Foxhall Road. At that point, traffic again would have a choice. It could either continue up the parkway or curving to the right it could go to MacArthur Boulevard or Foxhall Road.

Senator CASE. Even if you do not run a parkway or freeway up through the park, you do plan to take quite a piece of the park . . . for use in this traffic pattern, do you not?

Mr. AITKEN. Well, sir, that is a one-lane loop, and I think the impact would be very minor.

Senator CASE. Is it elevated or is it ground level or what?

Mr. AITKEN. Well, no, sir; it is on fill and at ground level. These contours indicate the nature of the ground. That is 100 feet. This is 125 just west of the gym at Georgetown. It drops to 50, that is a total drop of 75 feet in a very short distance. While this would use some of the park, Senator, it also would get rid of somethings they would like to get rid of. The old transit bridge, and certain other undesirable things and the resultant facility would be landscaped and attractively improved. [pages 1673-1679]

Aitken said he wanted to make an important point, namely that “unless we can build, somehow, an integrated freeway system in the city, and in the metropolitan area, we cannot meet, we cannot adequately serve, our transportation needs in the future”:

There is no city in the land today which has a completed freeway system. Some cities are quite well along, but none of them have a completed system, and I think it is quite obvious if the Interstate System, for example, is built elsewhere, and it is not built here, I think we face some nice problems and nice predicaments.

He described the issues concerning the link between I-70S, which was built to Pooks Hill, and the District; the connection between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and downtown Washington; how to get I-95 traffic from the District line to downtown, and I-66 moving from Virginia to the city:

Now, here we have an Interstate Highway System coming along . . . . I think there is a great deal of pressure for the reconstruction and modernization of that part of the Interstate Highway System . . . . We have these things coming toward the city. Are we going to say we will stop them out here, the beltway, or here some place at the river, at the District line? [pages 1685-1686]

Senator Byrd asked Stolzenbach about his coordination with District highway officials as they prepared the 1963 budget. Stolzenbach acknowledged that “it is evident that there is disagreement between the Agency and the District of Columbia Highway Department on what should be done next year.” However, they had established what he regarded “as probably the most important example of joint highway transit planning, in other words, total urban transportation planning,” that had ever occurred in the Washington area:

I was talking to the Federal Highway Administrator yesterday and he said he was terribly excited about it. That is one of the reasons why they have assigned five of their people, their technicians, to help us and observed it because they want to apply this joint technique to other cities where they have comparable problems.

He did not think any substantive or even procedural issue existed on planning:

It is sort of a question of whether you want to take a plan, essentially that was based on an all-highway solution that is 5 years old, and say that we are going to go ahead with this because money is available, or whether you want to wait just a little bit because we are not for a 5-year study or even a 1-year study. This is all in the mill, and next January Congress is going to have the most up to date and, I think, the best plan from the point of view of application, using the best professional planning techniques that we have available in a plan for this region. It will not be just an integrated highway plan, but an integrated transportation plan. [page 1687]

Officials continued sparring over the planned freeway network, then returned on August 10 to continue the discussion. General Clarke, after discussing his background and role, summarized what he saw as the transportation goal:

I think our major objective in all of these discussions is to provide a transportation system for the city that will be effective, that will meet the needs of the people, and will to some extent meet the desires of the people. And this is what all of our discussions are trying to



resolve, to come down to an effective, reasonable, desirable transportation system. And I think we are all agreed on this as our objective.

The Mass Transportation Survey recommended creation of a coordinating agency to get a mass transit program underway while area jurisdictions worked out a compact for a replacement organization to complete the job. The result, General Clarke said, was NCTA. He referred to views that NCTA was to take over transportation planning, including highway planning, and Chairman Whitener's report accusing the District commissioners of circumventing the will of Congress by not holding off on certain projects until NCTA released its report.

The intent of Congress in creating NCTA had become unclear. "There is language in there which has been cited by people who feel that there is a mandate, that there is a requirement that NCTA evaluate this study, and then presumably decide whether it is good or bad and then go on and do something." At the same time, Congress had expressed its will in other ways:

As I see it, the intent of Congress is expressed in the legislative history, the act itself, and in the actions of Congress subsequent to the passage of the act, and by certain things that were not said in the act that created the Agency.

For example, Congress had continued appropriating funds for highway development after passing the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. In that legislation, Congress had included a prohibition on freeway construction in a part of the city as an outgrowth of the U.S. 240-I-70 controversy:

And it has always been my feeling that since Congress specifically forbade this particular item, and was silent on the other items, that the intent of Congress was that the remainder of the program continue. And this seems to be supported by the continuing actions of Congress in appropriating money as we went along.

He also referred to the language in the 1960 Act referring to highway development by the agencies with jurisdiction. In his view, NCPC was the overall transportation planning organization for the area and particularly the city – "all the aspects of life in the District of Columbia, the planning of that falls to their organization." He continued:

So that I think the intent of Congress was that the highway program as developed continue and that there be developed an accompanying transit plan. In the act Congress included what I would consider boilerplate language, which said that the Agency was to evaluate the transportation plan.

This does not mean to tear it apart or hold it up, but to evaluate it and work along with it. And it talks about cooperation and coordination of all these programs as we move along. [pages 1692-1694]

Senator Case said he understood the difficulties involved in transportation planning, particularly in a city where Members of Congress were involved in details that were handled without congressional involvement in other cities. "I express my own sympathy to you," he told General Clarke, adding:

The fact that you have disagreement as to what these things mean doesn't disturb me in the least. This is a contribution to us who have some responsibility on this subcommittee and to the Congress, and I am sure to the President, with whom I suppose the ultimate decisions for recommendations at least must lie, in the absence of any other machinery that is set up to make final decisions here.

Meaning, he said, no disrespect to the District commissioners, highway officials, or General Clarke, Senator Case said he was convinced that some form of mass transit was essential for the Washington area:

This to me suggests the desirability of attempting before we do much more—in fact, I think anything more—in the way of major projects, that we do know a little bit better what the answer to that problem may be.

He thought, for example, that some freeway projects might incorporate rapid rail transit and, therefore, should be wider than currently planned:

And perhaps it would be wise to wait until we get this particular plan before us before we go ahead with other projects, which I think it is true may by their own momentum or the logic of their existence require further things—for example, the building of Three Sisters bridge it seem to me would logically suggest—you have got this great project here, which could, if extended through a northwest loop, be much more valuable than it is sitting here.

And perhaps it is desirable at this point to wait for the 2 or 3 months that we would wait until we have the whole picture, not only among you, because I think you all probably know what each other's thinking is pretty much according to law, but we can't know more than that, and the public can't know.

General Clarke said that as far as the projects NCTA wanted to defer (Three Sisters Bridge and interchange "C"), none of the agencies "had contemplated that they would try there to make dual use of those particular structures for transit. By contrast, for a radial facility such as the Northeast Freeway, "every consideration should be given there to the use of the median strip."

Senator Case replied by referring to the report Chairman Bible's committee had issued on June 21, 1960, regarding the legislation that established NCTA. The language discussed the Mass Transportation Survey, saying it was "a valuable starting point," but accepting it without further study "would be a mistake." The report stated:

In particular it appears that the highway agencies will not be able to build new freeways nearly as fast as called for in the plan. Since it is a balanced plan and the elimination of any one facility calls for an elimination of the other or a change in the location of major traffic arteries, the failure to build all the highways will call for a reassessment of all the parts of the plan . . . .

Senator Case admitted that trying to figure out the intent of Congress "is more than I know." He believed the 1960 Act was not intended simply to develop a transit plan, but rather to take "an overall relook at the transit problem in the District and in the metropolitan area." He understood

the desire of the District commissioners and highway officials to proceed as fast as they can to overcome “the layers and layers of approvals that they have to obtain in all the agencies,” but Senator Case still believed that this language reflected “what Congress really meant when they set up this agency, and it would be well for the subcommittee, as I see it, now to take that as a general guide.” [pages 1699-1701]

Later that day, the headline in *The Evening Star* read: “Case Would Delay Three Sisters Span.”

The hearings continued on the morning of Saturday, August 11, this time with only city officials on the panel. The day’s hearing covered many of the topics discussed the previous 2 days, but two items made news.

General Clarke, referring to Chairman Whitener’s highly critical report, asked for help from the Senators in understanding the congressional intent in creating NCTA:

I do not enjoy the position of advancing a position which seems to be counter to the position which a subcommittee of the House has adopted . . . . I would be hopeful that there would be some way of clarifying once and for all what is the intent of Congress. I had thought that the intent had been portrayed and shown by Congress over the past years in making continual appropriations to carry on our program. I thought this was a clear indication—but perhaps I was wrong.

But I suppose that, in a way, we are here asking your subcommittee to help determine for us what is the true intent of Congress in carrying out this program. I do not wish to pass the buck to your subcommittee, but I think it is clear that my position is not the position that the subcommittee of the House District Committee adopted.

Aitken pointed out that the House appropriated funds for the Three Sisters Bridge; “in the event the Senate should do likewise, these two actions might be indicative of the will of the whole Congress.”

Senator Byrd asked how the District would react if the Senate were to delete the \$300,000 in view of the House District subcommittee’s report. “Would you proceed, do you think?” he asked.

General Clarke replied, “No, sir; I do not think we would. I think we would regard this, then as a clear indication that Congress at the moment does not want a bridge there.”

Senator McGee suggested that such an action might mean simply that the Congress wants the District to wait for the NCTA report, not that Congress opposed the bridge. [pages 1757-1758]

The second point was that Senator McGee was upset about a front page story in the *Post* that morning. According to the article, a spokesman said BPR was “deeply concerned” about the disputes between District highway officials and other officials who want to hold off on construction until a mass transit system is developed:

“By law, we make the 90 per cent funds available for certain specific purposes—namely an interstate road system, a spokesman for the Federal agency said yesterday.

“If we find that the projects we are supporting are not going to be part of the interstate system, then we will have no alternative other than to request the return of the funds. The consequences for the District could be rather serious.”

Even if the District were required to return Interstate construction funds, the city would still be obligated to pay for its long-term highway construction contracts:

To do so, the District presumably would have to divert many millions of dollars away from schools, health facilities and other services which the city is already hard-pressed to provide.

A cutback could even affect completed projects that had been built with 90-percent Interstate funds, such as the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, the Washington Channel Bridge, portions of the Southwest Freeway, and even the District’s short section of the Capital Beltway on the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge:

“They are all part of the overall plan for the region,” the Bureau official said. “If we are now going to start pulling pieces out of the plan, then we may have to abandon the plan and start all over again.”

If this were to happen, the roads now completed would be considered local roads and a new interstate system would have to be planned, he said.

BPR had been considering the issue for some time and had discussed it with District officials:

He said the Bureau will make its decision soon, possibly in the next few weeks. “We are at a crossroads and we have to act pretty quickly,” he said. [Clopton, Willard, “D.C. Facing Cutoff of Road Cash,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 11, 1962]

An angry Senator McGee said:

I think it would be of interest to the committee, Mr. Chairman, to know if this was released at this point in order to threaten the committee in trying to make an honest deliberation on this question.

If that is the case, who cocked the gun, I think we ought to know that.

I personally resented the appearance of the story at this time, when we are making our attempt to get the facts on this question.

And if this is an attempt to do that, then I think the committee ought to know how far they really can go in the cutting off of the funds while the Congress is trying honestly to consider all the information that is involved in reaching a decision that is in the interest of the Nation’s Capital and the surrounding areas.

And I would hope that we might have a little light shed on that, because I assume that it is the hesitancy over Three Sisters and over the circles [Inner Loop] in the east part of town, the suspension of those for the time being, that is really what has provoked this and brought it to the surface.

General Clarke quickly replied:

May I comment first on the point of a release timed with the hearings, and state in all honesty and sincerely that I had nothing to do with the timing of the release or the substance of the matter which was in the release.

I would like the record to show that clearly.

Senator McGee wanted to know the name of the BPR spokesman who released the statement to the *Post*. General Clarke said he did not know the name. "I was called out of bed this morning by other newspapers trying to find out the same information." He promised to try to find out in time for the afternoon session.

General Clarke added that the article was fairly accurate but not entirely so. He had met with the NPS Director within the past week along with BPR officials. Participants discussed the possibility that funds might be withheld. "But I assure the committee that this is not in the form of a threat--."

When the hearing resumed on Saturday afternoon, Federal Highway Administrator Whitton had joined the District panel. By then, the *Star* had published a similar article about the threat to withhold funds. The article quoted Whitton:

"We discussed this with the District," Mr. Whitton said, "but there was no ultimatum. We set no date for them. We also cannot roll up the highways that are already there.

"We just said to them: Here are some things you ought to think about. Some day you just have to finish your planning and start to work. If we can't get a highway through the District, I don't know if we should build roads into the District."

Referring to the work on the South Leg of the Inner Loop, he continued:

"The Inner Loop was agreed to as part of the interstate highway system," Mr. Whitton said. "If we build the South Leg and can't complete the other ones, then the South Leg is not properly designed. We have to have a balanced road system."

General Clarke told the reporter that he could not imagine BPR filing suit for a refund, which would require the District to go to Congress to appropriate the money "to pay up." The District, in short, would be hard put to refund Interstate funds. General Clarke made clear, however, that no one was discussing reducing funds for schools or other city services to repay BPR.

Regardless, Whitton said, "We have had no falling out with the District. We'll continue to work together":

But he made it clear that the Federal funds are available for use only in interstate systems, not local spurs, and if a road network turns out to be not a part of an interstate system, the bureau has to request the return of its funds.

Because the local roads would be eligible for BPR's usual 50-percent reimbursement under the non-Interstate program, BPR would not require a full refund. I would seek repayment only for the difference between 50 and 90 percent reimbursements. ["Road Bureau Prods D.C. on Slow Pace," *The Evening Star*, August 11, 1962]

Senator McGee asked Whitton to "shed any light on" why the two articles appeared while the subcommittee was debating whether to delay appropriations for several freeway projects.

Whitton replied:

The story, the timing of the story is absolutely coincidental. We make no release of it. A reporter called us and asked the questions, and we answered them. We had no ulterior motive whatever, other than to answer questions . . . . We did not initiate the story, nor did we plant any questions anywhere to cause the story to be brought up.

Senator McGee expressed the "sensitivity" of the timing because the subcommittee had been deliberating for 2 days "on this question of trying to resolve, if possible, this at least quasi-impasse that has arisen with the District on this question." He asked Whitton to comment on whether delaying the projects until NCTA releases its report in November would affect Federal funds for the District.

Whitton explained that the Federal-aid highway program was funded through highway user taxes that could be used for no other purpose. If a State or District does not use the funds made available to it, "the people are not getting the benefit" they paid for. The District of Columbia was in "a peculiar position" regarding the use of Interstate construction funds because it was entirely urban:

Now, any other State highway department has rural interstate routes. And if they get tied up in a city, and it is not uncommon to be tied up on construction work in a city, they can spend their money outside, in rural areas, and keep the money at work, or keep it going, and get the highways built.

But the District is in this peculiar position where they have no rural area to spend the money. And that is the reason we hate to see it tied up.

I think they probably have \$40 million or so interstate funds now available to be spent on construction projects.

He also explained the circumstances that might prompt BPR to cut off Interstate funds for the District:

We would cut off no funds to the District until we had been told, or had found out definitely that some of the interstate routes within the District had been removed from the Interstate System.

And then, when we made the next estimate of cost to the Interstate System, which I think is in 1966, our estimate would then be based on the Interstate System as in effect at that time.

Just to clarify, Senator McGee asked whether delaying interchange “C” or the Three Sisters Bridge would provoke BPR to cut off funds. Whitton replied, “It would not.”

Whitton said that a number of routes had been designated in the District, including the Inner Loop, a connection to Baltimore, and so on:

Well, if some of that inner loop is taken out, then it is not a part of the Interstate System. Or if so much of it is taken out, that we do not have a connected highway through the District, then much of the now interstate routes in the District might not qualify to be in the Interstate System, because the Interstate System has to be a connected system, as we see it.

Senator McGee wanted to confirm that simply delaying action would not result in a funding penalty for the District. Whitton replied:

That is right.

But let me be honest—we do regret delays, because we are anxious to get the money working.

Senator McGee summarized:

Well, I think that is what the real meat of this particular element in the controversy is. I do not think anybody on the subcommittee would have in mind using delay as a trick to defeat or destroy. Because the only question that has been raised here in this hearing, I believe, in all fairness to all sides, was the wisdom of trying to delay until the report was submitted which the President has requested for the 1<sup>st</sup> of November.

And if it became clear that, subsequently, this would be used only as a tactic to delay further, I think that would require a very sober assessment by the subcommittee.

Senator Case wanted to know if BPR could pay for a wider median to accommodate transit. Whitton replied, “I do not think there is any legal objection to that” if the expenditures were limited to restoring a disrupted rail line. He cited Congress Street in Chicago where the Interstate followed the alignment of a railroad that had to be restored.

Senate Case asked if BPR also could pay for construction of a new rail line. Whitton said that BPR could not pay for the rail line or the right-of-way to accommodate it. “I think the rail system ought to pay that cost.”

When the Senator asked if the distinction Whitton was making was stated in law, Whitton replied that he could not repeat the language of the law. "But I think that the money that comes into the trust fund is reserved solely for the building a highway, or for the engineering of a highway, or for the right-of-way for a highway."

Next, Senator Case asked about the use of Federal-aid funds for bus lanes. He quoted a report by the Housing and Home Finance Agency to the President enunciating a policy that would allow the use of Federal-aid highway funds for exclusive bus lanes "when comprehensive transportation plans indicate this to be desirable." Whitton explained:

We are anticipating that it will be legally possible for us to provide lanes for the exclusive use of buses if the volume of bus traffic justifies it. We might even provide lanes for buses that can use it from 7 until 9 o'clock in the morning, and from 4 until 6 o'clock in the afternoon. We would have to have policing of such an arrangement.

What was clear was that Federal-aid highway funds might be spent to provide lanes for buses, if Federal law were changed to permit it, but not for rail transit.

Senator Case returned to the *Post* article, asking how it came out. Whitton repeated the explanation that a reporter "called 2 or 3 days [ago] and talked to our public relations people." BPR had nothing to do with the timing of the article. "It is not premeditated whatever. I hate to tell you, but I did not even know you were in session."

Senator Case asked if the timing had anything to do with the NPS decision to withhold approval of the Three Sisters Bridge. Whitton acknowledged that BPR was "disturbed" by the NPS action. "But our release had nothing to do with it":

Senator Case. You can understand, of course, our concern, that an agency of the Federal Government should be attempting to make propaganda.

Mr. Whitton. No, sir. We definitely did not intend it as such.

Senator Case. It always backfires, and it especially backfires on Members of Congress.

Mr. Whitton: We would be the last one to do that.

Although Senators Case and McGee appeared satisfied, Whitton wanted to clarify one point:

The south leg that is now being built, and is designed, it is designed with the thought that it would comprise part of an inner loop. If all of that inner loop is not built, it could well be that the south leg . . . will not be designed correctly.

Senator Case wanted to discuss another issue, namely whether Interstate routes entering the city had to go all the way through. "Cannot interstate roads end in a metropolitan city?"

Whitton did not think so:

I just do not think that the Shirley Highway could come into, say, the downtown part of Washington and stop there, without going on and making a connection to the road going



to Baltimore, and still be part of the Interstate System. It could be an urban expressway. But not interstate.

The key was that the routes must be part of a connected system. A route “could flow around [a metropolitan area]. But if it started in, I think it has to flow on through.”

Senator Case asked about tunnels, and Whitton replied:

We can pay for a tunnel where that turns out to be the cheapest and most effective and efficient way of handling the traffic.

Whitton cited examples such as the tunnel west of Denver, adding that if “people still want a tunnel, then I think it is our duty and responsibility, unless Congress decides otherwise, to pay only the cost of the open cut type of highways . . . .

Senator Case asked about building tunnels under the Washington monument. Whitton replied, “Along with the District people, we are dedicated to doing the best job with the least disturbance to the established homes and businesses possible.” That included monuments.

With that, Whitton’s testimony ended, and the subcommittee returned to other subjects related to the District’s transportation needs. [pages 1805-1818]

The committee report on the hearings included many letters from others who did not testify, including a September 13 letter from Senator Randolph, then writing as a member of the Subcommittee on Roads of the Committee on Public Works. Attacks, he wrote, on the District’s capital outlay budget for highways had “created much confusion.” Referring to NCTA’s request to delay the East Leg, interchange “C,” and the Three Sisters Bridge, he said that those seeking delays “apparently are obscuring a number of facts which should be brought into focus.” The 1963 budget represents “the minimum highway needs” if the District “is to keep pace with regional and national highway development.” The budget, he wrote, was based on the Mass Transportation Survey of 1959 and approved by NCPC.

Moreover, the freeway network was designed to include rapid transit, whether by rail or nonrail. “Actually, if there should not be brought into being a rapid transit program, the proposed freeway planning will of necessity have to be much enlarged.”

Those seeking delays apparently did so “on the premise that there is a question of highway versus nonhighway facilities” for the area. This was “an unfortunate mistake” that threatened the highway program now and may threaten the transit program later.

Further, the charge that the District had accelerated its program to get ahead of NCTA was mistaken. Following the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey, Congress in 1961 had increased funds for the Interstate program, which “made it possible to proceed with the original program at a more rapid pace.” Congress created NCTA to study the rapid transit aspect of the 1959 transportation plan, including the possibility of a subway. “This meant that the second part of the overall transport plan was underway; the highway phase already had begun.”

Senator Randolph also addressed NCTA's role, which he said was subject to "additional misunderstanding." In studying mass transit, NCTA was concerned primarily with "home-to-work movement while the highway program is being designed to handle the everyday demands of modern motor vehicle traffic," which he pointed out was "only partly involved in the home-to-work movement." The truth was that "there is an ever-growing volume of motor vehicle traffic of all types that must be served," including trucks serving the area's commercial needs. "Unless these demands are met, this area will be faced with a staggering problem of traffic congestion." Delay in the freeway program will "only multiply the many serious problems that ultimately must be solved."

If the freeway system was delayed until a decision is made on a subway system, the city will be unable to do anything to address growing traffic demand, including visitors:

More than 90 percent of visitors travel in their own automobiles. It would be tragic if Washington's highway condition became such that the city would be classed as a place to avoid.

The date of NCTA report, November 1, 1962, was going to be only a starting point, to be followed by intensive hearings in 1963 to determine if its recommendations are physically possible and financially reasonable. Congressional review could take a year or more, while "highway traffic volume increases almost daily, endangering the commerce of the city and posing a serious problem of public safety." He agreed that if the area embarked on a rail rapid transit system, including a subway, some freeway plans might have to be changed, but "if the highway program is stopped until the subway plan is fully evaluated, the time lost can never be regained."

Senator Randolph also pointed out the District's freeway network, including its controversial parts, were part of a metropolitan area network within the Interstate System. The freeways must be coordinated with their links in Maryland and Virginia. "Changes in the vital parts of the plan could result in these roads being considered ineligible for inclusion in the interstate program."

In closing, he urged the committee to appropriate funds to keep the District's freeway program on schedule. Not doing so would mean costs would increase, downtown commerce would continue to deteriorate with a resultant loss in revenues, and Interstate funds might be lost. [pages 2476-2477]

That same day, August 11, Thomas W. Richards, vice-chairman of the Arlington County Board, accused the District of Columbia of plotting to spoil the county's residential areas so it can get more Federal-aid highway funds. He was referring to the Three Sisters Bridge:

To get 90 per cent Federal financing for the Potomac Freeway it wants to build, the District has got to connect it to an Interstate System which accommodates trucks. So it proposes to link it to a new bridge and then spoil our residential areas by ramming heavy truck traffic through. This is expediency rather than planning. It is a thinly veiled attempt to bail the District out of paying for the Potomac Freeway.

He indicated that the District's request for \$300,000 for the bridge in its 1963 budget was just a ruse to begin minimal construction before NCTA releases its report:

We feel that this fine park on the Virginia shore should not be destroyed simply to accommodate the District of Columbia's freeway schemes. ["Arlington Charges 'Plot' In District Road Plans," *The Sunday Star*, August 12, 1962; "Member of Board Opposes Bridge Link," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 12, 1962]

The District, fighting to save its highway program, released a half-hour color film called "Freeway" pointing out how an up-to-date freeway system could eliminate congestion. At the end of the film, General Clarke said:

The alternates are clear: completion of the freeway system, with people and goods moving and community life flourishing—or construction stopped, goods and people slowed down, with the accompanying blight and decay . . . ."

WMAL-TV was to debut the \$2,000 film on Wednesday, August 15, at 9 p.m. It would then be made available to community organizations for showings with speakers available to discuss the District's Interstate program. ["D.C. Movie On Freeways Is Released," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 12, 1962]

As part of the public relations effort to gain support for the freeways, Aitken, appearing on WWDC's "Report to the People" on September 1, said he wished the public would express the same support for highways that it expressed for automobiles. The District, he said, had the highest per capita income in the country, with automobile sales rising steadily. At the same time, the public expressed "no particular interest" in the freeway network those cars needed. "It makes me wonder philosophically, why."

After all, the purchase of cars was "an implied endorsement of automobility." He wondered if the lack of public support resulted from "a feeling of people that the debate about freeways is academic, something that they feel they personally can't do anything about." Even the harshest critics, he suggested, preferred their automobile to rapid transit, despite their desire to delay freeway construction until the mass transit system was worked out. ["Aitkin [sic] Seeks Public Help on Freeways," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 2, 1962]

On September 25, Robert Moses was in Washington for a presentation to the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Commissioners' and Governors' Conference on Metropolitan Washington Traffic Problems. (The Governors' Conference was the forerunner of the National Governors Association.) In his remarks, he discussed the congressional delays in the freeway program:

It is not in the public interest to delay this program on the theory that an as yet undisclosed and undetermined rapid transit system will make such highway arterials unnecessary, or materially alter the proposed network.

Washington was, he said, "a car and bus town," resulting in a need to improve transportation for these vehicles. He did not completely discount the need for mass transit:

There are locations where rapid transit can be combined with vehicular lanes with the same right-of-way, but not many. No doubt commuter subsidies of some kind are inevitable, but they should depend on superior rail service after the relative roles of the train, bus, car, and aircraft have been determined by experts concerned only with the truth. [“Moses Fears Transit May Delay Highways,” *The Evening Star*, September 26, 1962]

On September 27, 1962, the Committee on Appropriations completed work on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963. Regarding freeways, the committee’s reported stated:

Funds for the interchange C project, together with the Northeast Freeway and the east leg, were disapproved by the House, and this committee concurs in this action.

The committee also deleted \$760,000 for the Southeast Freeway (13<sup>th</sup> Street, SE, to Barney Circle) because Director Aitken had testified on August 9 that although the House had appropriated funds for the project, “I am going to suggest to you, sir, that there is no need for this appropriation in 1962 with interchange C out because I cannot use it.” [page 1688]

Without mentioning the proposal to shift the East Leg to cross park lands along the Anacostia River, the committee addressed the idea by citing a provision of the law, signed on June 2, 1950 (Public Law 81-534), authorizing construction of the East Capitol Street Bridge across the Anacostia River:

That neither the bridge, approaches, nor connecting roads provided for herein shall be planned or constructed through the National Arboretum on the west bank of the Anacostia River.

The report continued:

District officials are reminded that over 12 years ago Congress thus expressly precluded any plans for the construction of highways or parkways through the National Arboretum, which has since been improved at a cost of over \$8 million. In view of the longstanding legislative history on this matter, the committee expects that District officials will make no further use of planning or other funds available to them for developing future proposals which contemplate the use of the National Arboretum for highway or parkway purposes.

In short, the District was free to consider shifting the East Leg to a river alignment as long as it did not encroach on the National Arboretum.

(Like so many other projects in Washington, the East Capitol Street Bridge was the subject of extensive controversy in the late 1940s. District officials wanted to construct the new bridge at East Capitol Street. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission favored a bridge at Massachusetts Avenue. For example, General Grant, testifying as an official of the American Planning and Civic Association, said the District’s preferred location would do “irreparable damage” to the area and result in such “intolerable” traffic congestion around the Capitol that Congress might have to appropriate funds for tunnels to carry the overflow on Independence

Avenue and Constitution Avenue. During the debate, Acting Secretary of Agriculture K. T. Hutchinson submitted an amendment to a bridge bill that resulted in the provision protecting the National Arboretum from intrusion by a highway or parkway. The *Star* called the fight between the city and critics the “battle of the bridges.” [Rogers, Harold B., “Grant Criticizes City Heads’ Effort On Bridge Site,” *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1950]

(President Truman approved Public Law 81-534 on June 2, 1950. The bridge opened on November 10, 1955, following dedication ceremonies presided over by District Commissioner Spencer. On a rainy day, he told the crowd of about 300 that opening the \$16 million bridge was a “pleasant task.” It was, he said, “a monument to the skill, energy and vision of the city’s engineers and planners.” Miss Tippy Stringer, the “Weather Girl” on WRC-TV who also hosted cooking and homemaking shows on the station, cut the ribbon:

Miss Tippy Stringer, television star, came bareheaded to cut the red satin ribbon . . . . As her scissors parted the satin, Miss Stringer said, “I dedicate this new bridge to the motorists of the Nation.”

Samuel Spencer, president of the Board of Commissioners, handed the blonde television personality a bouquet of chrysanthemums. Nine-year-old Don Sennott, of 1712 D st. ne., clamored for her autograph, which he got on a wet matchbook.

(Eventually, the bridge was expected to carry 90,000 vehicles a day. [Bassett, Grace, “E. Capitol St. Span Opened In the Rain,” *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*, November 11, 1955]

(In a ceremony on June 13, 1974, the bridge was renamed the Whitney M. Young Jr. Memorial Bridge in honor of the former leader of the National Urban League who had died in 1971. [“Bridge Honors Whitney Young,” *The Washington Star-News*, June 13, 1974] In 1992, the *Post*’s Alan Bisbort described the “steel-plate girder bridge” as “lean and streamlined.” [Bisbort, page 9])

Regarding one of the most controversial projects on the District’s agenda, the committee approved \$300,000 to begin construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. However, it did so “with the understanding that the District of Columbia Highway Department will not proceed with the project until the report of the National Capital Transportation Agency has been submitted in November 1962.” Further, “if that report is against the Three Sisters Bridge, the Commissioners shall proceed with the construction of the bridge unless before March 1, 1963, action to negate such construction shall have been taken by either the Senate Committee on Appropriations or the House Committee on Appropriations.”

Finally, the committee stated:

Furthermore, it is the view of the committee that no funds allocated to the District of Columbia’s highway program shall be used for the construction of the Glover-Archbold Parkway. The committee further recommends that the District of Columbia cooperate in the preservation of this natural park. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963,

The Senate considered the bill on September 28. After the Senate had considered many other provisions, Senator Byrd discussed the highway provisions. He said that the District appropriations subcommittee had provided in its report that if NCTA's report was against the Three Sisters Bridge, the District "shall not proceed" to construction. The Senator explained why the committee changed the subcommittee wording:

It was the feeling of those of us who wished to strike out such language that if it were to remain, it would, practically speaking, give the National Capital Transportation Agency a veto over the location and construction of the Three Sisters Bridge and, indirectly, over the design and construction of the Potomac River Freeway . . . .

We believe that the action taken by the full committee yesterday in striking out the earlier language removes a straitjacket which had been applied to the freeway program in the District of Columbia . . . .

In one of the few discussions of the freeway plans during consideration of the bill, Senator Randolph asked Senator Byrd to confirm that the NCTA report was due on November 1, 1962. With that in mind, he hoped that neither the Senate nor the House Committee on Appropriations would delay construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. Having been a member of the House District Committee for 14 years, and chairman for 7 years, he understood the difficulty of resolving the contentious issues Senator Byrd faced. He said nothing had happened since he wrote his September 13 letter to the Committee on Appropriations to change his mind:

I continue to believe it would be a mistake to create roadblocks against a consistent moving forward with the freeway program for the District of Columbia and adjoining areas of the Metropolitan Washington complex. I feel that, to a degree, some recognized errors have been made—not by the subcommittee, not by the Appropriations Committee, but I feel there has been a slowing down of the highway and bridge and freeway program—at least by some persons.

He understood that the critics' positions "were well taken but, I repeat, they have argued it almost to a complete standstill." He was concerned that delays and postponements of possible solutions, both commercial and passenger, were becoming "snarled in the web of confusion here."

He cited the statement by Robert Moses that delay was "against the public interest," a comment coming from "an expert, a knowledgeable person in this transit field." Senator Randolph also cited recent *Star* and *Post* editorials. The *Star*'s September 23 editorial, "Highway Disruption," quoted Senator Randolph's letter. "These are meaningful words," the editorial stated, because "no evidence has been produced by anyone to contradict the assertion of District officials that, regardless of transit proposals, more bridge capacity across the Potomac is essential for motor vehicular traffic."

Similarly, no one had produced evidence that any location other than Three Sisters Island “would be as suitable from the viewpoints of topography, traffic service, residential dislocation, or cost.”

Relatively few freeway projects were underway, but motorists were well aware of “the frustrating and time-consuming traffic jams they create.” Delays meant that the District would have to build the freeways in a shorter period, resulting in an “intolerable mess.” The editorial expressed the hope that the Senate committee would “expedite the unduly delayed freeway construction program.”

The *Post*'s September 22 editorial, “Roads and the Budget,” stated that any basic highway system for the Washington area required the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway, as well as interchange “C” and the East Leg. The growth of the suburbs was one reason why another bridge was needed to supplement the Key Bridge. “Neither the District nor, for that matter, Congress, can control the pattern of population in the suburbs.” Transit might “reduce the pressure on the roads,” but traffic that could not adapt to rail travel would increase in any event. The “economic viability” of the city depended on addressing the transportation problem.

The Senate Appropriations Committee should have restored the funds the House committee had withheld for interchange “C,” the East Leg, and the Northeast Freeway in the face of a divided Board of Commissioners. In that case, the House-Senate conference committee could retain them in the final bill. The editorial concluded with a reference to NCTA's report, still 6 weeks off:

To hold up all decisions on highway construction for another year, particularly on such insubstantial grounds, would do the city genuine damage. If Congress wishes to insure coordination between transit and highway builders, the committees certainly have the authority to require it.

After securing approval from his colleagues to reprint the Moses article and the two editorials in the record, Senator Jennings concluded:

We must all realize this is a growing city. The number of visitors to this city will increase by the millions in the years ahead. I have spoken because I felt there could not be a disregard of the needs of the city, particularly highway construction.

Without further discussion of the freeway controversy, the Senate approved the bill, which would have to be reconciled with the House version. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1963, *Congressional Record-Senate*, September 28, 1962, pages 21188, 21238-21241]

The *Star*, in an editorial about the “needless” restriction on the Three Sisters Bridge, commended Senator Byrd for securing the compromise language that would allow construction to begin unless either Committee on Appropriations takes affirmative action by March 1, 1963, to halt the project. Because General Clarke indicated the city would not be ready to begin construction before then, the restriction was “confusing as well as unnecessary”:

No Commissioner in his right mind would proceed to spend money if an Appropriations Committee, even on an informal basis, told him to stop . . . . In the unlikely event that

some persuasive argument against the bridge should turn up within the next few months, Congress would have ample time to step in—with only a modest amount of money having been spent in the meantime on the bridge design.

The confusion over the language, the editorial said, “can best be cleared up by eliminating its source.” [“Needless ‘Restriction,’” *The Evening Star*, September 29, 1962]

When conferees met, they soon found themselves deadlocked on one issue: the Three Sisters Bridge. By October 4, the *Star* was reporting that conferees were “stuck fast over the city’s controversial highway program.” According to reports, House conferees were “holding out for removal of the restriction and will take nothing else.” Referring to the more restrictive language in the Senate subcommittee’s report, the article said that Senator Byrd has “succeeded in modifying the language and removing the virtual veto power the NCTA held over highway plans.”

Senator Case, the newspaper reported, was leading Senate conferees who wanted to retain the language from the Senate report. The Senators were split, 4-4, on the issue. One House conferee said his delegation would remove the Senate restriction if “we have to stay until the snow falls.” [McKelway, John, “Highway Controversy Stalls District Budget,” *The Evening Star*, October 4, 1962]

The stalemate over the issue continued until October 10 when Senator Hayden, chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, took an unusual step, initiated by Senator Byrd, to complete the conference. On the Senate floor, Senator Hayden said:

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Presiding Officer appoint an additional conferee on the part of the Senate in regard to the District of Columbia appropriation bill for 1963, H.R. 12276.

Without objection, it was so ordered. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill – Additional Conferee, *Congressional Record-Senate*, October 10, 1962, page 22933]

With this authority, Senator Byrd added Senator Absalom W. Robertson (D-Va.) to the conference, with assurance that he would break the tie among Senate conferees in support of the bridge project and allow the conference to conclude its work. [McKelway, John, “Congress Ends Deadlock Over District Budget,” *The Evening Star*, October 10, 1962]

The *Star* praised Senator Robertson for coming to the rescue to overcome “the dogged determination of four Senate conferees to impose some kind of condition” on the District’s plans for the Three Sisters Bridge:

Their feeling, as nearly as we can make it out, is that contrary to all traffic estimates and the best judgment of the District Highway Department, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and most of the experts in Virginia, maybe the bridge is not needed.



The “whole silly business” was ironic since the restrictive language “had very little meaning anyway.” [“Robertson to the Rescue,” *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1962]

With Senator Robertson’s tie-breaking vote, the conference committee completed its work on October 10. Regarding capital outlays, the conference report stated:

The committee of conference is agreed that construction of the Three Sisters Bridge should proceed according to the plan set forth in the budget in the amount of \$300,000 as provided in the bill. Furthermore, it is the view of the committee of conference that no funds allocated to the District of Columbia’s highway program shall be used for the construction of the Glover-Archbold Parkway. The committee of conference further recommends that the District of Columbia cooperate in the preservation of this natural park. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963, Conference Report to accompany H.R. 12276, U.S. House of Representatives, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d Session, October 10, 1962, Report no. 2548, pages 4-5]

When the House took up the conference report on October 11, Chairman Natcher discussed the conferees’ decisions on freeways. During the House hearings, he said, pro-transit and pro-highway advocates “used every political issue and every possible source of opposition to bring about confusion and disorder.” This rivalry was “dangerous and certainly not [in] the best interests of the future development of our Capital City.” He explained how the two District commissioners had asked his committee to withhold funds for the East Leg, interchange “C,” and the Northeast Freeway:

Our committee believes that, where thousands of people will be displaced, every precaution should be taken prior to construction to protect these people before they are forced out of their homes. We have been assured by the Commissioners that, before funds are requested for the deleted items, some solution will be reached solving this major problem.

He described the stalemate during the conference. “Under no circumstances would we agree to such language and so informed the conferees on the other side. They refused to yield and a stalemate resulted.” With Senator Byrd’s maneuver to add a pro-bridge Senator to the conference, Chairman Natcher said, his compromise language was added to the report and the conferees were able to complete their work. “The action insisted upon by the House assures the city of Washington that the freeway program will proceed and there is a place in our Capital City for both freeways and rapid transit.”

Representative William H. Avery (R-Ks.) told his colleagues that he had no “particular interest” in the Three Sisters Bridge, “but I think it is about time that the House took a firm position in support of continued progress on a highway program for the District.” He continued:

It appears that anyone who has an objection to one particular connection or one particular interchange can object and immediately a “hold” is put on that increment. The result is to destroy the usefulness of the whole circumferential system or the inner and the outer loop as well.

He praised the House District appropriations committee for holding firm.

Representative Rhodes agreed that the bridge would “go a long way toward helping solve the dilemma of the District of Columbia highway system.” The committee’s action went “a long way” toward a solution, but “believe me, this problem is not solved and it will not be solved for quite some time.”

Representative Broyhill recalled the Senate’s attempt to include language giving the Appropriations Committee’s veto power over the Three Sisters Bridge. He had fought hard for the bridge:

However, we must recognize that in recent months objections have developed, some of which are from people in my congressional district, to the construction of the bridge, since there is a possibility that a pending rapid transit program may eliminate the necessity for this construction . . . .

There is speculation that this [NCTA] report, which is due on November 1, may well show that the Three Sisters Island Bridge is not needed. Furthermore, a subcommittee of the House District of Columbia Committee has expressed the desirability of holding up any further highway construction of this type which might be proven unnecessary in the report I just referred to.

Under the circumstances, he thought the District Commissioners should “proceed very slowly with developing their plans for this facility during the next 5-months period, until Congress has had an opportunity to consider and act on the National Capital Transportation Agency report.”

The House agreed to the conference report without further discussion of highway issues. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1963, *Congressional Record-House*, October 11, 1962, pages 23212-23215]

The Senate also considered the conference report on October 11. After the formalities of introducing the bill were over, Senator Leverett Saltonstall (R-Ma.) rose to discuss the Three Sisters Bridge. After recounting how conferees broke the stalemate, he said:

My purpose in rising today is to point out that that vote represents the views of only five members of the Senate committee. The remainder of the committee, so far as I know, are still in favor of the language in the Senate report.

He introduced an October 10 letter from Commissioner Tobriner informing Chairman Hayden that “before the Commissioners proceed with the construction of the Three Sisters bridge, they will give more careful consideration to any recommendations pertaining thereto that may appear in the report of the National Capital Transportation Agency . . . .”

Senator Saltonstall expressed the hope that the commissioners “will bear carefully in mind” the NCTA report before proceeding.

Senator Robertson pointed out that “it would have been utterly absurd to have held the Congress here until Thanksgiving or later to pass only on language in a report, the only purpose of which was to prevent the building of a necessary bridge.” The highway agencies in the District and Virginia favored the Three Sisters Bridge:

But we have a Commission [NCTA] indulging in a pipedream of a proposed subway to cost \$300 to \$600 million, that will go under the river and into a highway to relieve traffic congestion. We are to wait and spend millions of dollars in building U.S. Highway [Interstate] 66, and when it gets to the river, people will either have to swim across or stay on the Virginia side.

He dismissed the objections of “a few citizens who did not want any more traffic,” as well as the allegation that the project would interfere with the Lincoln Memorial or connect with the George Washington Memorial Parkway. NCTA, he said, had neither plans nor money for a subway system “and it will be many years before they have either.” Nothing was involved “but an effort to stop the building of a necessary bridge.”

Senator Mansfield referred to the language in the conference report regarding Glover-Archbold Park. “I hope this admonition will be considered.”

Senator Morse wanted a more definite statement on the issue. He said, “I serve notice on the District of Columbia Commissioners” that he would be in the Senate in January 1963 after the November election and “I strongly recommend that they take note of this colloquy”:

I strongly advise the District of Columbia Commissioners to see to it that this park remains untouched, either from the standpoint of building a highway through it or sacrificing it to selfish commercial interests in the District of Columbia. I suggest to the District of Columbia Commissioners that they not attempt any end run play, because if they do, they will be breaking faith with our committee, in my judgment, and with the Senate, and they will be breaking faith with a majority of the House of Representatives, if we can ever get an issue such as this to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote.

Senator Mansfield thanked Senator Morse. “I am sure the Commissioners will read every word that has been said on the floor of the Senate about this matter.”

(Senator Morse was reelected.)

Senator Humphrey, in a statement that may have been inserted into the record rather than delivered on the floor, said he supported the reservations the Senate had initially approved regarding the Three Sisters Bridge. He acknowledged “honest differences of opinion,” but felt that Congress should have the benefit of NCTA’s report on mass transit “before giving a final decision as to construction of the Three Sisters Bridge.” Given the importance of the issue, “we can afford a delay of no longer than 5 months,” as the Senate had initially approved. Because the bridge committed the District to the Inner Loop system, Congress needed “an objective assessment of the transportation needs of the area until the entire highway system is evaluated in

light of the forthcoming mass transit proposals.” He regretted that the conferees decided not to approve the Senate language.

The Senate approved the conference report. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1963- Conference Report, *Congressional Record-Senate*, October 11, 1962, pages 23162-23165]

President Kennedy, then in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis, approved the legislation on October 23, 1962 (P.L. 87-867), without comment.

That same day, General Clarke delivered a speech to the American Society of Civil Engineers in an attempt to resolve clashes between highway and transit supporters. He said, “the curse of Washington is the endless controversy about the solutions to the problems of the future which involve continuing delay with restudy after restudy of problems on which agreement may have long since been reached.”

The modes served different needs:

The mass transportation problem is concerned primarily with the movement of people into and out of the downtown section of the region. The highway problem is concerned primarily with moving those people who are not going downtown but who are moving diffused patterns throughout the region.

To break through the competitive spirit among the partisans, he said:

My proposal is quite simple. Let us attempt to arrive at agreed total volumes or percentages of the total travel . . . for which we will plan each mode of transportation.

Let us allow each agency to determine and plan an adequate system to provide for the agreed-upon loads. In this way we could at least get progress without the planners’ competing for traffic loads to justify individual broad plans.

If this first step could be agreed upon, the remaining steps are relatively simple. They consist of co-ordinating the detailed planning and construction of the various facilities to be built so that each new system provides for the other without undue waste and for mutual support.

He said that following his suggestion “would allow the shoemaker to stick to his last and the tailor to the cutting of the cloth so that the whole person will be clothed.” He favored acceleration of the highway program as well as mass transportation to create a balanced transportation system:

We must avoid action on the part of any of the official agencies which attempts to restrict unduly the programs of others to insure that a pre-determined solution will be justified. It would be possible by design to restrict a program on either side to a point that it would fail.

He believed that “we can secure among all the agencies a remarkable degree of unanimity of the numbers of people for whom adequate mass transportation should be provided and the numbers who should be provided with adequate facilities for travel by car.”

As for groups such as the American Institute of Architects, General Clarke thought they “could render a much more constructive public service by using their many talents to advise and consult on the ways by which highways may be skillfully threaded into the fabric of the Nation’s Capital.”

The area’s population, he said, would double over the next 18 years, which meant more highways were needed. He expected that sufficient housing would be available for those relocated by the program, and the board of architects would assist highway officials on matters of “esthetics and general livability.” He was “willing and anxious” to work with NPS on replacing any park land taken for the city’s public works program:

If we can avoid negativism, timidity and sheer obstruction along with cross-accusations of competing agencies, I believe we can move the city along. [Pierce, Charles D., “Clarke Proposes to End Highways-Transit Feud,” *The Evening Star*, October 23, 1962; “Clarke Tells Bickering Transit Foes to Get Back to Work,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 24, 1962]

Although the President signed the District appropriation act, 1963, without ceremony or comment – typical for such a bill – he did send a letter to Commissioner Tobriner regarding the Three Sisters Bridge. Administrator Stolzenbach, in his first appearance after a law was passed designating him an ex-officio member of NCPC, read the letter when Engineer Commissioner Clarke asked to have an item on the bridge removed from the agenda. The letter was in reference to Commissioner Tobriner’s October 10 letter to Senator Hayden:

Dear Mr. Tobriner:

I am advised that on October 10<sup>th</sup> you informed the chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, in connection with the conference on the appropriations bill for the District of Columbia, that the Commissioners will give careful consideration to the forthcoming report of the National Capital Transportation Agency on the transportation needs of the region before proceeding with the construction of the Three Sisters Bridge.

I believe that this was a wise decision and that the agency’s recommendations should be studied and evaluated before a decision to proceed with construction of the bridge is reached.

I should appreciate it if you would keep me advised through Mr. Horsky of future developments with respect to this matter.

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy.

[Flor, Lee, “Kennedy Note Upholds Wait on Sisters Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, October 26, 1962; “JFK Backs Delay On Bridge Project For Transit Report,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 25, 1962]

With action on the FY 1963 budget completed, the District Highway Department submitted its 1964 budget request to the District commissioners. The department asked for \$88.8 million, a \$30 million increase, for a budget that included several controversial freeway proposals. The budget sought funds for the projects Congress had delayed, namely interchange “C,” East Leg, Northeast Freeway, and the Southeast Freeway between 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Barney Circle, SE., as well as two projects NCTA had opposed unsuccessfully (Three Sisters Bridge and Potomac River Freeway).

New items referred to construction of:

- North Leg of the Inner Loop along Florida Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, NW., and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, SE.;
- Center Leg between the Southwest Freeway, along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the North Leg along Florida Avenue;
- Intermediate Loop between East Capitol and 41<sup>st</sup> Street, SE., and Missouri and Georgia Avenues, NW.;
- Ninth Street Expressway between Constitution Avenue and the Southwest Freeway.

The budget, Engineer Commissioner Clarke said, presented a clear choice for the agencies considering the budget. As for one of the chief objections to freeway construction, he was “confident the relocation problem caused by the projects can be solved.” [Flor, Lee, “Roads Budget Request Rises by \$30 Million,” *The Evening Star*, October 25, 1962; Clopton, Willard, “Funds Allowed To Build Most of Intermediate Loop,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 25, 1962]

### **National Capital Transportation Agency Submits Its Report**

As directed by the 1960 Act, NCTA submitted its report, *Transportation in the National Capital Region: Finance and Organization*, to President Kennedy on November 1, 1962. In a transmittal letter, Stolzenbach told the President:

The programs recommended in this report strike a sound balance between highways and mass transportation for this region. The Agency proposes a continuing program for the construction of a regional highway system and a ten-year program for the construction of a modern high-speed rapid transit system. These facilities are essential to solving the region’s severe transportation problem and to preserving and enhancing the vitality and appearance of the Nation’s Capital.

The plan focused on the express transit system, which called for two subway routes within downtown. The routes totaled 19 miles and crossed twice for distribution and collection. “This will provide fast service throughout downtown, speeding rush hour trips and improving circulation of downtown traffic in off-peak hours.” The downtown lines would be extended

through the District and suburban areas along seven rapid rail transit routes and one commuter railroad route. Stations and parking areas would serve as local distribution and collection centers linking automobiles with the transit lines.

The plan included express and local bus service in the District and throughout the suburbs with convenient connections to the high-speed trains. The report summarized:

The rail rapid transit system will be 83 miles long and will be served by 65 stations. Nearly 19 miles will be underground. Some 26 miles of freeway median strips and 24 miles of existing railroad rights-of-way will be used for the rail rapid transit system. The Pennsylvania Railroad line [from Bowie to Cheverly in Prince George's County, Maryland] will be 15 miles long and will have seven suburban stations. Express bus operations will be provided on 52 miles of freeway and parkway. [*Transportation in the National Capital Region: Finance and Organization*, National Capital Transportation Agency, 1962, pages 31-32]

The report identified the location of each route and station as well as the time a trip between them would take.

NCTA estimated that a capital outlay of \$793 million would be needed for the rapid transit system. Of the projected cost of \$793 million, the report estimated that \$681 million would be needed for construction (including engineering, acquisition of right-of-way, and contingencies), with the balance of \$112 million to acquire rail rolling stock. [page 48]

The plan called for a basic fare of 25 cents for all trips within the 10-mile square of the original District of Columbia. The suburban areas were divided into zones, with fares increasing 10 cents per zone. Concessions, advertising, and other sources of non-operating income were projected to generate about \$5 million annually by 1980.

Funding for the transit plan would be a problem since the Federal Government did not have a transit-aid program. The recommended plan called for the issuance and sale of \$530 million in federally guaranteed loans on the private money market during 1971-1974. Proceeds would be used for capital outlays and to refinance \$415.6 million of interim Treasury borrowing. The Federal guarantee would encourage more private borrowing than would otherwise be possible and keep the interest at a possible level of 4.5 percent. In addition, the plan proposed \$180 million in government equity from the local governments, \$20 million of capital outlays from system revenue, and new Treasury loans of \$63 million to be repaid from surplus revenue after the system is on a revenue-producing basis.

The plan included \$180 million in government equity, with the Federal Government providing \$120 million of this amount. Government equity would be repaid after retirement of debt within 30 years of system completion. The recommended breakdown of the local contribution among jurisdictions was:

- District of Columbia: \$21,720,000
- Maryland counties: \$18,690,000

- Virginia suburban districts: \$19,590,000

Construction debt would be retired within 30 years mainly from farebox revenue, after which the government debt would be repaid:

Whether or not repaid, the equity paid in by local jurisdictions represents an average annual per capita burden during this period of less than 50 cents for each resident of the National Capital region. [pages 80-81]

Construction would begin in 1964, with downtown service to begin in 1968.

As for highways, the report explained that auto ownership was steadily increasing, with many people moving through downtown in the future either unable or unwilling to use public transportation.” The movement of trucks was another consideration. Still, the region had a substantial network of freeways and parkways, totaling 140 miles, but “more roads will be needed if the residents of the region are to have a substantial degree of mobility.” Current plans included another 65 miles of freeways or parkways. NCTA recommended another 50 miles of freeways by 1980.

In the Washington area, as elsewhere, “the public has also shown that it is troubled by overextensive highway construction and regards rapid transit facilities as a less disruptive means of transporting people to and from downtown.” This preference was shown in the Washington area where virtually every citizens association was “in favor of more emphasis on new rapid transit facilities and relatively less emphasis on new highways.” [pages 10-11, 42-43]

The recommended highway plan retained the key features of the Mass Transportation Survey plan:

The Capital Beltway is the framework for future regional industrial and commercial as well as residential development, and the major heavy-duty route bypassing central Washington and connecting its outer suburbs. From a dozen points along the Beltway, radial expressways lead inward to serve the suburbs and the District.

The new transit system would reduce traffic in certain corridors, necessitating changes. [page 43]

The key problem was downtown where no practicable highway system could accommodate the traffic to and through downtown as forecast for 1980. Coupled with the downtown subway, NCTA recommended a downtown freeway system in the form of an inverted “T” connecting the central bridges (15<sup>th</sup> Street, Arlington Memorial, Theodore Roosevelt, and Key) with freeways to Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties:

The “T” includes major elements of the inner loop proposed in the 1959 plan. However, the North Leg of the previously proposed loop is replaced by an express street system that would provide adequately for traffic requirements and at the same time preserve desirable neighborhood characteristics and fit in with any future plans for neighborhood



improvements. The Agency's studies show that such improved street facilities would be adequate for traffic movements in the area which the North Leg would serve . . . .

The Agency's studies similarly show that the East Leg of the previously proposed loop is not required since it can be satisfactorily replaced by a high-speed route through Fort Drive.

Instead of the East Leg, NCTA favored a route that crossed the Anacostia River on the 11st Street Bridge, then ran north on the Anacostia Freeway and Kenilworth Avenue, both of which would be widened and swing northwest onto Fort Drive. The rationale was that much of the traffic originates or ends in Washington and Montgomery County or in southern Prince George's County. Under NCTA's plan, much of this traffic would remain on the east bank freeways, unlike the District plan which encouraged motorists to cross the river, crowding the bridges and the area between the river and downtown.

With those elements out, the "T" consisted of:

- (a) Extending the Southeast Leg to 11<sup>th</sup> Street and across the Anacostia River to Route 295; and
- (b) Constructing an underground freeway below the Mall from Third and C Street, S.W., to the vicinity of Third and C Streets, N.W., and a depressed freeway from there to New York and Florida Avenues. This Third Street leg will not require use of any part of the Capitol grounds. In the vicinity of New Jersey Avenue it will be integrated with proposed urban renewal projects. [pages 43-44]

NCTA also proposed to combine I-95 and I-70S in the District and Maryland:

The Third Street Leg will be extended along New York Avenue to 9<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E. From there the route will turn and follow the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks toward Silver Spring. This will be the means of bringing Interstate Routes 70-S and 95 into the city from Maryland and of serving the central and eastern portions of Montgomery County and the western portions of Prince George's County.

I-95 diverted from I-70S in the vicinity of Michigan Avenue/Queen's Chapel Road and continued to a link with I-95 at the Capital Beltway.

For western Montgomery County, traffic service to downtown "will be provided by the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Potomac Freeway."

The use of the railroad corridor was "the key to meeting" highway needs by providing additional capacity while "avoiding the substantial relocation of persons, loss of taxable property and disruption of neighborhoods that would result from construction of the Northeast, North Central and Northwest Freeway proposed in the 1959 plan." A rapid transit line between Silver Spring and Queen's Chapel, Maryland, would be located in the I-70S corridor. [page 44]

The new plan also called for changes in I-66 in Virginia. The State was building I-66 outside the Capital Beltway and acquiring right-of-way within the circumferential. Under the plan:

Route 66 will have six lanes except between the Airport Access Road junction and Four Mile Run. Between these two points the capacity will be increased to eight lanes. From Route 66 to Arlington Boulevard a short spur through Four Mile Run will be needed as will improvements of the Boulevard.

The reason for the reduction was that trucks could not cross the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge; they would be diverted to the Shirley Highway's 14<sup>th</sup> Street bridges. [pages 44-45]

NCTA also rejected the Three Sisters Bridge. The report explained that the only reason for the Three Sisters Bridge was "to bring trucks and additional auto traffic from Fairfax and Arlington Counties into downtown." That service is not required. With 22 bridge lanes open in 1957, 19 more lanes recently opened or under construction, and mass transit reducing automobile traffic, "central area bridge capacity will be adequate for the needs of motorists in 1980 without Three Sisters Bridge.

Further, building the Three Sisters Bridge would "create traffic pressure that would tend to force construction of highways that would otherwise be unnecessary." The report cited the Northwest Freeway, the Glover-Archbold Parkway, the North Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, and portions of the Intermediate Loop in Arlington. [pages 25-28]

The report also called for two projects that were essential to the operation of the downtown freeway plan. One was construction of a highway on Fort Drive between the combined I-70S/95 and the Kenilworth Avenue Expressway, a project that would require little new right-of-way because the city had acquired most that would be needed. The widening of Kenilworth Avenue and the Anacostia Freeway would be needed in later years. [page 45]

Finally, NCTA considered advanced vehicle concepts, such as monorail, but concluded that "the standard-gauge, dual-rail system has distinct advantages over the monorail vehicle system." The report considered D.C. Transit System's monorail proposal in an appendix, limiting its review to a line from Georgetown to Dulles International Airport. A transit line was needed in the densely populated Wisconsin Avenue-Chevy Chase-Bethesda corridor, but the line to the airport "would depend almost entirely on airport and tourist patronage; it would carry virtually no commuter traffic and therefore make no contribution to the solution of the peak hour congestion problem."

Rapid transit service to the airport "may well be desirable," but the most logical route would be an extension of the proposed rapid transit line serving, and deriving revenue from, Arlington and Fairfax. Moreover, if rail service were provided to the airport, travelers should be linked to downtown and "not force him to transfer to a bus or taxi several miles short of downtown as would the Superrail proposal."

Further, the monorail would be "too costly to become part of a rapid transit system whose heart is a downtown subway." Tunnels, for example, "would have to be about one and half feet higher" to accommodate the elevated line. [pages 66, 91]

Professor Schrag summarized the NCTA plan:

Gone, in the NCTA plan, was Bartholomew's intermediate loop. Gone was the northern half of the Inner Loop, the so-called North Leg and East Leg, except for enhancement of existing streets. Gone was Bartholomew's pet Northwest Freeway. Gone too was the Three Sisters Bridge. The NCTA acknowledged the need for some new highways, but only where they could be built with the minimum impact on established neighborhoods. Thus, it combined the North Central and Northeast Freeways of the 1959 plan with a version of the East Leg to create a Y-shaped freeway whose stem would run alongside the B&O railroad tracks leading north from Union Station. Because these tracks had been in place since the beginning of the century, a highway alongside them would not divide neighborhoods any more than they already were divided, "avoiding the substantial relocation of persons, loss of taxable property, and disruption of neighborhoods" that would result from the 1959 plan. [Schrag, page 54]

The new plan, with its reduced highway component, would cost less than the 1959 proposal:

It confidently asserted that its program offered a plan in which "each type of transportation is assigned to do the work for which it is best suited and in the sense that people will have a reasonable choice of how to travel." [Schrag, page 54, quote is from the NCTA report, page xi]

### **Trying to Sort Out the Freeway Battles**

Upon receipt of the NCTA report, President Kennedy released a statement in which he "expressed his hope that the report and recommendations of the transportation agency would be a significant contribution to the solution of the transportation problems of the National Capital." The plan was to be reviewed by District, Federal, and other officials before the President submitted recommendations to Congress.

Representative Broyhill, after scanning the report, said it "looks like a real step forward." He said he would contact Chairman McMillan of the House District Committee to urge hearings by the Joint Committee in early January 1963. "I am sure the chairman will agree with me." In addition, Representative Broyhill said, "I hope it will be shown that the Three Sisters bridge will not be needed."

The District's Aitken was skeptical of the funding aspects of the mass transit plan. He would not be able to comment in detail until NCTA released appendices on planning, engineering, finance, and organization. "If Mr. Stolzenbach can build a transit system for 60 per cent of the persons going down town in rush hour, let him." He added, "But why can't he let highways alone?"

Virtually every other agency or jurisdiction that was asked to review NCTA's report made the same observation regarding the absence of the appendices. Without them, officials could not understand the basis for NCTA's assertions.

Donald Gingery was critical, as he had been of Stolzenbach and NCTA all along:

It's perfectly obvious there was no control or checks and balances over the agency's procedures. I think the agency should not get any more funds until Virginia and

Maryland get some representation on the agency. I recommended some time ago that Congress give the State Governors the right to appoint a chairman who would rank with Mr. Stolzenbach.

This was an undercover study without checks and balances and it throws planning in both States into chaos.

Chairman Wells of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission said he thought NCTA, with its focus on the District, had not considered the 800,000 residents of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Arthur K. Stellhorn, planning director of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commissioner, was concerned that NCTA had proposed rail service along most of the routes where Maryland planners favored highways. He said that Stolzenbach was "taking the same routes that we are but he is taking off the highways." Gingery agreed, saying NCTA's plan would stop the commission "dead in its tracks." NCTA's report had "cast a real legal shadow on all regional planning for years to come."

State Senator Fenwick of Virginia thought NCTA had performed a service. "I feel, however, that there may be overemphasis on mass transit at the expense of the highway program." He was concerned that if the plan were used to delay highway construction "in hopes that within the next 10 years we will have a rapid transit system, we might never recover from the delay of these programs."

John E. Harwood, the Virginia Highway Department's location and design engineer, disagreed with NCTA's conclusion about the Three Sisters Bridge. "Adding more trucks to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge would only add to the congestion there. There is going to be a need for many more bridges, no matter how much rapid transit you have."

Ernest D. Wilt, who chaired the Arlington County Board, said the area needed "something like" NCTA's rail transit plan. "We may find we don't need the Three Sisters Bridge," which the board had long opposed. [Flor, Lee, "Broyhill Vows Early Transit Plan Action," *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1962; Clopton, Willard, "Area Politicians Favor Transit Plan Plus Roads," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 3, 1962]

The Bureau of the Budget sent the report to the Departments of the Treasury, the Interior, and Commerce, home of BPR, and the Housing and Home Finance Agency for review. Comments were expected by the end of the year, although full review might not be possible until NCTA released the appendices. Horsky said that given the amount of information yet to be released, "It could be that the budget and legislation will be in a supplemental request to Congress."

BPR's Barnett was concerned about the NCTA's proposal on freeways, which was "certainly not the program" BPR had approved for the region. While all officials should give "a new look" at the program, he said "the Bureau expects an integrated system." ["Transit Reviews Seen Awaiting Added Data," *The Sunday Star*, November 4, 1962; Clopton, Willard, "Transit Scheme Still Must Clear Many Hurdles," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 4, 1962]

The *Star*, meanwhile, was skeptical. An editorial stated that NCTA's report "does not suffer from any lack of confidence." A subway was needed, but NCTA's assertion that it would carry enough riders "to pay its entire capital and operating costs over the next 40 years is an astounding claim." Quite simply, "There is no precedent in experience elsewhere to support it."

As for the highway element of NCTA's report, it did more "than simply curtail certain parts of the regional freeway system which has been carefully developed and generally approved for years." Instead, it had "cut the heart out of this system—to such a degree, in fact, that the question arises as to whether the true intent might not be to make automobile congestion so clearly intolerable, through inadequate highways, that commuters would have no alternative but to seek other forms of transportation that exist only on paper." What would be left was a "skeleton highway system" that officials might be able to finance "under existing policies underlying Federal aid in highway construction."

The editorial cited the report's position on the Three Sisters Bridge as an example:

[It was] unnecessary because a rail-transit line would extend into the Arlington-Fairfax region and that, in its considered judgment, existing Potomac bridges alone would have sufficient capacity in 1980 to accommodate vehicular traffic. Here we go again! What is the source of traffic estimates which allegedly support this assumption?

Until NCTA released appendices explaining the basis for such assumptions, "the public would be wise to reserve judgment on much of the report." ["Transportation Plan," *The Sunday Star*, November 4, 1962]

How trucks would cross the Potomac River if the Three Sisters Bridge were not built was another question. On November 13, the District Commissioners committed to building the Three Sisters Bridge by approving an extension of the Potomac River Freeway from 31<sup>st</sup> and K Streets to Georgetown University. Director Aitken said the city had little choice but to build the Three Sisters Bridge. Key Bridge, which carried U.S. 29 between Rosslyn in Virginia and Georgetown in the District, could not handle truck traffic. Only the middle of the structure, built originally to accommodate streetcars, was structurally able to accommodate truck loadings. If Key Bridge had to carry trucks, it would have to be reconstructed:

Reconstruction would require closing Key Bridge to traffic while this work was done. This bridge now carries 66,000 vehicles a day and I am not about to propose that it be closed.

Moreover, when the District Commissioners approved the Potomac River Freeway plan earlier in the day, they had deleted two ramps connecting Key Bridge with the Whitehurst Freeway. Aitken said the ramps were "not compatible" with the planned freeway system and were not economically feasible.

As a result of these decisions, Key Bridge was no longer a possible link in the freeway network for traffic crossing the Potomac River. In addition, the Eisenhower Administration had requested that the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, still under construction, not carry trucks. Aitken said the

plan was for Interstate traffic to cross the river on the Three Sisters Bridge as part of the Potomac River Freeway. The four-lane Whitehurst Freeway would carry westbound traffic while the four-lane Potomac River Freeway would carry eastbound traffic. [“Pierce, Charles D., “Key Bridge is Ruled Out as Truck Link,” *The Evening Star*, November 14, 1962]

The District commissioners held a public hearing on the 1964 budget for road construction. The hearing was sparsely attended, with only about 50 people in attendance. The *Star*’s opening paragraph summarized the result:

Charges of “blackmail” and “unadulterated arrogance” and warnings of “irreparable harm” and “disaster” were sounded today as highway supporters and opponents collided at a public hearing.

Polly Shackleton said that by including the East Leg, Northeast Freeway, and interchange “C” in the budget, District officials displayed “unbelievable gall.” These freeways could result in the “ruthless destruction of countless homes and communities . . . .” This action on these projects represented “pure unadulterated arrogance.” She also criticized District highway officials for their plan to remove the ramps connecting Key Bridge and the Whitehurst Freeway, which she thought was a form of “blackmail” to force construction of the Three Sisters Bridge.

Chairman Neil Phillips of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City called the District highway budget “ideal” for the truck and highway lobby, but “a blueprint for disaster for the District of Columbia”:

Washington has drifted to an ever-increasing auto-dominant transportation system in which the interest of motor vehicles reigned dominant and the interests of the people—concerned with their neighborhoods, institutions, and fiscal soundness of their government—stood neglected.

Clifford C. Ham of Neighbors, Inc., called the highway proposals “opportunistic, costly and . . . destructive of human values.” His group favored NCTA’s transit proposals:

For the first time some emphasis is placed on solutions involving more than automobile transportation. For the first time we recognize considerations of such factors as home, communities, the potential displacement of families and businesses, and the elimination of needed public and private community facilities.”

Some witnesses favored the highway plans. J. C. Turner, president of the Greater Washington Central Labor Council, reminded the commissioners that thousands of construction workers depended on the highway program for their jobs. He said that, “unless the highway program goes forward month by month, there will be severe unemployment this winter as well as in the winters to follow.” He was convinced the relocation problem would be solved so that “no one in this community will suffer and the highway program will go forward.”

AAA’s Miller said the board endorsed the highway program:

Even if the most modern and advanced rapid transit facilities which have yet been devised were to be provided the Washington Metropolitan Area tomorrow, it would not and in the foreseeable future take care of only a fraction of the area's transportation requirements and at an appalling deficit.

He disputed NCTA's estimate that its proposed rapid rail system would pay for itself. It would, he said, run deficits "vastly greater" than the annual deficits of \$16 million predicted for the more modest rail system proposed by the Mass Transportation Survey:

One can only imagine what the deficit would be for the proposed eight-lane rail rapid transit system proposed by the National Capital Transportation Agency.

Overall, according to the *Post*, "the proposed highway program drew more cheers than jeers at the lightly-attended hearing." [Pierce, Charles D., "D.C. Highway Plan Termed 'Blackmail,'" *The Evening Star*, November 16, 1962; Schuette, Paul A., "Freeway Plans Stir Debate at Public Hearing," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 17, 1962]

Given the interest in shifting the East Leg Freeway from the 11st Street corridor to the west bank of the Anacostia River, District officials opened discussions with NPS officials in hopes of a compromise regarding the use of park lands. Wirth told reporters that he had not seen details of a proposal. "I don't want to take a stand one way or the other without looking at it." He indicated, however, he had "an open mind" on the question. One concern he cited was that the freeway would cut off a portion of a public golf course. District officials responded that the golf course could be extended north onto land created by proposed dredging and reclamation around Kingman Lake. Further, they contended, most of the park land needed for the freeway was undeveloped and, in general, not suitable for park facilities. ["Wirth Keeps 'Open Mind' on East Leg," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 18, 1962]

### **Implementing the Year 2000 Plan**

On November 27, 1962, President Kennedy released a memorandum on the Year 2000 Plan for the National Capital Region. Building on the Year 2000 Plan, President Kennedy said that in view of the Federal interest in the region, he wanted "the greatest possible coordination of planning and action among the Federal agencies in developing plans or making decisions which affect the Region." To facilitate planning, he established "development policies" as guidelines. For example, all agencies were to base their decisions on the prospect that regional population would be 5 million by 2000. Further, the Federal Government would "limit the concentration of Federal employees within Metro-Center . . . over the next four decades to an increase of approximately 75,000." Federal office development should follow the corridor cities concept recommended in the Year 2000 Plan:

The success of the corridor cities concept depends on the reservation of substantial areas of open countryside from urban development. It shall be the policy of the executive branch to seek to preserve for the benefit of the National Capital Region strategic open spaces, including existing park, woodland, and scenic resources.

The memorandum advocated non-monumental government buildings in clusters within the central business district that “will have a dignity and strength to establish their public identity.”

As for transportation, President Kennedy’s memorandum said:

Planning to meet future transportation requirements for the Region shall assume the need for a coordinated system including both efficient highway and mass transit facilities, and making full use of the advantages of each mode of transportation.

With these and other guidelines, he asked all department and agency heads “to give full consideration to these policies in all activities relating to the planning and development of the National Capital Region, and to work closely with the planning bodies which have responsibilities for the sound and orderly development of the entire area.”

The *Star* welcomed President Kennedy’s call for coordination, saying it “logically complements his earlier appointment of Charles A. Horsky as special White House advisor on Washington area affairs.” Horsky was in a unique position to resolve roadblocks, especially those involving conflicts involving previous administration policy:

Action is more difficult, however, when the proper policy is not clearly defined, as is the case with the most pressing area problem—transportation.

The *Star*’s editors saw the memorandum in the context of the President’s recommendations to Congress on mass transit and highway proposals in NCTA’s report:

Here also, however, the new memorandum should prove beneficial. For its issuance at this point obviously is intended to enlist the co-operation of all agencies in carefully studying the controversial NCTA report, and in submitting recommendations which will help the White House arrive at a sensible conclusion. [“Goal: Co-ordination,” *The Evening Star*, November 28, 1962]

In part because of President Kennedy’s support, the Year 2000 Plan was more influential than the Downtown Progress action plan. Gutheim and Lee summarized the impact:

A fruitful debate began to define common interests. Large portions of the wedges and corridors plan were embraced in Maryland and, with modifications due mainly to topography, in Virginia as well. The bold and simple diagram planted itself in the popular imagination and, widely supported by civic groups, survived many challenges by the Council of Governments for as long as fifteen years.

In downtown Washington, redevelopment and the location of federal buildings received support from the plan but were less consistently responsive to it. Nevertheless, the plan influenced the design of the Metro rail system and special project planning for Pennsylvania Avenue and other development centers. Most of all, the Year 2000 Policies Plan also affected the future planning of the National Capital Planning Commission.



The impact of the Year 2000 Policies Plan was most pronounced in the metropolitan region where rural land still existed. For the first time, a structure was suggested that combined the much-desired qualities of order, open space, and mobility.

The Year 2000 Plan affected the scope of planning in the area:

To realize the vast wedges and corridors design, regional planning organizations clearly had to include all planning elements: zoning, regulation of new subdivisions of land, transportation networks, public works, and the allocation of funds. The regional growth configuration of the Year 2000 Policies Plan also required more immediate action to regulate development of heavily populated corridors, including the new town centers, highways, the completion of the mass transportation system, and the preservation of three hundred thousand acres of open space required to separate the corridors. Policies worked out jointly between the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council additionally involved economic analyses; development plans; and studies of legal, administrative, and fiscal arrangements. In this way, new forms of development planning were superseding the older and simpler regulations of land use that had constituted planning for the past half century. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 291-293]

### **The Darwinian Theory of Transportation**

Despite NCTA's objection to several freeway proposals, the District commissioners had committed to the Three Sisters Bridge on November 13 by approving an extension of the Potomac River Freeway from 31<sup>st</sup> and K Streets to Georgetown University. Director Aitken said the city had little choice but to build the Three Sisters Bridge. The Key Bridge, which carried U.S. 29 between Rosslyn and Georgetown, could not handle truck traffic. Only the middle of the structure, built originally to accommodate heavy streetcars, was structurally able to accommodate trucks. If Key Bridge had to carry trucks, it would have to be reconstructed. Aitken said:

Reconstruction would require closing Key Bridge to traffic while this work was done. This bridge now carries 66,000 vehicles a day and I am not about to propose that it be closed.

Moreover, when the District commissioners approved the Potomac River Freeway plan earlier in the day, they had deleted two ramps connecting Key Bridge with the Whitehurst Freeway. Aitken said the ramps were "not compatible" with the planned freeway system and were not economically feasible.

As a result of these decisions, Key Bridge was no longer a possible link in the freeway network for traffic crossing the Potomac River. In addition, the Eisenhower Administration had requested that the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, still under construction, not carry trucks. Aitken said the plan was for Interstate traffic to cross the river on the Three Sisters Bridge as part of the Potomac River Freeway. The four-lane Whitehurst Freeway would carry westbound traffic while the four-lane Potomac River Freeway would carry eastbound traffic. [Pierce, Charles D., "Key Bridge is Ruled Out as Truck Link," *The Evening Star*, November 14, 1962]

The plan for the Potomac River Freeway seemed uncontroversial because the District and NCPC had approved it and Congress had appropriated funds for it. However, whether the new freeway would extend ramps to Key Bridge did prove controversial. As NCPC Chairman Rowe pointed out, the absence of connections with the bridge created the need for the Three Sisters Bridge, making the absence controversial. She indicated that the District's action was taking liberties with NCPC's approval. Although NCPC had approved the Three Sisters Bridge, she contended the approval was only in principle, without approval of plans for approaches in the District. She also disputed the District's plan to link the freeway to Georgetown University via Prospect Street, a plan NCPC had never approved. Further, NCPC's associate director, Charles H. Conrad, disagreed with Aitken about the feasibility of the link to Key Bridge. "There is no physical reason why it cannot be done." [Schuette, Paul A., "River Highway Runs Into New Controversies," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 19, 1962]

NCPC Executive Director Finley was about to leave his post to take a position with a Baltimore mortgage and development firm. On November 21, he addressed the Washington section of the Institute of Traffic Engineers on "Reflections on Leaving the Nation's Capital."

Finley praised the Bible Committee for its 1959 recommendations for a regional development agency and other recommendations that had been gathering dust ever since. "The recommendations should be dusted off and studied—they were years ahead of their time." He told the professional engineers, "No matter what anybody says here, the future transportation system will result from decisions made in the halls of Congress on non-technical basis resulting from the emotional reactions of Congressmen."

He praised the District Highway Department, saying it had the most enlightened approach of any State highway agency for designing attractive freeways in cities. "The District has had the most creative response to the problem of urban design, a problem which more traffic engineers are going to have to consider as time goes by." He complimented the District for its cooperation with city planners and for its hiring of architectural consultants for help in designing highways that fit in the Nation's capital. "Hal Aitken, District highway director, deserves a great amount of credit for this," he said.

Finley included "a few jovial comments," as the *Star* put it, on the District's "friendly rival," NCTA. He noted that Darwin Stolzenbach was not in attendance, possibly because he feared Finley "would reveal his Darwinian theories of transportation [namely that] if you delay highways long enough, you really need transit."

Mr. Finley said people also were saying that the initials NCTA stand for "Never collate the appendices." As the *Star* explained:

This was in reference to the growing number of requests by agencies for several appendices which the NCTA said would be published soon after its November 1 report to President Kennedy on financing and organization for transportation. Agencies have been told that the NCTA had all of the material ready for the appendices by October 1, but has never been able to write the material in what it felt was acceptable form, officials said.

Finley also suggested that strengthening a regional planning agency would be like sending an ambassador to a country that doesn't exist. "We need a better metropolitan organization, and would be much better off with some centralized type of government." At present, NCPC had a say in many areas, but its function was largely advisory, which he called "an old-fashioned idea" in planning:

A competent agency ought to be established which is big enough and strong enough to prepare a development plan for the city, say for 20 years. It ought to be able to see that decisions are made according to that plan.

If the commission were under the direction of the White House, he speculated, it would be able to deal with Federal agencies across the board with authority. He hoped that appointment of Charles Horsky was an indication that "this is where we are headed."

He said of his current NCPC post, with its annual salary of \$19,000, "it has been thrilling to work in the community. I look forward to coming back with my pockets filled with money." ["D.C. Freeway Designs Lauded By Parting NCPC Chief Finley," *The Evening Star*, November 22, 1962; Whitten, Leslie H., "Finley, in Parting Short, Blasts Inaction Here," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 22, 1962]

A *Star* editorial complimented Finley for saying "publicly what others are saying behind the scenes" regarding Stolzenbach's efforts to delay highway construction. Stolzenbach denied any such intention, claiming he simply thought highway development should be delayed until decisions are reached on the rail rapid transit system NCTA had proposed:

There should be no need to say that the NCTA proposals will have to stand or fall on their merits. Any thought (by Mr. Stolzenbach or by anyone else) that the prospects for an elaborate rail-transit system might be enhanced by delaying highway construction until automobile congestion becomes intolerable is childishly ridiculous. ["Darwinian Theory," *The Evening Star*, November 30, 1962]

### **In the Wake of the NCTA Report**

In response to the Bureau of the Budget's request to agencies to review NCTA's plan, NCPC unanimously approved the \$793-million rail transit system in principle on December 6, urging that "construction proceed as rapidly as possible in the interest of economics and service to the public." During debate, NCPC modified the endorsement that originally recommended "that the [transit] system be fully implemented at the earliest possible time." This phrasing seemed to broaden an endorsement of the NCTA plan. After discussing the question during a recess, the members agreed to call for construction of the transit system "as rapidly as possible" after general approval.

As for NCTA's proposed highway cutbacks, NCPC decided to withhold judgment until NCTA published the appendices of supporting data. [Lewis, Robert J., "Planners Back Rail System," *The Evening Star*, December 6, 1962]

In addition to the commissioners' approval of the Potomac River Freeway plan, the year ended with further good news for the highway builders when NPS, the District Department of Highways and Traffic, and BPR announced agreement on December 13, 1962, on the South Leg of the Inner Loop. The plan was to build the freeway through a 1,400-foot tunnel under the Lincoln Memorial grounds between the Potomac River and 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. Officials had been negotiating since 1960 when NPS had proposed the plan, and reached general agreement about 6 months earlier.

On December 14, 1962, all parties signed the agreement. Wirth signed for the Department of the Interior, saying:

This section of Washington—the Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Pool, the Washington Monument, the Tidal Basin, and the Jefferson Memorial—is the real heart of beautiful Washington. I know that you are as much interested as we are in retaining this atmosphere to the greatest extent possible.

Consultants employed by NPS had partially designed the tunnel.

The agreement included removal of the driveway between the Lincoln Memorial and the Reflecting Pool, plus removal of the temporary buildings on both sides of the Reflecting Pool, with park roads and parking areas to be built in their place.

The NPS would be in charge of the first segment, between Constitution Avenue and a midpoint between the Memorial and the Tidal Basin. BPR would be involved in approval of the consultants' work and final approval of the plans.

The second segment ended west of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and included part of the road network for the area around the Tidal Basin where the Japanese cherry trees were a popular tourist attraction each spring. BPR would be the contracting agency for this section and oversee construction.

District highway officials would be in charge of the final segment, which involved construction of an interchange between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The project was estimated to cost \$18 million, with construction to begin in 1963 and completion scheduled for late 1965. Engineer Commissioner Clarke said, "We really don't expect any trouble. We all understand each other's problems."

The plan satisfied all parties. The District received the Interstate highway it wanted, while NPS was finally able to improve the memorial plaza and the area around the Reflecting Pool. [Flor, Lee, "Lincoln Memorial Inner Loop Tunnel to be Begun in '63," *The Evening Star*, December 14, 1962]

A *Star* editorial expressed surprise that there "seemingly is no end to the studies, negotiations and compacts" needed to build the Inner Loop. The fact that the agreement gave each party veto power was an arrangement that "to say the least, opens the door to future delays and disagreement." General Clarke's comments were reassuring, but the key was simple:

In the final analysis, however, the success of the new agreement will depend upon whether each of the principals who signed it . . . continues to work together with a reasonable amount of good faith and mutual trust. [“In Accord’—Again,” *The Evening Star*, December 18, 1962]

On December 23, Lee Flor reported that the District Highway Department had sent a 13-page list of questions to NCTA about its November 1 report. Engineer Commissioner Clarke, who referred to the list as a “white paper,” said the city wanted NCTA to know and check all the District Highway Department’s assumptions. “We want to be as objective as possible.” Department officials also planned to “sit down with the NCTA officials” to go over the white paper. The paper questioned each action NCTA had proposed, including its traffic forecasts for decisions by individuals about the use of an automobile or transit. The department also questioned NCTA’s modal split forecasts about corridor cities. In addition, District highway officials questioned NCTA’s assertion that the \$793 million system could be financed from passenger fares. “The highway officials,” Flor wrote, “said this is the first time such a claim has been made, since transit systems in all other American cities do not pay for themselves.”

Further, the District explored the history of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 to determine whether NCTA had any legislative basis for making highway planning recommendations. Stolzenbach had wanted this authority, including veto power, but it was not included in the 1960 Act. The highway staff thought that the November 1 report’s assertion of such authority was based on partial quotes from the legislation. [Flor, Lee, “13 Pages of Questions Asked on Transit Report,” *The Sunday Star*, December 23, 1962]

On December 24, the *Star* reported that construction crews had begun work on a four-lane section of the Potomac River Freeway across Rock Creek Park between 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Street, NW.:

The freeway section will be built on piers just south of Whitehurst freeway. The piers were put up several years ago, immediately after the District Highway Department received a permit from the National Park Service.

The project included extensive landscaping to restore the park atmosphere, while the District agreed to transfer land from a former school to NPS to increase the size of Rock Creek Park slightly:

The new freeway section is to carry eastbound traffic from the Three Sisters Bridge. In the Rock Creek area, the four lanes will separate into two ramps, to connect to the northbound and southbound lanes of the West leg of the Inner Loop.

The \$2.8 million project is to be finished by July, 1965, when it will serve as a temporary detour while the Whitehurst freeway is altered and while K street is torn up for construction of the Inner Loop.

West of 31<sup>st</sup> Street, the city's plans for the freeway were held up while the fate of the Three Sisters Bridge was decided. [Flor, Lee, "Work Starts on Freeway Over Rock Creek," *The Evening Star*, December 24, 1962]

As agencies awaited the appendices to NCTA's November 1 report, they continued their reviews to comply with the Bureau of the Budget's deadline of January 31. With that deadline in mind, NCPC set up a committee to study the location of the East Leg Freeway. NCTA recommended it be built on the east side of the Anacostia River while the District favored the west side because it would reduce the number of families displaced. Officials had sought a compromise, but Stolzenbach had not been willing to change a decision he had submitted to the President.

NCPC also wanted to study the ramp connections from the Potomac River Freeway to Key Bridge and the need for the Three Sisters Bridge. Studies for the freeway omitted the connection to Key Bridge and called for removing present ramps from the Whitehurst Freeway to the bridge. Instead, the new freeway would pass under Key Bridge and connect with the Three Sisters bridge. [Flor, Lee, "East Leg Freeway Review Is Ordered," *The Evening Star*, December 25, 1962]

The year ended with an important road opening on December 31. The Maryland State Road Commission opened the Cabin John Bridge across the Potomac River. At the same time, an

8-mile stretch of the Capital Beltway spanning the bridge opened linking the River Road interchange in Montgomery County to the State Route 7 interchange in Virginia. In addition, NPS opened a short segment of the George Washington Memorial Parking linking the CIA's new headquarters (and BPR's research facility) to the Capital Beltway.

The *Star* described the opening: "The 1,400-foot, \$3 million Cabin John Bridge across the Potomac . . . was opened some time today with absolutely no fanfare." With the temperature at 13 degrees, the *Star* explained, "a ribbon-snipping ceremony would not be appealing." Maryland had scheduled the opening for 10 a.m., but cars reportedly began driving across the river as early as 8 a.m. ["Cabin John Opens on Cold, Quiet Note," *The Evening Star*, December 31, 1962]

(As mentioned earlier, the Cabin John Bridge was renamed the American Legion Memorial Bridge on May 30, 1969.)

## Debating the NCTA Data

In view of NCTA's rejection of the Three Sisters Bridge, Engineer Commissioner Clarke said in early January that the District Highway Department would study whether an improved Key Bridge could serve as a substitute. "It is under study, but it is not in the recommendation stage. We did feel obligated, though, to consider all the various alternatives." [Pierce, Charles B., "Highway Unit Weighs Key Bridge Widening," *The Evening Star*, January 3, 1963]

NCTA finally began releasing the appendices on January 10, 1963, ultimately six reports with a total of nearly 1,000 pages of text and maps. The reports released on that day predicted that 60 percent of commuters entering downtown Washington in 1980 would use mass transportation facilities (not broken down by rail or bus). This figure compared with 40 percent at present, and 56 percent in 1980 as forecast by the Mass Transportation Survey. The District Highway Department, in preparing its estimates for the ICE, had predicted steady transit use estimated at only 25 percent in 1980.

In discussing the projections, NCTA said that in 1959, no transit agency was in operation. Now, with NCTA planning a network, it projected higher mass transit use based on experience in other American cities with a rapid transit system. [Flor, Lee, "Heavy Use of Mass Transit Seen In Reports Issued by NCTA," *The Evening Star*, January 10, 1963]

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, the bus regulatory agency that favored expanded use of buses, had complained to the White House that NCTA had not discussed its proposal with the commission. The appendix on "System Planning" included five pages explaining why NCTA had rejected the express bus alternative to the November 1 plan. To attract commuters out of their cars, a much better level of transit service would be needed than the express bus system. "Without providing a very high level of new transit service, those 50,000 potentially new riders and some of today's transit riders will be coming to downtown by auto. Then automobile congestion in downtown would continue, and more freeways would be required."

NCTA had considered laying out a downtown routing plan for buses on city streets, but the plan "was found to be inadequate." Wilbur Smith and Associates had studied a downtown bus subway system that could accommodate 120 buses an hour. However, this plan would handle only 7,500 passengers per hour in return for construction costs of \$4.5 million greater than for a rail transit system:

In sum increasing bus-subway capacity either by adding tunnel lanes or by widening stations would add substantially to the cost of a system that even without these changes would cost more than rail transit.

No one has ever operated a comprehensive express bus system, let alone a comprehensive bus subway system. It has yet to be established that a bus-subway system could be scheduled and operated in a fashion that would attract a large volume of patronage. [Flor Lee, "NCTA Explains Alternative of Express Buses," *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1963]

On January 12, the White House asked 16 local, Federal, and county organizations to complete their reviews and submit them to NCTA by January 26:

The President has asked that the views of the District of Columbia Commissioners, Federal departments and agencies, and State and local governments and other responsible organizations be considered in developing the administration's recommendations to the Congress on both the report and the Transit Development program.

NCTA was to submit all the comments and NCTA's recommendations after review of the comments to the Bureau of the Budget.

In a statement, NCTA indicated it would make the same recommendations to the bureau that were contained in its November 1 report, including completion of two-thirds of the downtown subway loop and rail rapid transit and commuter lines by 1969. The statement quoted Stolzenbach as saying, "From informal comments we have received on the back-up material already provided the co-operating agencies, I am confident we will be able to ask Congress to move ahead on this basic schedule." ["Transit Agency Seeking Views of 16 Groups," *The Sunday Star*, January 13, 1963]

On January 18, President Kennedy transmitted the annual message to Congress on the District of Columbia's budget. In the section on "Highways and Traffic," President Kennedy expressed concern about the District's highway fund, which would "face critical deficiencies after 1965." How large the deficiency was would depend on the scope of the highway program:

Those decisions will be made promptly. The National Capital Transportation Agency has prepared and transmitted to me a report recommending a system of highway and modern rail transit facilities for the National Capital region. This report is being reviewed by appropriate Federal and local agencies. When that review has been completed I will forward the report of the National Capital Transportation Agency to the Congress with my recommendations. Therefore, I am withholding from the fiscal year 1964 budget those highway projects which do not conform to the highway recommendations of that Agency - the east leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, the Intermediate Loop, the Potomac River Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge. At the completion of the review, appropriate budget amendments will be submitted with respect to both the mass transit and highway programs of the District. The projects which are not in question in the current review, particularly the center leg of the Inner Loop and its continuation to the north, as well as the modified Interchange C, represent a major and important highway program.

Although President Kennedy withheld \$21 million requested by District highway officials pending completion of the NCTA review, Administration officials made clear that he was "very definitely" keeping the door open on the highway versus transit debate. [Flor, Lee, "Road Funds Held Up for More Data," *The Evening Star*, January 18, 1963]

The District commissioners submitted their response to NCTA. On January 29, the *Star* reported:



Administration attempts to keep the strongly worded Commissioner report confidential failed today. Into the open emerged an almost unprecedented public dispute between the considered views of the Commissioners and the Agency Director C. Darwin Stolzenbach, all appointed by the President.

The commissioners sharply criticized NCTA's procedures and statistics, particularly in contrast with the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey:

The 1959 study was based on frequent and open discussions with all agencies and groups interested in transportation in the region. The resultant plan was responsible to the clientele it would serve.

The . . . agency plan was prepared unilaterally.

In contrast with the survey, NCTA based its recommendations on assumptions, not scientific analysis of traffic:

The Board of Commissioners should not push aside lightly the thoughtful studies and investigations which have been made over the years, as well as some of the solid, established trends.

Furthermore, in the absence of conclusive evidence concerning assumptions, methods and other relevant factors, the Board of Commissioners must be reluctant to accept at face value the data presented by the . . . agency.

In rejecting NCTA's estimate of 21,500 peak-hour trips across central Washington bridges, the board pointed out that NCTA had ignored the corridor plan that was central to the Year 2000 Plan. President Kennedy had called on all agencies to support the Year 2000 Plan, but NCTA had not done so.

The commissioners also said that NCTA had minimized factors that altered the view of highways:

For example, the NCTA based estimates for transit needs on the a.m. peak hour traffic. However, experience has demonstrated that peak hour for highway traffic is in the p.m. period.

President Kennedy, the commissioners pointed out, had called for "efficient highway and mass transit facilities" to make "full use of the advantages of each mode." (The commissioners underlined this quote.) Instead, NCTA appeared to "resolve questionable areas in favor of transit, tending to create a paper need for transit at the expense of highway travelers."

The board took particular exception to NCTA's opposition to the Three Sisters Bridge. Based on the conference report on the District of Columbia Appropriation Act, 1963, the District held off work on the bridge until officials could review the NCTA report. They found that NCTA's analysis of Potomac River crossings "lacks flexibility," with the commissioners questioning the "apparent neat balance between capacity and demand from a technical standpoint." They could

not find any “solid data in the NCTA publication on which to justify further deferral of the project.” Expert consultants over the years had verified the need for additional capacity, but no other bridge would provide adequate service.

Without the bridge, the Potomac River Freeway, which NCTA did not oppose, would be killed because it would not be eligible for 90-percent Interstate funds. Trying to convert Key Bridge to serve the purposes the Three Sisters Bridge was intended to fill would require “major surgery” and would be “too costly and disruptive of values in Georgetown.” [“D.C. Hits Transit Report, Backs 3 Sisters Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, January 29, 1963; “D.C. Bars 3 Sisters Span Delay,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 29, 1963]

On January 30, Special Advisor Horsky promised that the commissioners’ report would receive “careful consideration.” He thought that within the next month, President Kennedy would send his recommendations to Congress on freeway and transit proposals. As for the Three Sisters Bridge, Horsky said the commissioners’ report was “very comprehensive and gives a lot of reasons for building the bridge.” However, White House officials had only just received it. He did not think the District would start construction until the White House decided how to resolve the conflicting views on the bridge.

General Clarke informed reporters that he could not comment on the report, which had not been released officially, but he indicated that the city was not negotiating with a consultant for a design contract. [“White House May Review Sisters Span,” *The Evening Star*, January 30, 1963; “Three Sisters Operation Is Shelved for Awhile,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 31, 1963]

A *Post* editorial said that the White House’s policy on the area’s transportation system would be tested by the city’s desire to move forward with the Three Sisters Bridge. A White House veto would provide “an unwarranted triumph for bad figures and high emotions.” The bridge was needed partly because the opening of Dulles International Airport in 1962 had stimulated a “very rapid rate of development.” The resulting traffic would use I-66 for District access, but “if there is no Three Sisters Bridge, it will unavoidably be funneled through the parks and the monumental areas downstream.”

NCTA had proposed the unattractive alternative of Interstate trucks running in front of Arlington Cemetery [on Jefferson Davis Highway] and debouching into the overloaded 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges.” Further, “the Key Bridge must then be connected to the Potomac River Freeway by a grotesque clover-leaf suspended out over the river, and traffic would flow directly onto the local streets of Georgetown.” If the White House relied on NCTA’s “wildly optimistic” plan to extend rail rapid transit to Falls Church in 1970 and Fairfax City in 1973, “it will risk all of the dangers that may be expected to flow from the steady constriction of the newest suburbs’ access to downtown Washington.” [“The Case for Three Sisters,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 31, 1963]

## **Responding to NCTA**

The Northern Virginia Regional Planning Commission passed a resolution that did not endorse the transit aspects of NCTA's plan. The commission wanted assurances "that the rail program proposed by the NCTA will be feasible in conjunction with a comprehensive, co-ordinated highway program." Arlington County's representative to the commission, John Lohman, objected to the resolution, saying that the county would be transformed by a "sea of concrete" until ample rail transit facilities supplemented highways. Prince William County's Francis M. Coffey countered, "Highways are the backbone of this Nation and they always have been." Although the commission approved the resolution, it modified an earlier version that accused NCTA of "drastically cutting back the proposed highway program. ["Virginia Group Balks at Mass Transit Plan," *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1963]

NCTA missed its self-imposed deadline of January 26 for submitting its final recommendations to the White House. Some agencies had not yet provided their comments, in part because of the late release of appendices. Some jurisdictions had approved the "general principle" of rapid transit but not NCTA's recommendations on freeways.

The Bureau of the Budget wanted the recommendations before drafting the Kennedy Administration's proposals to Congress. Horsky, referring to the District's comments, wanted to ensure the White House had NCTA's comments on the highly important report. "The Bureau of the Budget will want as much light on this as possible." ["NCTA Misses Deadline On Final Transit Plan," *The Sunday Star*, February 3, 1963]

Senator Mansfield reintroduced his bill, now S. 651, on February 4 transferring District right-of-way in Glover-Archbold Park, to the Department of the Interior, and made clear his opposition to the Three Sisters Bridge. It was identical to the bill he had introduced in the 87<sup>th</sup> congress. "That bill was passed by the Senate, after extensive hearings; but no action beyond public hearings was taken in the House."

He summarized the history of the park, which he said was not large but was very important to those who knew it. If the District had its way, an expressway would be built through the park, "not this year or in 3 or 4 years, but I am certain it will in the not too distant future." Further, if the District built the Three Sisters Bridge, "it is inevitable that a highway will be built through the park because the approaches from the bridge have no other place to go."

He was skeptical that "new fancy highways and expressways" were the answer to the city's congestion problems; they would "only increase it." He said:

Unless we preserve some of the natural beauty of our Nation's Capital and develop the city with these things in mind, we are going to end up with a very costly city of expressways, arterial highways, and unsightly parking lots. There must be other ways to resolve these difficulties.

He praised NCTA for identifying "more reasonable solutions." [Glover-Archbold Parkway, *Congressional Record-Senate*, February 4, 1963, pages 1685-1686]

The Joint Transportation Commission (JTC) released a report on February 8 that was skeptical of NCTA's claims. The JTC grew out of growing concern in the area about how the expanding suburbs in Maryland and Virginia affected the area's transportation mix, including bus transfers among jurisdictions. District Commissioner McLaughlin and State Senator Northrop proposed a presidential commission to help regulate the area's private transit companies. Representatives Hyde of Maryland and Broyhill of Virginia secured congressional approval, but President Eisenhower vetoed the bill after Virginia indicated it would not join. McLaughlin, Northrop, and State Senator Fenwick then convinced the two State legislatures and the District Board of Commissioners to authorize the JTC.

By March 1961, the new Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission had taken over regulation of transit services from the area's public utility commissions. Next on JTC's agenda was a compact for building and operation a rail transit system as called for by the Mass Transportation Survey and the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. However, NCTA and the JTC were suspicious of each other, as Schrag explained:

On one side were the NCTA Advisory Board and staff and their allies. By early 1961 this meant the Stolzenbach crowd: a group of people who opposed freeways, favored home rule for the District of Columbia, and owed their power to President Kennedy. Members of this group were suspicious of the Joint Transportation Commission, which included the District's engineer commissioner (the NCTA's opponent in the freeway fight) as well as suburban politicians who had dubious sympathy for the disfranchised people of D.C. On the other side was the JTC, which, after 1961, was dominated by suburban voices.

The JTC, consisting of politicians, "regarded appointed experts of any stripe—Bartholomew, Stolzenbach, and Gutheim included—as impractical dilettantes" who might give a Federal transit corporation for the area "terrifying powers, such as the ability to push trunk lines through jurisdictions without consent." [Schrag, pages 96-99]

The distrust surfaced in the JTC's response to NCTA's November 1 report and recently released appendices. On February 8, JTC's report rejected NCTA's idea of a Federal corporation to build and control the rapid rail system. JTC urged regional officials to agree on an interstate compact to replace NCTA as soon as possible:

An interstate compact agency inherently would provide a greater degree of responsiveness to the plans and needs of the local areas and would insulate the Federal Government from becoming directly involved in a matter as purely local as community planning.

Although NCTA had predicted negotiations on a compact would be difficult, JTC reported "substantial progress" on the compact. It expected to have a draft ready for review by the end of the year.

The report also questioned NCTA's claim that the rapid transit system could pay for itself out of the farebox:

The financing plan makes no provision for meeting any deficits which may be experienced in the construction or operation budgets.

In such a long-term project, the estimates of construction are subject to changes due to unpredictable variations in the price of labor, material and equipment and the net revenue projections are subject even to a great variety of complex factors, none of which may be predicted with any certainty.

Further, NCTA had greatly underestimated how the rail system would affect the area's private bus companies. While expecting express bus and feeder lines to provide "substantial" service in 1980, NCTA estimated that by then, buses would carry about 88 million passengers (28 million on express bus lines and 60 million on feeder lines), compared with 209 million in 1961. The private companies would take in fares of \$4.7 million in 1980, compared with \$37.7 million at present, and require operating subsidies from local jurisdictions of only \$7.5 million, bringing total revenue to \$12 million. In view of this "substantial curtailment" in private bus operations, "full attention should be directed to the development of satisfactory arrangements to keep the private segment of the system in a state of necessary economic well-being." [Flor, Lee, "3-State Transit Agency To Replace NCTA Urged," *The Evening Star*, February 8, 1965; Clopton, Willard, "NCTA's Rail System Plans Attacked by Parent Agency," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 8, 1963]

Professor Schrag summarized the result:

The rift between the NCTA and the JTC widened after the November Report and Stolzenbach's antihighway proposals. In February 1963 [JTC counsel Jerome] Alper complained that the NCTA had failed to consult the JTC "on system design or in the formation of any of its plans." Fenwick wrote to President Kennedy to condemn Stolzenbach's meddling in highway matters and to support the Three Sisters Bridge. [Schrag, page 99]

On February 20, the District commissioners sent a preliminary report on the NCTA recommendations to the Bureau of the Budget. *The Washington Post* began its description of the report by writing:

The District Commissioners ripped into the National Capital Transportation Agency's highway and rail transit proposals for the Washington region.

In a 99-page critique bristling with such uncomplimentary phrases as "paper solution," "unsupported optimism," "unexplained neglect" and "poor planning," the Commissioners charged that NCTA would "decimate" the city's presently planned freeway system and cause choked rush-hour traffic congestion for decades to come.

They ended up recommending that the planned freeway system be completed, that commuter service be started on three existing railroad lines, that express bus service be given more consideration and that a start be made on NCTA's proposed downtown subway . . . .

The Commissioners' charge that NCTA failed to cooperate with the city in preparing its plan, miscalculated future demand for highways, manipulated its figures to show the desirability of rapid transit and failed to consider factors that could derail its financial estimates.

In not seeking advice from the area's highway agencies, "NCTA has followed a procedure contrary to all modern urban transportation studies." The result of this "unilateral control of input assumptions and adjustment" was "a paper solution which shows all transportation demands and capacities nearly in balance." The commissioners pointed out that under those circumstances, NCTA could forecast any balanced solution it desired. For example, NCTA predicted that 95 percent of increased daily trips by 1980 would be via highways, but NCTA recommended \$793 million for its rapid rail transit plan, almost as much as for added highways:

Apparently the "balance" criteria used by NCTA is the proposed expenditure of estimated similar sums of money on fixed transit and on highways.

The commissioners rejected virtually all of NCTA's recommendations on the regional freeway system, including the projects President Kennedy had withheld from the District budget. They also challenged NCTA's claim that even with deletion of several Interstate projects, its plan "includes a continuous interstate highway system." This claim was "a mythical conclusion" because NCTA did not check with State or Federal roads officials to see if the network complied with Interstate standards. Had they done so, they would have learned that the network was not in compliance, jeopardizing 90-percent Federal construction funding. The loss of funds for the Potomac River Freeway, which would be of little value if the Three Sisters Bridge were not built, would be \$25 million. Further, NCTA's projected savings of \$428.4 million in reduced freeway construction should have been only \$84.3 million, and even that lower figure might be countered by the cost of improving city streets.

NCTA's conclusion that the rapid rail network could pay for itself out of the farebox was "dramatically overstated." NCTA, the commissioners explained, was caught in a two-way bind because its construction estimates are too low and its revenue estimates are too high. If those estimates were realistic, NCTA would have had to state that Congress and the local jurisdictions would need to subsidize the subway, and that prospect could undercut support. Between likely increases in construction costs and conservative revenue forecasts, the combined deficit would add up to about \$400 million in 25 years.

The commissioners agreed that the District "unequivocally" needed improved mass transit as part of a balance transportation system. They endorsed JTC's efforts to develop a tri-State compact agency that would replace NCTA as soon as possible. They also endorsed rail lines along Wisconsin Avenue (Northwest to Bethesda), Rockville-Silver Spring along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, along the Pennsylvania Railroad to Lanham in Prince George's County, Maryland, and one through Alexandria to Springfield, Virginia. Beyond those lines, more study was needed, especially in the absence of "data necessary to equitably and adequately compare the merits of the Mass Transportation Survey Plan of 1959 and the NCTA Plan of 1962." ["Commissioners Rip Into NCTA Transit Report," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1963;

Flor, Lee, "Only 4 Lines of Rail Transit To Get D.C. Chiefs' Backing," *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1963]

The Department of Commerce, home of BPR, submitted its comments to the Budget Bureau on February 20. According to Schrag, Martin Wohl wrote the report. He was working in the office of Secretary Luther H. Hodges, but was a rapid rail transit skeptic and coauthor in 1965 of *The Urban Transportation Problem* (with John R. Meyer and John F. Kain, published by Harvard University Press.) [Schrag, pages 4-5, 55]. Commerce favored a downtown subway as the "only practical means in which essential volumes of traffic can be moved while maintaining the dignity and beauty of the Nation's Capital," but did not specify whether it should be a subway for buses or rail transit.

The report "particularly complimented" NCTA for trying to develop new ways of forecasting preferences for transit or highways. However, NCTA "has used a substantial number of assumptions that are highly questionable." NCTA had not cooperated with planning and highway agencies, and had "substantially over-stated" transit ridership and revenues. Because NCTA had not completed enough basic engineering and planning work, its preliminary estimates were "hardly comparable in completeness and accuracy to cost estimates which should be submitted to Congress for project authorization." The estimates for the cost of the tunnel segments "might require as much as 50 percent upward revision."

Commerce recommended prompt construction of the Three Sisters Bridge and key parts of the Inner Loop Freeway. At the same time, Commerce believed the North Leg, Center Leg, and East Leg should be restudied to determine location and number of lanes in view of the impact of the rail transit system.

Further, the 1960 Act had directed NCTA to evaluate the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey plan and consider alternatives. The NCTA report stated that the agency had done so, but according to the Commerce Department, "neither the report nor the six published appendices show any indication that a thorough analysis of these alternatives were made." ["Federal Study Favors Inner Loop Start Now," *The Sunday Star*, February 24, 1963; "Commerce Urges Sisters Span, Loop," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 25, 1963]

Other agencies also had commented on the NCTA report and documentation. As the *Post's* Willard Clopton put it:

The transit plan has been accepted in principle by a majority of political leaders and planners throughout the area. But the agency's corollary proposal that freeway construction be cut back had flown into a hornet's nest of criticism.

Some of the agencies questioned NCTA's assumptions on engineering and contingencies as being too low, while its assumptions on income were off by about two-thirds. Nevertheless, according to Lee Flor in the *Star*, agencies recommended a start on the rail transit system "on the basis that forecasting is not definite enough to prove that a transit system will fail to attract travelers away from their automobiles. The only real way to find out [is] to build a subway and then see if people use it, the analyses say."

Clopton reported that the White House was preparing its recommendations to Congress, but officials “are keeping as mum as if they were hatching another Manhattan project.” His sources at the Bureau of the Budget indicated that “a dual submission to Congress is likely,” with will “contain something for everybody.” [Clopton, Willard, “JFK Drafting Transit Plan,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 17, 1963; Flor, Lee, “Rail Transit System Is Recommended Despite Doubts on Agency’s Estimates,” *The Sunday Star*, February 17, 1963]

Donald Gingery of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, continuing his crusade to restructure NCTA, informed his colleagues that Stolzenbach was exercising “dictatorial power” in the absence of Maryland and Virginia officials who could provide “checks and balances that are so necessary so we can’t be hurt as we are being hurt.” He added:

We have not been consulted anywhere along the line about this plan. We need protection. Time has been wasted on this transportation plan because of incompetence.

He said the District commissioners’ comments had “repudiated with finality the factual basis of the NCTA plan and cast doubt on the ability of Maryland and Virginia to get 90 per cent Federal aid in building interstate highways.” NCTA’s present veto over the States’ transit plans was “not acceptable.” He said:

What’s the use of spending two years working on a plan and then vetoing it? Maryland and Virginia should have a voice in drafting these plans on a day to day basis so that there will be support for the proposals when they are released.

To provide the needed protection, Gingery again introduced a resolution calling for establishment of a three-man leadership of NCTA, with a representative from Maryland and one from Virginia joining Stolzenbach. The resolution asked the Maryland General Assembly to work through the State’s congressional delegation to secure a change in the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 to create the new leadership troika.

This time the commission approved the resolution unanimously, despite concerns that J. Newton Brewer, Jr., expressed that, “we’re going to sabotage completely the possibility of ever getting funds from Congress to build a rapid transit system in this area.” [Dessoff, Alan L., “NCTA Head Attacked by Plans Body,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 21, 1963; Duke, William, “Maryland Seeking a Voice In Area Transit Planning,” *The Evening Star*, February 21, 1963]

The *Star*, in an editorial, agreed with much of the District commissioners’ report. The result was “the chaos which now envelops the Washington area transportation picture,” an outcome that was “as predictable as the rising sun.” Even before finishing its studies, NCTA had “made known its intention to propose a regional rail-transit system so attractive and so economically feasible that large portions of the long-planned area freeway program could be scrapped.” It drafted the report unilaterally on the assumption that its plan would be “so universally acceptable that the outcome would be virtually unchallengeable.” Unfortunately, no such mathematical precision was available to NCTA or anyone else.



The District commissioners' "devastating" analysis charged that using NCTA's own data, "the estimates of transit costs are too low, the revenues too high, and the means of predicting future transit use subject to 'incredible' and 'ridiculous' error."

The commissioners' report, "as might be expected," challenged NCTA's assumption on highways:

It accuses the agency of assigning traffic volumes to freeways far in excess of their capacity, of undervaluing the desire of motorists to use their cars, of shattering the concept of the interstate highway system, of downgrading the potentials of express buses on freeways.

The editorial rejected the tendency "to throw up one's hands over the transit situation," but faced with the evidence, the White House might be unable to send its comprehensive transit-highway proposals to Congress in the near future as planned:

The administration possesses both the authority and the information it needs, however, to end the unwise restraints now imposed on the freeway system, and to get on with the job of resolving differences over the transit proposals. It will not be the first time that such a dispute has been settled at that level. ["Inevitable Response," *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1963]

Senator Douglas, a long-time critic of the Three Sisters Bridge, wrote to President Kennedy to advise him that its construction would lead to highway construction through Glover-Archbold Park and the conversion of Spout Run Parkway into an eight-lane expressway. Noting that Arlington County opposed the plan, Senator Douglas asked, "Are we to go ahead on the advice of the D.C. Commissioners and the D.C. Highway [sic] to build a bridge and connecting truck routes against the other jurisdiction most concerned, when it is overwhelmingly opposed to such actions?" ["Douglas Asks 3-Sisters Bridge Ban," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 26, 1963]

While waiting for President Kennedy's recommendations, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City made clear its continued opposition to the Three Sisters Bridge. In late February, the committee wrote to the President, the Bureau of the Budget, and the House and Senate Appropriations Committee to express its opposition:

For good or ill, the traffic forces which would be generated and in turn, unleashed by the proposed Three Sisters Bridge would be such that no one, not even the Highway Department, dares foretell its eventual consequences.

The bridge would "force construction of the proposed northern and northwestern portions of the Inner Loop . . . no freeway yet conceived for Washington would be more destructive of cultural and tangible values."

NCTA's report offered a "soundly based, balanced transportation system." By contrast:

As if in a footrace to put down a highway network which would foreclose an economic transit system, the District Highway Department and the Engineer Commissioner have relentlessly pursued an all-highway planning objective which even the 1959 Transportation Plan had rejected.

The Committee of 100 rejected the argument that the bridge was needed to carry trucks. This justification was “without substance” because, the committee stated, the Eisenhower Administration’s restriction of truck traffic on the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge could be changed by an executive order. Moreover, the committee claimed that:

All available traffic forecasts, including the forecasts of the D.C. Highway Department itself, verify the NCTA’s conclusions that the proposed Three Sisters Bridge is not warranted if, as is planned, a rail rapid transit line is constructed to Arlington and Fairfax Counties.

This statement contradicted the District’s interpretation of its data. [Flor, Lee, “Federal City Committee Would Bar Sisters Span,” *The Evening Star*, February 27, 1963]

One member of the Committee of 100 took exception to its views. AAA’s Washington I. Cleveland had written a letter requesting contributions “to combat the efforts [of NCTA] to emasculate the highway program in the Nation’s Capital.” The District area’s Highway Users Conference was planning “an intensive public relations campaign to keep the area road program from being drastically curtailed.” The Committee of 100 “disassociated” itself from these views. [“Three Sisters Bridge Meets New Attack,” *The Evening Star*, March 30, 1963]

### **President Kennedy’s Decisions - Delayed**

Although the White House had promised prompt decisions following agency review of the NCTA report and documentation, the Administration plan was stalled. While waiting for the report, interests continued expressing their views in hopes of influencing the outcome.

The *Star* understood the problem, stating in an April 11 editorial:

It is not surprising that the White House is already far behind its original schedule for proposing specific expenditures to Congress for rapid transit and freeway construction in Washington. The elaborate technical claims of the National Capital Transportation Agency in defense of its rail transit proposals, at the expense of freeway construction, have generated controversy which the White House could neither ignore nor easily resolve.

The editorial said that in recent remarks, General Clarke had “summarized the dilemma in words which the politicians now grappling with the problem would be wise to heed.” He said:

What I get from all the studies to date and from the statistics that we have is that we should be proceeding at a great rate with both a highway system and a transit system. We should not be bickering about a few percentage points of difference in estimates about what will happen in 1977 or 1980. Our crystal ball is not that clear, nor is our rate of

progress going to be so great that we cannot keep our goals under constant scrutiny and make changes in them as we go along. If we were to miss the estimate by 10 per cent – and past experience tells us that we will probably not be that close – a difference of two or three years of natural growth will take up the capacity. If past experience is of any value, we appear more likely to underestimate our needs, so that the need for the facilities will come sooner than we plan.

The editorial agreed with this “sound advice”:

A decision to curtail highway building now would not make people stop driving automobiles; it would merely compound the traffic jams and wreck an orderly program of construction which will have to be carried out eventually in any case. At the same time, the transit portion of the total load should be handled largely by a subway transit system which, in the interests of the Nation’s Capital, should be started now. [“Cloudy Crystal Ball,” *The Evening Star*, April 1, 1963]

In early April, NCPC was working on a “compromise proposal” that had been in development for several months to resolve the I-266/Three Sisters Bridge controversy. The concept would reduce the number of lanes on the bridge from eight to six and eliminate some approach roadways. The District would give its 100-foot right-of-way through Glover-Archbold Park to NPS. In return, NPS would allow construction of I-266 through Spout Run Park to serve trucks. [“3 Sisters, Spout Run Deal Pends,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 18, 1963; Lewis, Robert J., “Simultaneous Renewal of Two Areas Is Urged,” *The Evening Star*, April 4, 1963]

D.C. Trucking Association sent a telegram to President Kennedy urging him not to put the North Leg or the Three Sisters Bridge on the shelf. Deletions of the “key segments” of the Interstate System “would ignore the importance of these segments both as a part of the interstate system and as integral elements of an effective freeway system for the movement of people and goods in the city.”

Director Aitken, in an interview, said the two projects would be needed in years to come. Failure to complete the Inner Loop would “scuttle” the District’s Interstate System and cause the loss of many millions of dollars in Interstate construction funds.

AAA’s Cleveland worried about the implications of the freeway battles in the District for the Nation. If the argument that mass transit could reduce the need for freeways prevailed in the District, similar arguments elsewhere would lead to a “general slowdown” in urban freeway construction. [“Keep Loop, Truckmen Urge JFK,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 17, 1963]

Later in the month, staff of the National Capital Regional Planning Council issued a report backing the basic rapid transit system, but suggesting a need for more highways to meet growing demand. Staff suggestions included a Potomac Freeway through Alexandria, the Northwest Freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, and the North and West Legs of the Inner Loop. The Three Sisters Bridge and Spout Run connections should be advanced because “no adequate

design has yet been presented for any other route for the connection of Interstate 66 with the Inner Loop.”

Even with those freeways, highway congestion could increase in ways that would force the imposition of tolls to discourage peak period use by private automobiles:

The most equitable mechanism for rationing the use of the highway system is through charging a fee for a trip made during the peak hours. This would assure that the use of scarce highway capacity would be made by those to whom it was of greatest value.

Staff endorsed most aspects of the NCTA transit proposal, putting the cost at what they considered a realistic estimate of “around a billion” dollars, considerably more than NCTA’s estimate. The report recommended a series of public hearings in the local jurisdictions to test the extent of support.

The staff report, a response to the Bureau of the Budget’s request for comments by the end of January, was long overdue. The council, however, put the report on hold for further review by NCPC and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. [Flor, Lee, “Planners OK Rapid Rail, More Area Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, April 23, 1963; “District May Have to Charge Tolls to Restrict Highway Use,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 24, 1963]

General Clarke wrote to his NCPC colleagues urging them to adopt a “basic highway system for the District and the region that can withstand the annual onslaught of dissension.” In view of the 3C planning process the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 had required be in place by July 1, 1965, General Clarke wrote, “it is essential that immediate steps be taken to assure the establishment of a formal planning process for this region, including the District, Maryland and Virginia.”

Charles H. Conrad, NCPC’s acting staff director following Finley’s departure, told the panel that work had been underway for 6 months on a comprehensive highway plan, but that it required agreement on a thoroughfare plan for the District and its neighboring jurisdictions. He expected the plan would be completed in 1964. Chairman Rowe said that many decisions would depend on that report. [“Clarke Seeks Speedup On Area Highway Plans,” *The Evening Star*, May 3, 1963]

Meanwhile, District highway officials, in response to a request from BPR, were considering a new route for the Three Sisters Bridge. The new location, about an eighth of a mile to the east of the original location, would be about halfway between Key Bridge and the planned Three Sisters Islands location, linking to the exit of Spout Run Parkway. Another option was to change the angle of the Three Sisters Bridge so it would not point directly toward Glover-Archbold Park, the issue that was at the heart of much of the opposition. [“D.C. Studies New Site For 3 Sisters Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, May 3, 1963; “Shift in Bridge Site Asked by U.S. Bureau,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 4, 1963]

The White House delay could be attributed, at least in part, to disagreements among NCTA’s advisors. Neil J. Curry, a Los Angeles trucking executive and a member of President Kennedy’s

Committee for Traffic Safety, had served on NCTA's advisory committee on finance. The committee had endorsed NCTA's financing plan, including its freeway cutbacks. When members of the California congressional delegation informed Curry of the implications of the endorsement, he wrote to Stolzenbach in protest. Curry, the trucking official, referred to the critiques submitted by the District and the Commerce Department:

I am concerned that there be a complete understanding on the part of all concerned of the limited role played by the Advisory Committee on Finance, particularly from the standpoint of any recommendations relative to cutting back or delaying the District highway program . . . .

I wish to express unequivocally my opposition to the philosophy and proposals in the NCTA report which would cut back the highway program. I would appreciate your making every effort to see that there is no misunderstanding regarding my position on this matter. ["Transport Advisor Balks At Plan Sent to Kennedy," *The Evening Star*, May 3, 1953]

Lee Flor discussed the reason for the White House delay on May 5:

Washington area transportation recommendations are stalled in the White House because administration officials fear their effect on pending national transit legislation, officials said yesterday.

Legislation to establish a \$375 million transit grant program for the 214 metropolitan areas throughout the Nation has been passed by the Senate. Similar legislation, reported out by the House Banking and Currency Committee, is awaiting clearance by the Rules Committee before coming before the House.

The Washington area rail transit program calls for a \$120 million grant program and \$731 million in guarantees for bonds. Administration officials are reportedly afraid the local measure will overshadow the House action on the national legislation.

When the 87<sup>th</sup> Congress had come to an end on January 3, 1963, the legislation had passed the Senate, but not the House. In the 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, the legislation had been revived. On April 4, the Senate approved the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1963 by a vote of 52 to 41. House action was pending.

(Congress would not complete action on the urban mass transportation bill in 1963. As noted earlier, President Johnson approved the landmark Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 on July 9, 1964, during a signing ceremony in the Cabinet Room of the White House.)

Downtown Progress, saying "there is no record of a city having an overabundance of good transportation," voiced its support for the freeway network as well as the rail transit system:

The freeway plan of the District of Columbia Highway Department . . . is a reasonable program . . . and it should be carried out as rapidly as possible. Deferral or deletion of major segments of the freeway plan will result in a highway system that will be

inadequate to meet the needs of the area, even with a comprehensive rail rapid transit system.

To sacrifice a portion of this freeway network on the vague claim that it might not be needed could well result in economic losses and sociological damage which would far outweigh the present costs of these new roads.

Completing the network was essential “for the dynamic growth which lies ahead.” A “satisfactory solution” for part of the Inner Loop had “not yet been designed, particularly the north leg,” but must be found. Regarding the Three Sisters Bridge, the organization wrote:

No reasonable solution has been presented which would enable Key Bridge, and its approaches, to properly serve the traffic needs of this area.

The statement continued, “The time for study, though well spent, is behind us. The time has now come for action.”

As for NCTA’s transit proposals, the statement said:

There is no dispute over the need for a modern, efficient high capacity rail rapid transit system. This is essential, and every effort should be taken to expedite its construction.

. . . . The transportation system which will serve the rapidly growing metropolitan region must provide a high degree of accessibility between the central business area and the communities which depend on downtown and upon which downtown is dependent.

Only a balanced transportation system, comprised of adequate highways and rapid transit facilities, both rail and bus, can meet the needs of the Nation’s Capital. [“Downtown Group Backs Rail Transit,” *The Evening Star*, May 11, 1963; “Business Unit Backs Road, Rail Systems,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 12, 1963]

With the President’s report on hold, the Federal City Council released a report on May 4 calling for an immediate start on the 98-mile rail transit system as well as the freeway network. The report indicated that projections of a regional population of 5 million by 2000 “warrant an assumption that the National Capital region will require both the amount of mass transit proposed in the NCTA’s 1962 report, and a system of freeways largely in accord with that proposed by the District Commissioners.” NCTA’s assumption of financial independence should not be the sole basis for advancing the transit option; the area “must have an efficient, modern, rapid rail transit system, including the best equipment available, whether or not complete financial self-sufficiency is attainable.”

The council urged Congress to authorize NCTA to proceed with construction rather than waiting for an interstate compact or a Federal corporation. Further, “in face of the uniqueness of a jurisdiction where the legislative and taxing power rest solely in the Congress, both the Congress and the Executive must accept a special obligation either to provide or to guarantee the financing of the enterprise.” Specifically, the council recommended that construction on the downtown subway and some radials begin in FY 1964.

The council recommended construction the Three Sisters Bridge near its island site, construction of the East Leg on the west side of the Anacostia River, and a modified freeway along the northwest downtown boundary. Saying the city “should be integrally related to the Federal interstate highway system,” the council nevertheless suggested that BPR consider easing its standards for segments such as the North Leg and the Potomac River Freeway through built-up areas.

The report cited the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, with its restriction on truck traffic, as an example of an Interstate freeway that did not meet full standards. Council president Gordon Gray told reporters, “I’m not sure who has the ultimate power in this thing, but I think the President of the United States could influence the standards if he wants to.” [Flor, Lee, “Area’s Rail Transit Plan Stalled in White House,” *The Sunday Star*, May 5, 1963; Clopton, Willard, “Put Downtown Subway First, Council Urges,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 5, 1963]

### **The President’s Recommendations**

Finally, on May 27, 1963, President Kennedy sent a letter to congressional leaders on the transportation needs of the Washington area. He explained that NCTA’s report of November 1, 1962, recommended a 10-year Transit Development Program, which would “provide the National Capital region an extensive rail rapid transit, commuter rail and express bus system,” including commuter rail and express bus service within the right-of-way of several freeways and express parkways. This plan was, “in my judgment, both sound and necessary.”

He submitted a bill to authorize NCTA to proceed with construction of the system. “I hope that this proposed legislation will receive both prompt and favorable Congressional action.” There was, he said, no questioning the need for improving the Washington area’s transportation network. “Nor can it be doubted that improved transportation must include a major rapid transit system.” He explained:

The alternatives would be steadily worsening congestion with all that congestion means in losses of time and money, or an enlarged highway and freeway program entailing additional expense, major disruption of persons and businesses, and substantial impairment of the appearance and attractiveness of the city.

As for NCTA’s estimate that the rapid transit system would cost \$793 million over 10-years, “any estimate is subject to modification upon the completion of more detailed engineering.” Nevertheless, he thought NCTA’s estimate provided “a reasonable basis for authorization of the program.” He continued:

In accordance with the directives given it in the 1960 Act, the Agency has provided as far as possible for payment of system costs by users, with the remaining costs to be distributed among the Federal and local governments of the region. The bulk of the capital costs, which would be ultimately payable from system revenues, would be financed by borrowing from the capital market. The remainder of those costs would be financed by Federal and local grants in the same proportion as that proposed in the

national mass transportation program which I have recommended. The Agency has concluded that necessary borrowing can be repaid from fare box revenues within 36 years. Even under adverse circumstances, it seems reasonable to conclude that the borrowing could be repaid within a period of 50 years.

He supported the intention of Congress in passing the 1960 Act that a regional compact agency take over construction. "I am hopeful that the compact negotiations which are now in progress will reach a successful conclusion."

President Kennedy recognized that rapid transit was not the sole answer. "Rapid transit must be related to, and coordinated with, the movement of people and goods by freeways and parkways, roads and streets." He did not know a "single touchstone" for balancing the roles of transit and highways in meeting the area's "total regional transportation needs."

He acknowledged the "wide differences of opinion" on the specific highway and bridge proposals. He was convinced, however, that the differences could be resolved by "a careful re-examination of the highway program of the District of Columbia in light of the Transit Development Program, and the social, economic and esthetic impact of highways in the Nation's Capital." He asked the District's Board of Commissioners to work with appropriate Federal Agencies on this reexamination.

As for the projects he withheld in his FY 1964 budget proposal for the District, he now recommended proceeding with the East Leg of the Inner Loop and Fort Drive Parkway. Funds were available for these projects. Horsky clarified for reporters that the President advocated the west bank alignment for the Anacostia River segment of the East Leg.

President Kennedy continued:

Decisions on the appropriate highway facility for the North Leg of the Inner Loop, particularly whether it should be built to Interstate standards, should await the outcome of the re-examination which I have outlined above. Since the construction of the Three Sisters Bridge as an interstate facility appears to depend upon the decisions which must be made with respect to the North Leg, its construction should likewise be deferred until all the alternatives have been fully re-examined. For similar reasons, no further commitments at this time should be made with respect to the Potomac River Freeway.

In the end, he said, "an intelligent decision" on the area's transportation should encompass highways and mass transit. Until now, transit plans were tentative and lacked sure knowledge they would be carried out:

The time has now come to answer that question. The Transit Development Program of the National Capital Transportation Agency presents a carefully conceived and attractive plan. It has commended itself to me, and I hope it will commend itself to the Congress.

President Kennedy's letter was accompanied by a five-paragraph of legislation authorizing NCTA to begin construction of the rail transit system "subject to the availability of



appropriations and other funds.” He also enclosed a 42-page Summary Report on the Transit Development Program.

The *Star* and *Post* provided readers with a sampling of reaction to the President’s letter. The delays in the Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac River Freeway, and North Leg for more study prompted Chairman Natcher to say that “any effort to bring to a complete halt important highway projects is a serious mistake.” He added that “the approved freeways which have been considered by our committee from time to time, with funds appropriated, are a vital part of the future development of the District.”

Chairman McMillan of the House District Committee said:

In my judgment it is going to take both modern highways and a modern rapid transit system to haul the traffic coming into the District daily. I hope the program can be worked out and we can get it started.

Chairman Bible of the Senate District Committee pointed out that the District’s downtown had the fourth highest daytime population in the country. “I hope that Congress may make its decision this year or no later than next.”

Stolzenbach was, as might expected, delighted with the letter. As for the subway system, “If we get the breaks, we can start digging in 1964.”

By contrast, the letter “brought gloom” to the District Building, according to the *Post*. General Clarke said, “I think the best thing I can say is nothing.” The commissioners had sent their views to the President for consideration. “The Commissioners will begin the studies that the President has requested that we make.”

H. E. Humphreys, Jr., chairman of the National Highway Users Conference, was “stunned that the President has urged further delay to the interstate and defense highway system.” The only bright spot for highway supporters was President Kennedy’s recommendation on the East Leg, a position that Stolzenbach opposed. [Flor, Lee, “Kennedy Calls on Congress to Vote Area Rail System,” *The Evening Star*, May 27, 1963; Clopton, Willard, “Rail Transit Plan Sent To Congress,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 28, 1963]

On June 1, President Kennedy sent a special letter to Commissioner Tobriner, president of the Board of Commissioners, outlining how to conduct the reexamination of the freeways. It “should be started immediately and concluded as promptly as possible.” He continued:

A re-examination should focus on the sections of the highway plan which have from the beginning been the most uncertain and the most controversial—the north leg of the inner loop and the Three Sisters Bridge, both of which involve the manner in which traffic is to be moved across the near Northwest of the District.

This will necessarily involve a restudy of those additional portions of the plan which are directly affected by the conclusions reached in the re-examination.

The reexamination of the highway program “should assume a full mass transit system approximating that proposed in the transportation development program, and should make full use of all data which have been accumulated by the National Capital Transportation Agency.”

President Kennedy also advised Tobriner “to insure that economic, social and aesthetic considerations are fully taken into account and related to broader community development plans.” To do that, the commissioners should work with the Departments of Commerce and the Interior, the Housing and Home Financing Agency, the Commission of Fine Arts, NCPC, and NCTA:

Regional and local authorities in Maryland and Virginia should, of course, be consulted to the extent necessary to insure co-ordination of transportation plans and policies within the entire National Capital area.

He asked Tobriner to let Horsky know the “appropriate timetable” for the reexamination and to provide “periodic reports” to Horsky on the review.

Despite the “wide differences of opinion” on the controversial freeway segments, “a major objective of the re-examination should be a consensus which can command general support.”

District officials had mixed reactions to the letter. The implication was that if the reexamination confirmed the need for the North Leg and the Three Sisters Bridge, the White House would approve them and allow the Potomac River Freeway to go forward. However, NCTA, NCPC, and the agencies that President Kennedy wanted the city to work with had expressed wide differences on the freeways. The *Post* observed that, “One top city official considers it patently impossible, and believes the re-examination will end in the same old conflicts.” Albert A. Grant, the chief highway planner, thought the city might be able to convince technical staff based on data, but convincing policymakers was uncertain.

Director Aitken said the city did not have the “substantial amount of money” that would be needed for the reexamination, but was working with the House and Senate on the matter. He expected the review to include a re-check of traffic estimates, preparation of alternate plans, preparation of models, and exploration of the use of airspace above the freeways for office or apartment buildings. [Pierce, Charles D., “Kennedy Asks New Study of D.C. Highways,” *The Evening Star*, June 5, 1963; Schuette, Paul, “Community Accord On Freeway Plans Sought by Kennedy,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 6, 1963]

### **Congress Considers the President’s Report**

Within days, Congress began examining the President’s recommendations. The chairmen of the House and Senate District Committees wanted to hold joint hearings. Chairman Bible thought the President’s recommendations “provide a working base for Congressional consideration and, hopefully, action on the growing problems of metropolitan Washington.” Chairman McMillan said he would be pleased to co-chair joint hearings. In addition, Chairman Natcher had hearings on the District appropriations bill coming up in June.

As it happened, though, the Subcommittee on Roads, House of Representatives, had begun holding hearings on May 27 to consider several bills amending Federal-aid law. On May 29, General Prentiss, the former District Engineer, appeared before the subcommittee to testify on behalf of the American Road Builders Association (ARBA). After discussing ARBA's views on each of the pending bills, he brought up President Kennedy's call for "a delay and re-study of certain segments of the planned Interstate System within the District of Columbia on the premise that the provision of a suitable rail transit system might make the construction of these freeway links unnecessary":

The great weakness in this premise is that it overlooks the fact that the rail transit system will effectively serve only certain portions of the commuter traffic load, while the planned freeway system is needed to serve not only commuters but also the 24-hour needs of freight transportation and passenger automobile traffic of all kinds, including tourist traffic, the diffuse patterns of local traffic, substantial amounts of through traffic, and the requirements of the national defense.

He was certain that the restudy would confirm the need for the freeways, but the "tragedy of the situation" was that people would be deprived of the freeway service for several years, "much to the detriment of the national capital region."

Because the District transportation system was not the subject of the hearing, Representative William C. Cramer (R-Fl.) began the questioning on the pending bills. After doing so, he expressed interest in General Prentiss's discussion of the District issues. Representative Cramer, who lived at 6714 Joallen Drive in Falls Church, Virginia, while Congress was in session, explained his interest:

I still can't get to Congress over decent highways coming to work in the morning over 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, for one example. There is still a missing link in the expressway to the South here connecting with even the Capitol. How long do you think such a delay and such a restudy would take, do you have any idea?

Prentiss did not know, but said all the data necessary for the restudy "has already been collected" by the highway department, NCPC, and the other planning agencies in the area.

Representative Cramer thought General Prentiss's reasons for not delaying the freeways were "very sound," adding:

I don't think there are many cities in the United States that have a worse traffic problem than the District of Columbia . . . . [It] appears to be that the highway situation in the District of Columbia is about as botched up, hodgepodge and slipshod as any in the United States of America. As a matter of fact, I had a study made with regard to delays on present projects and out of 31 projects underway now 21 of them have been delayed for periods ranging from 16 days to 9 months beyond the termination date of construction. As I say, there is no way to get to the U.S. Capitol over 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and Shirley Highway on the expressways system even though the system is now constructed. It is not connected up.

With another “indefinite delay” on tap, “when are we going to get any relief for the District of Columbia highway traffic?” Highway traffic, he said, was going to increase “regardless of what type of a rail transit system may be devised.” He agreed with General Prentiss about the variety of traffic in the city. The high number of trucks passing through the city was inevitable because “there is no other way for them to get to the Northeastern United States except through the District of Columbia on U.S. 1, and so forth.”

General Prentiss pointed out that tourists did not want to ride into the city on a rapid transit system. “Most of them will come in here in their own automobiles or by buses.”

Representative Cramer agreed that tourists did not “want to leave their automobiles some distant place when they want to visit the District of Columbia.” He also wondered how “the Defense Establishment [is] going to move over rapid transit system.”

General Prentiss pointed out that 10 years ago, when he represented the District as Engineer Commissioner on NCPC, staff conducted “a very comprehensive origin-destination survey,” with the finding that 50 percent of people who drove into the area inside the proposed Inner Belt Freeway “did not have a destination inside the inner belt.” The 50 percent of vehicles that were causing the congestion within in the downtown area inside the Inner Belt “were not there because they wanted to be there, they were there because it was the only way to get to where they wanted to go.” The point of the Inner Belt Freeway and its connecting radials was to let people “get to their destination without going into the central city.”

Referring to the Potomac River Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge, Representative Cramer asked if the Inner Belt Freeway would connect without these missing links. General Prentiss said that “no section of this belt can carry out its function until the belt is closed.” True, the rapid rail system would reduce traffic within downtown, “but the great majority of people are very probably like you and me, we want to see other people using that rapid transit so we can drive downtown in comfort because it happens to be more convenient for us to drive our automobile.”

Representative Cramer thought the question related to “the basic psychology of American independence, even in getting to town.” He was not opposed to rapid transit for commuters who want to use it “but I don’t think you can substitute it entirely for the highway system.”

General Prentiss said ARBA was not opposed to rapid transit, either, but “rapid transit has to stand on its own legs and not stand on legs that are supported by taking away what careful studies by experts have indicated is absolutely essential to the solution of the transportation problems of this city.”

Chairman Fallon, who chaired the subcommittee, also was concerned by the President’s message, pointing out that one editorial he had seen from another city suggested that its officials also take a “stop and look” attitude about its planned expressways:

This could spread all over the country in a very short while and change the thinking of a lot of people, and it might impede and certainly will hinder the construction of a much needed Interstate System in those cities.

Representative Cramer suggested “it appears to me that might be the objective of making Washington the guinea pig or test case and thus the focal point of this whole mass rapid transit program which is to some extent faltering in other areas, as justification for the rapid transit, mass transportation bill now pending . . . to try to give great emphasis and push behind that program.” His personal opinion was that doing so “to the detriment of the Interstate System is not the proper approach.”

Chairman Fallon, who told one interviewer that he disliked driving, especially freeway driving and commuted daily by rail between his Baltimore home and Washington, said that was his personal opinion, too:

Certainly if the press is in some instances going to recommend that nothing be done in other cities until they see what happens to the Washington study or action, this will obstruct the building of these highways in most of the large cities of the United States.

General Prentiss reminded the subcommittee that Congress had accelerated the Interstate System in 1956 to complete the network, including the routes into Washington, within about 13 years, “and we are certainly not going to be able to do that if we stop the construction of our interstate highways out on the border some place and look at rapid transit.”

Representative Cramer acknowledged that some changes in Interstate routes around the country were justified, “but a lot of changes have been made which couldn’t be justified, in my opinion, and uncertainty of it is very unfair to people who own property in these areas.”

After some additional discussion of the pending bills, Chairman Fallon thanked General Prentiss for his testimony. The chairman assured General Prentiss that the subcommittee was “interested in seeing the program initiated by Congress in 1956 go forward to completion by 1972.” From the testimony “it certainly seems this is going to be one of the greatest obstacles to the completion of the system if these delays are carried out, not only in Washington but throughout the Nation.” [Federal-Aid Highway Act Amendments of 1963, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report 88-6, pages 65-76; reference to Chairman Fallon’s dislike of driving based on interview reported in: Schwartz, Gary T., “Urban Interstates and the Interstate System,” *Southern California Law Review*, March 1976, pages 433-434, footnote 195]

Representative Cramer wrote to Chairman Fallon on June 7 to call for hearings “at the earliest possible date” on the President’s proposal to delay the Three Sisters Bridge, the North Leg, and the Potomac River Freeway. After summarizing recent developments, he wrote:

I do not believe that the construction of critically important parts of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways should be further delayed on the basis of recommendations which do not take into account the purpose and objectives of the Interstate System.

The District was already 30 percent behind schedule, ranking below 32 States. The studies ordered by the President would only put the city further behind. Further, if they resulted in a

decision not to complete the Potomac River Freeway, the segment under construction “will not serve the purpose for which it was designed” and it “will almost certainly be taken off the Interstate System so that the Federal Government would bear only 50 percent of the construction cost.”

He called for hearings, but emphasized that “I don’t think such hearings could or should be construed as opposing a justified and properly financed mass rapid transit program that may be needed but would serve notice that any such planning should not be permitted to destroy the effectiveness or unduly delay completion of the Interstate and Defense Highway System—be it in Washington, D.C., or elsewhere.” [“House Asked to Air Road Delay Plan,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 8, 1963]

(The Subcommittee on Roads hearings were part of the review leading to the Federal-Aid Highway Amendments Act of 1963 (P.L. 88-157), which President Kennedy approved on October 23, 1963. Among its provisions was a revision of the timing of ICEs and a change in the 1956 statutory requirement that Interstate standards “shall be adequate to accommodate the types and volumes of traffic forecast for the year 1975.” The new requirement was that standards “shall be adequate to enable such project to accommodate the types and volumes of traffic anticipated for such project for the twenty-year period commencing on the date of approval by the Secretary . . . of the plans, specifications, and estimates for actual construction of such project.” As Lee Flor pointed out in the *Star*, this change could affect the Three Sisters Bridge because meeting traffic demand in 1975 might require only a six-lane bridge while meeting demand in, say, 1984, might require eight lanes. [Flor, Lee, “Forecast of More Traffic To Alter Design of Bridges,” *The Sunday Star*, October 13, 1963])

### **The Commissioners’ Views**

Chairman Natcher, preparing for hearings on the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1964, also wanted to explore President Kennedy’s transportation letter. The Congressman was, according to Lee Flor, “indignant” that the Bureau of the Budget had not made public the views of the District commissioners as expressed in an analysis dated April 8, 1963, and sent to the White House. Chairman Natcher was upset because he had not realized until late May that the Budget Bureau had not released the commissioners’ final analysis. Had he known, he would have released it in April. Now, he gave copies to the press, which saw it for the first time.

The commissioners endorsed a downtown subway, half the proposed rail-transit lines, and study of express bus routes, but they also wanted to build the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway. The commissioners were still “concerned that certain studies . . . used by the transportation agency . . . have not been made available.”

Although the analysis was similar to their earlier views, the commissioners added a section on the decline in the use of subways and rail transit in New York City. In 1940, the subway carried 1.8 million trips; in 1960, the total was 1.3 million even though the city’s population had increased by 2 million people. Transit riding per person since 1940 had declined by 40.6 percent in New York City, 33.1 percent in Chicago, and 41.2 percent in Philadelphia. Flor summarized:

The transit system, proposed for 1980, will carry only 117,000 more passenger trips than the bus and streetcar system in 1955, while the number of trips on highways will increase by 2.5 million, the report states.

Service to present bus riders may be severely hurt because the number of bus stops may change, the report indicates. The proposed 98-mile rail transit system would have only 30 stations in the District, while D.C. Transit now has more than 3,000 stops in the District, the report says.

The commissioners also informed President Kennedy that the District's highway plans would displace 25,200 fewer people than originally estimated. NCTA had estimated displacement of 33,000 people under the highway and transit plan the Mass Transportation Survey had recommended in 1959. This figure, NCTA calculated, could be reduced by 5,400 people because fewer highways would be needed under the transit proposal. NCTA said its plan "would save the homes and relocation costs of 27,000 persons in the District."

The District commissioners disagreed, as Flor summarized:

The District Commissioners, however, in their official evaluation of the transit proposals said that around 7,800 persons would be displaced, provided two freeways are built along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks through the north part of the District, it was disclosed yesterday.

The NCTA transit plan would have little effect on relocations because they would be about the same under the 1959 or 1962 plans:

But a more realistic appraisal shows the agency's transit system would "save the homes" of only around 144 persons, or around 35 families. This is based on the District's official report, a presidential decision on the East Leg freeway, and the pending decision on the combined freeway [along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks in the northern part of the District].

The wide difference in figures is because the transportation agency used the relocation estimates for the Wisconsin Avenue corridor and the Intermediate Loop.

The District Commissioners use relocation figures for the projects financed by interstate funds because they already have junked several controversial projects.

Critics had used relocation issues as a "key weapon" in their attacks on the highway plan, saying displaced families were "social dynamite." They were, Flor concluded, likely to dispute the District commissioners' new displacement figures.

Chairman Natcher also released the Department of Commerce's 39-page February report on the NCTA plan. It had called the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway a "necessary part of the highway network and detailed engineering and construction of it should be pursued vigorously." The report accused NCTA of failing to "cooperate with agencies responsible" for

transit development, adding that the agency did not “fully analyze the cost or service potentials” of the transportation alternative.” In addition:

The NCTA study failed to complete a sufficient amount of basic engineering work for all sections, including subsurface exploration, evaluation of construction methods, the preparation of preliminary plans and profiles, etc., in order to realistically develop sound cost estimates for the rapid transit system recommended.

The White House and Bureau of the Budget were concerned that Chairman Natcher’s release of the Commerce Department’s report would give ammunition to opponents of President Kennedy’s decision. He had neglected to release a letter from Under Secretary of Commerce for Transportation Clarence D. Martin, Jr., transmitting the report to Members of Congress, including Chairman Natcher. On orders from the Budget Bureau, Martin had written:

This report was one of several submitted to the President from various agencies on this matter. Understandably, conflicting opinions were represented in the various reports he received.

The President has now made his decision after considering all relevant advice and I would like to emphasize that the Department of Commerce fully supports the recommendations of the President . . . .

As Flor pointed out:

But the department has not changed one word in its transit analysis made last February, which is almost the exact reverse of the presidential recommendations. [Flor, Lee, “D.C. Transport Plan Balked by Kennedy,” *The Evening Star*, June 1, 1963; Flor, Lee, “Roads’ Displacement Toll Seen Reduced by 25,200,” *The Sunday Star*, June 9, 1963; Flor, Lee, “Commerce Says It Favors Rail Plan Though Formal Report Is Critical,” *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1963; “Foes of Kennedy Rail Transit Proposal Cite Critical Commerce Department Note,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 12, 1963]

### **Chairman Natcher Takes a Stand**

Chairman Natcher began hearings on June 3 to consider the District’s appropriations for FY 1964. Serious discussion of the District’s highway construction plans did not begin until June 11 when the three District commissioners joined Director Aitken and Deputy Director Airis on the witness panel. The chairman decided to reverse the usual order by offering his own statement before the city officials spoke because, he said, “This committee is deeply concerned with the highway and freeway problem.” Any effort to halt the highway projects was “a serious mistake.” Given the nearly daily growth of traffic, “we must carry our highway program along with any and all proposals concerning a rapid transit system.”

Congress, after years of deliberation, had initiated the Interstate System in 1956, and required it to extend through important metropolitan areas. In 1961, Congress had increased taxes to pay for the increased cost of the program. Despite all that, “a new party” (NCTA) had been introduced



into the Washington area's highway planning process. "Because of intercessions by various interests, the advancement of the freeway system has been dramatically curtailed."

By FY 1964, half of the time Congress allotted for construction of the Interstate System will have elapsed. He asked Aitken, in his opening statement, to discuss the percentage of the city's Interstate System that was open or under construction to help the committee understand the relationship between elapsed time and completed work.

He wanted to identify "what constructive steps the Congress can or should take to either get this program underway," as mandated by Congress, "or whether it should be stopped entirely until basic policy decisions are made":

The Congress does not intend to sit idly by and permit this important public works program to be placed in jeopardy by irresponsible intruders . . . .

The freeway system is critically needed to ease our transportation requirements. It will stabilize confidence in the construction of office buildings, both private and Government. It will create taxes. It will save thousands of dollars by the elimination of costly traffic delay, and it will save lives. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1964, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, on H.R. 7431, pages 619-620]

When the hearing resumed on June 12, General Clarke explained that after much controversy, the Kennedy Administration had "supported certain projects and requested other projects be delayed for further study." He said that, "This is the position that we have adopted in formulating our budget" for FY 1964. As a part of the Kennedy Administration, District officials naturally followed the President's direction. [page 622]

Aitken summarized Interstate projects underway and their status before Chairman Natcher interrupted to recall the events leading to the Appropriations Act for FY 1963, including the stalemate during the House-Senate conference. The result, largely because of the chairman's efforts, was that the law included funds for the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway. The House Committee on Appropriations believed these projects were important and "under no circumstances would we agree to bring to a halt the highway system."

Then President Kennedy halted those two projects and the Northwest Leg, which was not even under consideration during deliberation of the FY 1963 appropriations. Nevertheless, on June 1, the President had asked the District to study those freeways based on the concerns raised by NCTA. The District's request for FY 1964 reflected these actions.

Chairman Natcher just wanted to confirm that up to June 1, the District thought the projects should proceed. General Clarke replied, "That is correct, sir." [pages 628-629]

Aitken said that to complete the Interstate System on schedule, the District would have to obligate \$51 million a year. In FY 1964, the District expected to have between \$65 and

\$75 million of unobligated funds. “Optimistically, as things now stand, we doubt that we can obligate more than about \$30 million in fiscal year 1964.” That was because the District could not “advance a project to design or construction until we get past the planning hurdle.” They were able to proceed only on projects “on which there is agreement between some of the planning factions, shall we say.”

He cited a problem with the Center Leg, which “has been on the freeway plan since 1955.” The problem was that the Center Leg would pass under two pieces of property under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol, J. George Stewart. The District did not need title to the land, only permission, but it had not secured clearance from the Architect. Aitken was confident that the Center Leg would “have a terrific effect in clearing up traffic confusion around the Capitol Hill area” because no motorist would “use the city streets if he can get on a freeway system for a part of his trip.”

Chairman Natcher said the committee would not support any project that would damage the Capitol or any section of the National Mall.” He added, “I do not believe you gentlemen would recommend any proposal that would fall in that category.”

Aitken assured him, “That is absolutely right.” He explained:

The center leg, then, is the next logical place to get a heavy movement of traffic off the surface of the Mall, so that when you are standing on the westerly terrace of the Capitol and looking toward the monument, you will not see this traffic. It will be landscaped and have more of a park type appearance and it can be reserved for local traffic movements. [pages 630-634]

Chairman Natcher wanted to discuss the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway. In view of the President’s call for a study, the city had not requested additional funds for these projects. Aitken told him that the Three Sisters Bridge was “a good one to pick out as an example of what goes on in our planning process.” He went through the history of the bridge as far back as 1953 and its inclusion in the Mass Transportation Survey. Overall, he said, NCPC had “acted on the item, directly, or indirectly, at least five times. But as of today, the Commission has not signed off on some elements of the Three Sisters Bridge.” The problem was not planning, but “the business of replanning over and over.” [pages 633-634]

General Clarke said that based on discussions with District highway staff and BPR, “this type of restudy would take about 9 months to do. It will be a most thorough and comprehensive study.” The city needed to shift money around for the study, but did not need additional money for it. [page 636]

Chairman Natcher wanted to confirm what the city had requested for the North Leg. The budget, Aitken replied, asked for \$900,000 for study and right-of-way acquisition on the section that was not in controversy. The White House, the chairman wanted to confirm, did not object. Aitken and General Clarke confirmed that the White House did not object to the request. [page 643]

As Chairman Natcher directed the discussion to the planning process, he asked about NCTA's role in planning highways. Aitken replied that the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 "says that the responsibility for planning shall continue in those agencies that already had it." As "the best way" to indicate NCTA's work, he cited its "proposal with reference to the north leg of the inner loop where they would build in a serious deficiency in a part of the inner loop freeway."

In response to Chairman Natcher's inquiry about the concept of a 3C planning process for the Washington area, General Clarke replied that the planning process, involving NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council, from 1955 to 1959 was "an excellent example then of a cooperative planning process." Since then, "the cooperative planning process seems to have fallen apart to some extent." Since the Mass Transportation Survey had been completed, the major actions "seem to have been a downgrading of the plan that was arrived at in 1959."

What was needed was for the area's two official planning bodies, NCPC and the Regional Planning Council, to get everybody involved from the start of the plan. "You talk out everything in a long time-consuming process. But you would have to keep that—you have to go through this so that at the end, the plan will be supported by the people who have to carry out the plan." That type of cooperative planning process "has been missing the past 3 or 4 years." [pages 645-646]

Chairman Natcher asked about funds in the budget for the South Leg Freeway. The city's budget for 1963 indicated that the freeway would cost about \$18 million. Aitken said, "During the past year, we have reached, I think, what might be termed a gentlemen's agreement with the National Park Service and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads as to a method for proceeding." Details were still being worked out with NPS and BPR, "but it looks like the estimated cost now might be in the order of \$30 to \$40 million." The main reason for the increase was the desire on the part of NPS for a tunnel "so that this freeway will not disrupt the park features in this part of the city." [page 649]

Regarding NCTA's report and the commissioners' formal response to it, Chairman Natcher wanted to know if they still supported completion of the District's proposed Interstate System. Tobriner replied:

Sir, that is the recorded position of the Board of Commissioners. But our effectiveness is controlled by the President's request that some of these items—namely, the Potomac Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge—be deferred for further study.

Chairman Natcher asked if the commissioners had any comments on organization, finance, or phasing of the mass transit portions of NCTA's report. General Clarke said he was part of a 10-member group of District, Maryland, Virginia, and Federal representatives negotiating an interstate compact as Congress had called for in the National Capital Transportation Act. With details to be worked out, the members were unanimous in recommending that "the ultimate organization for the . . . rapid transit in this area should be a compact type of organization in which each of the States and the Federal Government would have some voice."

Maryland and Virginia, he said, were concerned about “whether or not the same financial terms would be available to a compact agency as would be available to a Federal corporation.” The understanding was that the risks to the States “would be no greater under a compact agency than they would be under a Federal corporation.” [pages 650-651]

The panel discussed the relocation issue. General Clarke said the city had asked Congress to approve the use of Federal-aid highway funds for relocation costs on the same basis as under the urban renewal program. “This amounts to \$200 per family and up to \$3,000 for commercial establishments.” The city also had requested legislation allowing it to coordinate with the Redevelopment Land Agency on a Centralized Relocation Service to handle all relocations in the District. “This, I think, would go a long way toward satisfying some of the critics of relocation.”

He estimated that the highway program would displace about 7,000 people over 10 years, or 700 people or 200 families a year:

While it is a problem, it does not seem to be an impossible load. I think it has to be put in a reasonable context, because if you say 7,000 people that is a lot, but it is 7,000 people over a period of 10 years. [pages 669-670]

Chairman Natcher asked how the commissioners were going to comply with President Kennedy’s request to reexamine the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg. General Clarke said the best way to reply was to submit, for the record, a memorandum, dated June 11, he had received from Director Aitken. The city proposed to hire “a firm with outstanding and nationally recognized ability in the field of traffic forecasting, and, if possible, with some knowledge of transportation problems in the National Capital region.” The firm would develop traffic estimates for highway facilities to serve “the study corridor extending from the Three Sisters Bridge site on the west to a connection of the north leg extended to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway on the east, with emphasis on a continuous route for the entire length of the study area.”

At the same time, the District planned to continue developing geometric studies and architectural sketches of alternate locations for a crossing above Key Bridge, including the Three Sisters Bridge. As for the Potomac River Freeway, the city would continue developing geometric studies and architectural sketches from the Three Sisters Bridge and alternative river crossings.

The District also planned to retain “a nationally recognized firm to consider aesthetic treatments and develop appropriate sketches and models” for the North Leg from the Potomac River Freeway to the Center Leg. A study of the social and economic impacts of the North Leg would include impacts on tax base, relocation, use of air rights, and other factors.

General Clarke estimated that the studies would take about 9 months and cost approximately \$500,000. [pages 672-673]

Closing out this portion of the hearing, Chairman Natcher said he had “often wondered just how those people feel who believe that this program should be brought to an abrupt halt, and how the people feel who believe we do not need any highways.” He believed the city should proceed

with rapid transit and the highway system. “I see no reason to penalize the District of Columbia by stopping the highway program, and in my opinion that is what is being done.”

He had talked with those who wanted to halt the program and now he wanted to go through their arguments. They argued that the freeways would affect the appearance of the city; would affect the city’s ability to pay its share of the highway program; reduce District revenues by taking taxable property; and, of course, displace many people. He asked the panel to comment on those objections to the highway program.

General Clarke had heard aesthetic arguments from the American Institute of Architects, the Commission of Fine Arts, and others. “All I can say in answer to that is that we have attempted to employ the finest architects we can find.” The city had added local architects to the staff. As he had told the institute, “if they desire to help us they could tell us how to get a highway through a city esthetically instead of just saying it cannot be done.” For example, “Miss Smith” had examined the E Street Expressway “and I think she came up with a very fine treatment.” (This is a reference to Chloethiel Woodard Smith, the influential District-based architect who had been involved in the new Southwest among many other projects.)

Aitken pointed out that architects also criticized buildings in Washington and elsewhere, but he referred to an article in *Architectural Record* of May 6, 1961, in which architect Edmond Bacon said, in regard to Philadelphia, “That the decision was made not to try to fight the automobile, a losing battle at best, but to treat it as an honored guest and cater to its needs.” The article included a map of an inner loop for Philadelphia. The article reinforced what General Clarke had said. “In other words, here is a problem. Help us make it as attractive as we can.”

General Clarke admitted that the city had reduced, overall, the amount of parkland in the city. Based on a study of how much had been taken and how much given back, he said “they balanced out to about 250 acres each way.” In the case of the East Leg Freeway on the west side of the Anacostia River, for example, “The city will end up with more parkland” than before.

The effect on tax rolls, General Clarke said, was debatable. “You have to evaluate the question of taking land off the tax rolls and perhaps if you can reduce the volume of traffic on the street you can add a little to the tax rolls.”

He was aware of the complaint that traffic reduces the value of adjacent property. “I don’t have any total picture on it . . . . If we could remove the traffic all of us would agree that a piece of residential property without traffic running by it all day long, is more valuable without that.” However, he questioned “whether the economic aspects of the freeways are, as these people phrase it, a simple removal of land from the tax rolls.” He thought the freeways brought more business into the city.

Aitken also considered the argument to be based on a fallacy. The “economic equation” is more complicated than simply adding up the property take from tax rolls for freeway right-of-way. For example, such an equation does not take air rights into consideration. He said, “we have proposals, sincere proposals by men that want to build office buildings that will cost \$30 to

40 million over the center leg of the freeway system.” Other freeways had similar, valuable air space that would add to the tax rolls.

Aitken agreed that the city was going to have a problem providing the 10-percent match for the accelerated Interstate program, but the commissioners had not, as some asserted, decided to divert general funds from other needs, such as schools or welfare, to the highway program. “Well, to my knowledge, the general funds haven’t contributed in the past to the financing of the highway program.” In fact, the reverse had been true recently, with the city shifting District highway funds to general needs, namely policing. [pages 673-679]

On June 14, the subcommittee welcomed Federal Highway Administrator Whitton and other BPR officials along with General Clarke. “Mr. Whitton,” Chairman Natcher told subcommittee members, “appears before our committee at my request.”

Whitton began by saying that he appeared in support of the District commissioners’ request for budget revisions for 1964 to conduct the studies of certain highway projects as recommended by President Kennedy in his letter of June 1, 1963. The recommended studies of the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg of the Inner Loop also involved “a look at those portions of the Interstate System plan within the District of Columbia and the connections thereto in the immediately adjacent areas of Maryland and Virginia.”

Prompt action on the studies was essential because the region’s Interstate System was “interrelated and must be completely integrated into an overall transportation plan.” Given the time limit on completion of the Interstate System, the time was fast approaching when final decisions would have to be made to confirm the network in the District and its links to routes in Maryland and Virginia. In view of this urgency, he was appearing before the subcommittee in support of the District’s budget needs for the studies.

Chairman Natcher asked Whitton a few questions about the history of the Interstate System, including its urban segments. Whitton explained that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 had directed PRA to work with the State highway agencies to designate a 40,000-mile Interstate System, including Interstate routes “into and within urban areas.” The chairman asked about designation in the District of Columbia. Whitton presented a copy of the Yellow Book map of the District saying it depicted “the Interstate System you speak of.”

The chairman asked what changes had occurred in the District’s network since the original designation in 1955. Whitton cited the addition of:

- The Three Sisters Bridge in 1957,
- The connection between Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge about 2 years earlier,
- The Lincoln Memorial connection,
- Shift of the East Leg from the 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor to a route along the west side of the Anacostia River,
- The Center Leg, which was not yet formally approved, although Whitton said BPR would approve it, and

- The North Central route, still under study.

Responding to questions from Representative Edward R. Finnegan (D-Il.), Whitton explained that under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the “last dollar has to be out of the trust fund by October 1, 1972.”

Representative Finnegan, whose district was based in Chicago, asked if he correctly understood that under the President’s June 1 letter, the North Leg of the Inner Loop and the Three Sisters Bridge were being “held up until such time as he formulates some plan that has to do with mass transit.” Whitton clarified the status:

I do not believe you are quite right in saying it is being held up. I think we must make these studies of the Three Sisters Bridge and the north leg of the inner loop to obtain the necessary information to make a proper presentation for the public hearing which is required by the [1956] statute . . . .

I am in favor of proceeding as fast as possible in accordance with the request by the President to the Commissioners.

He said some preliminary studies had been made, but not final studies. That was true, for example, of the North Leg. Studies thus far had not been “made in sufficient detail properly to acquire information that would enable the District to have the public hearing which is required by the statute.”

Whitton added that after the studies were completed, BPR would have to decide whether to approve the segments. He and General Clarke also clarified that part of the Potomac River Freeway was under construction, but the portion near the Three Sisters Bridge was subject to the study of that structure.

Representative Finnegan wanted to explore Whitton’s earlier comment about connections in the adjacent States, citing I-66 as an example. Whitton confirmed that I-66 was needed. “There is no question in our minds about Route 66, which crosses the Potomac on the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and then swings west into Virginia.” He continued:

In a relatively short time, by which I mean probably this calendar year the State of Virginia will be awarding a contract for Route 66 from the west end of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge up and past the point where the Three Sisters Bridge connection would join to it. If we do not know between now and then whether or not there is to be a Three Sisters Bridge, then we will not know whether to provide for an interchange between Route 66 and Three Sisters Bridge [the I-266 link]. So, therefore we need to know as quickly as possible so we can tell Virginia, “Yes, there is going to be a Three Sisters Bridge and, yes, you must provide for an interchange and buy the necessary right-of-way and design the highway in accordance with that.”

With Representative Finnegan departing for another commitment, Chairman Natcher took over the questioning. He wanted to know if the 1961 ICE covered the entire Interstate System in the District as currently designated. Whitton confirmed that it covered “the designation as we have

approved it at this time.” If BPR designated additional routes, such as the Center Leg, “it then would not agree.” However, Congress was considering legislation calling for another estimate for 1965 that would update the costs based on all designated routes at that time. (The Federal-Aid Highway Amendments Act of 1963, as noted earlier, required the new ICE.)

Chairman Natcher wanted to know if BPR could approve the use of Interstate funds “where the system was not properly worked out and agreed upon.” Perhaps not understanding the question, Whitton said BPR could approve projects only on routes that were part of the approved Interstate System.

The chairman asked about the standards for the North Leg Freeway. “Specifically, would one-way streets with intersections at grade meet the requirements with reference to standards?” Whitton replied, “No, sir.” (He did not explain his answer, but Interstate standards called for full control of access; one-way pair streets with at-grade intersections would not qualify.) How, then, would the number of lanes be determined? Whitton said the number would be based on predicted traffic volumes as of 1975, adding that he was hoping Congress would change the year of traffic design, as it would do in the 1963 Amendments Act.

Asked to comment on the reexamination of the North Leg Freeway, Whitton said that it would focus on how much traffic would use the freeway “with the premise that a transit system would be built as has been proposed in the President’s recent message to the Congress.” The amount of traffic that could be expected on the freeway would determine the standards for its construction, adding, “not only the standard that will be used, but whether it should be a depressed or an elevated section or a section at grade.” Further, the study would consider the social effects of the North Leg Freeway on the area, the aesthetic effects, and the economic effects:

We shall make as complete a study, if the Bureau of Roads has anything to do with encouraging the District, as ever was made on an urban expressway, because this is the Capital of our country, and we are all good citizens and are proud of our Capital, and we want it to continue to be a place where people can enjoy it.

The chairman asked if the rest of the Inner Loop would be eligible for Interstate funds if the North Leg were not built to Interstate standards. That, Whitton said, would depend on the results of the study, but I believe as of now if the north leg is not built, then the south leg as now built or under construction will be overloaded.”

What, Chairman Natcher wanted to know, was the purpose of the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway. Whitton explained:

We think that more bridge capacity is needed across the Potomac, and the Three Sisters Bridge will provide that capacity. The Potomac Freeway would connect the Three Sisters Bridge to both the south leg, and the north leg. In brief these two projects are key components of Interstate Route 266 which serves to connect Route 66 in Virginia with Route 95 leading to Baltimore.

He added:



There is another thing the Three Sisters Bridge does, Mr. Chairman, if I may say so. The Three Sisters Bridge provides a way for the truck traffic to get into Washington and still comply with an agreement somebody made not to run any truck traffic through the Lincoln Memorial area.

Was it reasonable for Virginia to design I-66 in Arlington County without knowing where it will connect to the Three Sisters Bridge? Yes, it was reasonable, but the design could not be completed until State officials know whether the Three Sisters Bridge would be built as part of the I-266 connection:

That is the reason we are in a hurry now, because we do not want to hold up Route 66. If we get that Theodore Roosevelt Bridge completed without a way to go off the west end, somebody up here will ask us, "How come?"

Because the reexamination could delay the Three Sisters Bridge for 2 or possibly 5 years, will Virginia have to delay I-66 for the same time. No, Whitton said, Virginia could proceed with construction. The question would be whether to include design of the I-266 interchange or build it without the link.

How long would it take to design and build I-66 in Arlington County and the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway in the District? Whitton and General Clarke estimated 4 or 5 years. Chairman Natcher said of those timelines, "I would like to say, on the record, too long." Whitton responded that I-66 might be faster since Virginia had conducted the survey for the route through Arlington County, but that would present a problem:

Truck traffic cannot go through the Lincoln Memorial tunnel, and truck traffic would have to get off at the present Key Bridge and just across the Key Bridge and on to M Street, and downtown the best way they could.

(The record attributed this statement to Whitton, but General Clarke may have provided the clarification.)

When Chairman Natcher asked about the Federal-aid Interstate funds apportioned to the District (\$113 million obligated for projects and \$60 million apportioned but not obligated), Whitton wanted to make a point:

The District situation is peculiar. There is no other condition like it in the United States. Every other State has a rural area on which they can spend their interstate money if they get tied up in an urban area. Here the District has no similar place to go.

The chairman wanted to know if Whitton had any information showing that construction of freeways in metropolitan areas "has been detrimental from an economic standpoint in the area into which they extend?" Whitton told him, "No, sir. I think it is just the opposite." The chairman agreed. "I say as a matter of record, I think you are correct."

With the session nearing an end, Chairman Natcher asked what would happen if the District, "because of delays of one kind or another, cannot complete its Interstate Highway System on

schedule.” Would BPR be justified in approving construction of Interstate freeways in Maryland and Virginia leading to the District boundary?

Whitton said BPR’s commitment “is to build a connected system of interstate highways, and I think we are dutybound [sic] to be very careful in seeing that that mandate is carried out.” If the situation the chairman described were to occur, “then it will be up to us to cut those stub ends back to where they do form an interconnected system, cut back the work in the District and the adjoining States or any other section.”

Chairman Natcher thanked Whitton for his testimony, closing the session by repeating what he had often said “during the past 7 months,” that he did not oppose a rapid transit system for the District, “but under no circumstances do we believe that the highway program in the District of Columbia should be killed off to advance or bring about the construction of the rapid transit system.” There was room for both. Anything that delayed or set aside “the fine system” BPR and the District had designated would be “a serious mistake.” He did not believe “there should be any interruption here in the District of Columbia of the approved overall plan.” [pages 723-737]

When the House Committee on Appropriations completed its bill on July 8, for the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964, the report included a long section on the District’s highway program reflecting Chairman Natcher’s views. Any attempt to bring Interstate highway projects to “a complete halt is a serious mistake.” To meet day-to-day growth in traffic, “we must carry the highway program along with any and all proposals concerning a rapid transit system.” Citing the history of the Interstate System through legislation in 1944 and 1956, the report stated that “Congress has insisted on its original policy that this nation including the District of Columbia shall have an interstate system.” It must be “continuous and . . . properly designated.”

Beginning with FY 1959, Congress had appropriated funds for the Potomac River Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge, both of which were “consistent with and a part of the national program and have been reviewed repeatedly by the Congress.” The District had sufficient appropriations for those projects. The Committee on Appropriations approved the District’s request for \$900,000 for the North Leg Freeway in FY 1964. “The Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac River Freeway and North leg of the Inner Loop should proceed without further delay.” [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 499, July 8, 1963, pages 2-3]

### **Chairman Fallon – To The Rescue?**

On June 25, Chairman Fallon began Subcommittee on Roads hearings under the title “Transportation Planning in Certain Urban Areas.” He said that “satisfactory progress” was being made on construction of the Interstate System, but “it is evident that most of the progress to date has been accomplished in rural areas.” The urban segments constituted “the most difficult phase of interstate highway construction,” in part prompting Congress to approve the 3C planning process for projects in metropolitan areas effective July 1, 1965.

Given the importance of completing the Interstate System on schedule, he called the hearings to determine “as definitely as possible” whether compliance with the 3C requirement would prevent the States from meeting that goal and whether amendments might be needed. [Transportation Planning in Certain Urban Areas, Hearing Before Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Committee Serial 88-9, 1963, pages 1-2]

Representative Cramer, in his opening statement, explained that in approving the 3C planning process, “it was not the intention of the Congress, and the section was specifically worded to make certain it was evidence of that intention that this section should not result in undue delay in the completion of the Interstate System of which urban extensions are a vital and integral part.” The urban sections, like the rural segments, must be completed by 1972.

“As a matter of fact, it is my opinion that this section was put in partially, so far as Congress is concerned, to expedite these constructions, to avoid conflicts, to permit planning that would avoid those conflicts, with the result that urban extensions and construction would be expedited rather than delayed, and that any construction of this section to the contrary is subverting rather than carrying out the intent and purpose of the Congress.” In that regard, he introduced his letter to Chairman Fallon calling for a hearing on the freeway program in the District of Columbia. [pages 2-3]

The testimony overall was aimed at the impact of the 3C planning process around the country, not the District of Columbia, but the District came up at times. Administrator Whitton, the first witness, discussed the evolution of urban transportation planning and how the highway community had addressed objections to the urban segments of the Interstate System. His statement did not address the District of Columbia’s freeway network, but when questioning began, Chairman Fallon brought up the subject almost immediately. He asked if highway officials were receiving “full cooperation of all of those that are charged with the study of mass transportation in the cities.”

When Whitton replied noncommittally that most areas were experiencing full cooperation, Chairman Fallon asked if there were any areas where such cooperation was not forthcoming. Whitton agreed that difficulties were occurring in some areas, but did not specify where. Chairman Fallon got to the point: “I am, of course, referring to the report of the National Capital Transportation Agency”:

Mr. Whitton. Yes, sir.

Mr. Fallon. Do you know by whom this report was prepared?

Mr. Whitton. By that agency, so far as I know.

Mr. Fallon. In your knowledge, do you consider these people qualified to evaluate the transportation planning studies in the District of Columbia?

Mr. Whitton. With due respect, Mr. Chairman, I do not believe I am qualified to pass on their qualifications. I have made no study of their qualifications.

Whitton added that he was aware of NCTA’s report, but had not studied it. Chairman Fallon pointed out that the Department of Commerce had reviewed the report and “concluded that their

plan does violence to the efficient flow of motor vehicle traffic within and through the District.” Further, as far as the chairman knew, “there was no cooperation on the part of the mass transit people to find out just exactly the thoughts of the people who are charged with the building of the Interstate System in and about Washington.” They wanted, he said, some Interstate segments held up until their study was completed. He asked Whitton, “Do you have any knowledge of how long it will be before their study is completed?”

The administrator did not. “They were established some time ago, but, in view of the recent developments, we feel that a more detailed study should be made of particularly some sections of the inner loop.” He hoped the study could be completed in 6 months. He did not want to speculate on the result, but said he wanted the subcommittee to know “I am completely in accord with the study being made, because it had to be made” before officials determined the location and design of the legs.

When the chairman asked about the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway, Whitton replied only that they were part of the study. The chairman asked whether Whitton agreed that every time someone objected to a segment and called for yet another study, “it is a delay in the possibility of completing this Interstate System at our target date?”

Whitton replied, “Mr. Chairman, I think this study needs to be made. That is my firm opinion.”

Representative Cramer interrupted to point out that the study President Kennedy called for was different from a project study of location and design. He wanted a study of the proposals “in relationship to all other types of transportation” not only now but in the future.

Whitton replied, “Mr. Cramer, I think any urban highway study should take into account the other types of transportation that are imminent.” When Representative Cramer asked if all this planning justified delaying the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg for 5 or 6 years, Whitton replied that the studies were justified, especially since the shape of the planned transit system could affect the outlines of the highway network needed to meet future traffic demands.

Representative Cramer, seemingly exasperated, asked if Whitton had been involved in preparing the report, dated February 20, 1963, from Under Secretary of Commerce Martin on the NCTA proposal that stated:

Interstate Route 266, which includes . . . Three Sisters Bridge and Potomac Freeway, is a necessary part of the highway network and detailed engineering and construction of it should be pursued vigorously.

Whitton told the Congressman, “We are pursuing it vigorously.” They were beginning the study and would complete it “as quickly as possible.”

Whitton’s position, Representative Cramer pointed out, was “quite different” from the position in the February 20 report about pursuing the bridge vigorously. Whitton disagrees. “Mr. Cramer,

I think we are. I think this study had to be made.”

Representative Cramer pointed out that Congress was divided on the type of transit system the Washington area needed, and resolving the differences could take some time. Should the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg be delayed while Congress debated transit issues? Whitton did not think so; officials should proceed with whatever the study President Kennedy had requested determined.

Representative Cramer agreed, but said the President wanted to delay the segments “indefinitely until the basic decision as to all types of mass transportation in Washington in the future be determined.”

Whitton questioned the word “indefinitely,” but Chairman Fallon intervened to ask how BPR cooperated with NCTA on its report. Whitton said BPR furnished technical personnel to NCTA but added that in doing so, “we did not necessarily agree to their findings.” In other words, BPR did not furnish opinions; “it was just work.”

Chairman Fallon tried to clarify whether any cooperation had occurred in NCTA’s planning with BPR or the District Highway Department. Whitton was hesitant to “call it cooperation.” BPR simply furnished help.

Apparently still exasperated, Representative Cramer pointed out the statement in the Commerce Department’s report that NCTA “failed to cooperate with the agencies responsible for freeway, parkway, and arterial highway development” and the statement on page 1 of the report that agencies of the Commerce Department had cooperated in previous studies, including the Mass Transportation Survey and would have cooperated in the same way with NCTA “if the services had been requested.” The Congressman said bluntly that the Commerce Department had clearly stated that NCTA “did fail to cooperate.”

Whitton, presumably not wanting to imply criticism of President Kennedy, replied:

They did not ask us where to put the rails or where to leave out the highways. The only help we gave them was a couple of people.

He stated that BPR’s three or four transportation engineers “were furnishing their technical knowledge, and not of a nature that would call for recommendation.”

In other words, Representative Cramer summarized, NCTA did not consult BPR about its area of jurisdiction, the District’s freeways. Whitton replied, “I was not asked to make a recommendation.” In response, Representative Cramer read from the 1960 legislation calling for NCTA to cooperate with agencies involved in highway development. NCTA, he suggested “did not conform to the basic law that authorized this study.”

Whitton told the Congressman that, “I attended two conferences with the NCTA in which they outlined the program of their own that they were considering.” He added, “I would like the record to show that.” [pages 23-27]

On June 26, General Prentiss was the next witness, again representing ARBA. Speaking generally, he said that highway construction in urban areas was “the most urgently needed part of

our national highway program and the most difficult.” The problem wasn’t the lack of “technical competence” to plan the freeways:

The real bottleneck in urban planning lies in gaining concurrence and approval of plans . . . . This condition is especially true in urban areas encompassing multiple jurisdictions . . . . These governmental approvals are either extremely difficult or impossible to obtain without the support of public-spirited citizens. Many citizens’ organizations are for the highway program until a specific highway proposal appears to adversely affect their own immediate interests.

After commenting on aspects of the 3C planning process, he summarized:

Efficiency in planning, engineering, and construction requires that there be a continuous and orderly flow of work from the planning stage through all of the preliminary steps and the actual construction of the highway facilities.

The proper implementation of section 134 [the planning provision of the 1962 Act] will encourage this orderly and efficient process.

He pointed out that a 3C process does not “guarantee that the plans which are developed will ever be implemented.” He hoped no one thought the 3C process would lead inevitably to construction of the urban Interstate freeways.

The District of Columbia, General Prentiss said, was “an excellent illustration of the fallacy in this thinking.” For years, the District had a planning process similar to the new 3C requirements, “but the difficulties of implementation have been enormous.” The District, as a result, may have little difficulty complying with section 134, but would still face “tremendous difficulties in getting actual construction started, and these difficulties in implementation are related to the planning process.”

He summarized the history of the District’s freeway network, a subject he was fully familiar with as a result of his tenure as the District’s engineer commissioner. He said that NCTA was entitled to its opinion, but the Commerce Department and the District commissioners had pointed out the deficiencies in NCTA’s conclusions and how the agency reached them. NCTA made unrealistic assumptions, bent figures several times to get desired results, and manipulated “questionable assumptions by a method of analysis of unproven reliability.”

General Prentiss wanted a restudy of the transit needs NCTA had recommended while the District proceeded promptly with the Interstate network. Funds had been appropriated to complete design of the Three Sisters Bridge and the remaining segments of the Potomac River Freeway. As for the North Leg, he was fully familiar with “the sociological and esthetic condition of the area,” since he had been born “a few hundred yards” from the proposed alignment. Deferring this key link would only “defer the economic dividends which the District and the metropolitan area will reap from the linking up of the inner loop.” It will help keep people out of the central area who do not want to go there. [pages 63-72]

Chairman Fallon asked General Prentiss if he thought the NCTA report contained “any new information” that justified restudying the District freeway network. No, General Prentiss said, he had not seen anything that would indicate that such a study “would do anything more than waste time and money.”

The chairman asked why the North Leg was so important. “Cannot the traffic east and west be accommodated on the south leg?” General Prentiss explained that the Inner Loop would never serve its full purpose until it was a complete circle that permitted traffic from all directions to bypass the central business area. “I feel that the key, the absolute key, to solving the traffic problems of Washington depends upon the earliest possible completion of the entire inner belt.”

Would not the proposed subway loop advocated by NCTA serve the same purpose as the Inner Loop? General Prentiss said the subway loop would serve “exactly the opposite purpose.” The subway loop was intended to get people close to their destination in the central area so they could conclude the trip on foot. By contrast, the Inner Loop was intended for people who wanted to get somewhere other than the central area.

Representative John A. Blatnik (D-Mn.) asked about the many examples around the county “that cooperation is more of a continuing process rather than a stop-and-go proposition.” He asked why coordination among all the District agencies was so difficult. Did other large metropolitan areas have the same problem? General Prentiss agreed that around the country, “the planning agencies are going to have to work closely together, they are going to have to not only cooperate but coordinate their planning so that they do not come up at the end of a long session of developing a planning process with diametrically opposed ideas.”

NCTA’s report illustrated the problem because of the agency’s “unilateral planning” in developing recommendations for mass transit and freeways:

In other words, instead of being sure that they were going forward, utilizing the same accepted data as has been used in the preparation of all of these plans, they used other data and came up with a different answer.

Representative Blatnik wondered if another agency, above BPR, was needed as a coordinating agency to resolve disputes. General Prentiss thought BPR was the right agency to give the go ahead when the planning process resulted in a decision to proceed with a highway project. However, in a democracy, nothing “is going to replace selling the public on what is good for the public.” Faced with 10 years to get the planning process implemented, “My idea is that we have got to start right now” in selling the community on the need for freeways so “the newspapers and all of the other citizens organizations are educated and understand why these engineers say this, that, and the other ought to be done.” In the District, for example, most people had no idea why the Inner Loop was needed:

What we ought to be thinking about is how much it is going to help the whole metropolitan area and the big section downtown, instead of worrying about a small strip across Northwest Washington, which, as I said before, is where I was born.

Representative Blatnik admitted he was puzzled. How do you get groups with divergent points of view to “finally come to a workable, reasonable compromise arrangement, and then come out and proceed with implementing the agreed upon program.”

General Prentiss indicated that usually when people or groups object to a segment of a comprehensive program, “they seldom, if ever, have an alternative”:

What we have got to do is have officials who have enough intestinal fortitude, after having evaluated all of the benefits as well as all of the objections, and they find, as they will, that the benefits are much on the plus side, to go ahead and say, “Well, we are sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but the few must be inconvenienced so that the many may benefit; and this is going to benefit the many, and we are going to go ahead with it.”

Representative Blatnik, who lived at 2900 North Kensington Street in Arlington, Virginia, provided an example of the stop-and-go method of road construction:

I am thinking, for instance, of the Washington 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, with a complex of mazes, overpasses, underpasses, and loops. I am just waiting until that is fully operational. I want to see four lanes on one side merge with four lanes on the other side at relatively high speed, approximately 40 miles an hour, and suddenly merging in four lanes. It is going to be a honey. You will have a real pileup on this side.

On the other side of the river, coming from Dulles Airport, you come down to the [George] Washington Parkway, and again you have suddenly and abruptly four lanes merging into two lanes at speeds of 40 miles an hour and more, and six blocks down the hill the two lanes become one, and on one side you have a whole chain of cars at a dead stop waiting one by one to get onto a six-lane bridge, and when you come to the other end you stop, you cannot get off. I do not know who in the world is responsible for that.

General Prentiss agreed that these examples were the result of how projects in the area were planned. On the District side, the Potomac River Freeway was part of the solution, but it was partly on hold. Representative

Mr. Blatnik. Who can break this deadlock, or how should it be broken in this area?  
General Prentiss. I do not have the answer to that. I am sorry.

Representative Blatnik wondered if BPR could do so, or perhaps Commerce Department officials. General Prentiss replied:

I am of the opinion that the only way we are going to get this deadlock broken is by the public rising up and saying, “We want this to go forward now.” And then those in authority will pay attention. I do not know any other way. I do not know of any organization that has the authority right this minute to say go ahead.

If the solution was waiting for the public to rise up, Representative Blatnik said, “We are going to wait a long time.” General Prentiss said, “That is right.” [pages 72-78]



Other witnesses on June 26 were from highway-oriented associations and were supportive of highway development (Automobile Manufacturers Association and American Trucking Associations).

General Clarke and Director Aitken were the lead witnesses on June 27. Pointing out that he would be leaving office in 2 weeks, General Clarke said he hoped his 3 years in the post would allow him to offer constructive evaluations and suggestions.

First, though, he said he hoped that Section 134 of the 1962 Act would stir the “fire under the pot” that would “consume the embers of inaction and indecision.” The time had come for planning agencies to “halt costly piecemeal consideration of transportation segments whether it be for highways or rapid transit.” The “slow progress” on the Inner Loop in the District was an example of piecemeal planning and implementation:

In contrast, the concept of the National Capital Beltway which soon will completely encircle the metropolitan area has been adhered to and typified the benefits of farsighted system planning and implementation.

He told the subcommittee that based on his 3 years of service, he had sent identical letters to NCPC and the National Capital Regional Planning Council that read in part:

. . . that the future growth and economic stability of the region depends in a large measure upon the development of an effective and efficient urban transportation system in harmony with the overall comprehensive plan.

The two groups “have the basic responsibility for the establishment of a comprehensive planning process.” Their “acceptance of that responsibility can only be measured by the firmness and resolve exhibited by the Planning Commission and the Regional Planning Council in adopting thoroughfare plans without undue reservations to the labyrinth of detail.”

The period of the Mass Transportation Survey from 1955 to 1959 reflected a cooperative and comprehensive planning process. Since then, “new factors have entered the situation.” NCTA’s plans “raised serious questions about the need for several elements in the currently programed highway plan.” Acknowledging that responsible elements existed on both sides of the resulting controversy, “the very fact that there are responsible elements on both sides of this controversy has required further study of those elements in controversy.”

NCPC was responsible for planning and orderly development of the Nation’s capital, but planning must not only be long-range but take on a regional scope. The National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 had reiterated the congressional requirement “for planning on a regional basis of a unified system of freeways, parkways, express transit service on exclusive rights-of-way and other major transportation facilities.” Section 134 of the 1962 Act had reiterated this concept for the District and elsewhere:

Factors of esthetics, sociological, and economic considerations must receive great attention and must be related to the broader community development plan. Public improvements are rarely sought by those whose privacy may be invaded. We must seek

to minimize this invasion keeping in mind, however, the common good and overall benefits to the region at large.

If the area's planning agencies "cannot do the job, we will have to devise some other method."

He emphasized, however, that the planning of transportation systems "cannot wait until the ink is dry on the final detailed comprehensive plan for the area." General Clarke concluded:

Nevertheless, we must be assured that the transportation plan itself takes into account all significant factors. Transportation systems are the arteries of the region and will shape or be adjusted to shape the land use pattern. The life flow in these arteries must be kept current if we are to have healthy growth in the area. [pages 135-138]

Chairman Fallon began the questioning by referring to General Clarke's reference to the difference between planning through 1959 and since then. "To what extent did the National Capital Transportation Agency cooperate with you in the preparation of the NCTA report?"

General Clarke answered that "this is somewhat a difficult question to answer." The city had shared the expertise of its metropolitan planning study group with NCTA, the group that "runs computers to see what the various programs . . . would produce in the way of traffic loadings under certain assumptions." However, the programs fed into NCTA's computers were entirely NCTA's, as well as the decisions on which systems to study." He compared it with "loaning someone a typing pool." The group members loaned to NCTA "exercised very little in the way of policy coordination."

As for policy coordination, Aitken explained that he had a meeting with NCTA's Stolzenbach on October 10, 1962, but it "was simply a briefing, and there was no question of exchange of ideas, or thoughts, or principles, or policy."

Chairman Fallon observed that this did not sound like a cooperative planning process. Aitken began, "This is true." Normally, when a freeway idea was raised, the District worked with BPR, Maryland, or Virginia in "a free exchange of ideas and discussions during all stages of development of a project from the concept to the final finished plan."

Asked if he agreed with the NCTA report, Aitken said he was "in accord with the philosophy that we need improved mass transit," but had a "considerable difference of opinion" on the highway system. He cited the example of design standards for the Interstate System, which Congress specified should be adequate for a design year. BPR and highway departments across the country had devised a means of forecasting that traffic.

"Contrarywise, the NCTA limited traffic requirements by one device or another." On the North Leg, NCTA "made a predetermination as to the amount of traffic that would be permitted on the facility." Aitken based his claim of predetermination on a statement "in the back of the front page of their consultant's report on this particular item, [where] the consultant was careful to say that NCTA told them to design it for a certain volume of traffic." In short, instead of following the direction of Congress in authorizing the Interstate System and using the method employed by every State highway agency in forecasting traffic volumes, NCTA "went at it in a different way."

In response to followup questions from Representative Cramer, Aitken said:

And the facility which was recommended by the Agency, which consisted of one-way streets between sections of freeway, is like building a country road in the middle of the New Jersey Turnpike.

And, as Representative Cramer pointed out, such a feature would not qualify for Interstate funds.

Aitken explained another consequence of recent developments. The District had asked BPR to approve preliminary design of interchange "C" and the Center Leg, but just that morning, BPR told him it would not act on the requests until reexamination of the North Leg, Three Sisters Bridge, and Potomac River Freeway was completed. BPR wanted to be satisfied that the District would have a properly integrated Interstate System:

So when you talk about the north leg of the inner loop system, this is like a block that holds up the house: with[out] this one everything is in doubt. [pages 138-141]

Representative Cramer, who had been absent for General Prentiss's testimony on these subjects, picked up on Aitken's comment. "That concept would destroy the fundamental purpose of the interstate highways, would it not?" Aitken agreed and said the District Highway Department "does not propose such a plan."

Representative Cramer wanted to be sure he understood the testimony. BPR was holding up approvals on segments not under study per President Kennedy's instructions. Aitken confirmed that this was his understanding based on his conversation with BPR that morning.

They discussed what would happen if BPR would not approve 90-percent Interstate funds for the Center Leg. The estimated cost was \$60 million, with BPR providing \$54 million in Interstate funds. If the Center Leg were dropped from the Interstate System because of a failure of connectivity, the Federal share would drop to \$30 million on a 50-50 basis. With the Interstate System, the city would receive all the Federal dollars needed to complete the route to full standards by 1972, but would have to draw the 50-50 funds from annual apportionments of \$5 million for the ABC program. The District's annual allocation of Interstate funds for 1963 was \$34.5 million.

Representative Cramer asked if Virginia officials are designing I-266 in view of the uncertainty about the Three Sisters Bridge connection to the District. Aitken said Virginia highway officials had asked him what they could do to resolve the issue. "Virginia cannot settle the question of design in this area west of Key Bridge any more than we can settle the design of the Potomac River Freeway until we know where that river crossing is going to be."

Representative Blatnik asked who would make that determination. Aitken replied that "we have had a lot of help," with the transcript noting: "[laughter]." Aitken added that the city "had determinations several times in the past but they get changed." The city had developed a plan based on the Mass Transportation Survey, but "all at once it appears we do not have a plan to follow."

Chairman Fallon wanted to know if “any new factors” have come to light on the North Leg, Three Sisters Bridge, or the Potomac River Freeway that would alter decisions. Aitken said that some homes would be taken for the bridge approaches, but right-of-way needs had been taken into account in planning the bridge. He thought the real issue was that if the bridge and freeway were built, the District would have to provide a connection via the North Leg. When Representative Cramer asked what the objection was to the North Leg, Aitken replied:

Well, sir, I do not know. I know that housing will be involved, but I also know that we can recreate housing over the freeway to replace a substantial part of that which would be affected.

Representative Cramer said that on April 8, 1963, the District commissioners had approved a transportation plan that included the facilities. He asked if anything had happened since then that would change this support. When Aitken replied that the District’s views had not changed, Representative Cramer immediately pointed out that “the one salient difference is the President’s message.” Aitken replied, “Yes, sir.”

Representative Cramer began reading from the President’s June 1 letter. The President called for “careful reexamination” of the highway program in light of the transit plans. The Congressman asked if the city had considered transit in developing the highway program. Aitken and General Clarke assured him the city had done so.

President Kennedy called for consideration of the social, economic, and esthetic impacts of the highways. He allowed some projects to go forward, such as the East Leg and Fort Drive Parkway, but put others on hold pending the studies he outlined. What, the Congressman asked, were the social, economic, and esthetic impacts the President was referring to.

General Clarke was fairly certain the President was referring to the homes that would be taken for the North Leg and the resulting disruption to families. As for esthetics, the North Leg would go through some sensitive areas, such as Embassy Row; it was “a very important area of the city and must be treated very carefully.” If the Three Sisters Bridge were not built, traffic volumes on the North Leg would be reduced somewhat, and that would have a bearing on the design.

Representative Cramer wondered if these factors had been considered before release of the Mass Transportation Survey in 1959. The survey considered only the need for the facilities, General Clarke said. “Now the problem of how it was to be built, precisely where it was to be built, and just how it was to be treated, was a matter that was deferred for later consideration.” The city had not planned to build the North Leg until 1969, so time remained to consider these factors.

Representative Cramer asked if President Kennedy wanted the city to study how to build the facilities. No, General Clarke told him, the study was to determine whether the facilities would be built to “interstate or some lesser standard.”

Representative Cramer pointed out that everyone expected a freeway, with limited control of access, to be built in the North Leg corridor and had been planning accordingly. “And now that

whole thing may be changed and it may not be.” He added, “And that is not the decision of you people.” General Clarke confirmed that it was President Kennedy’s decision.

In response to a question from Chairman Fallon about whether the facilities in question were needed, Aitken said, “Absolutely, yes, sir; there is no question about it.” [pages 144-150]

Representative Blatnik said he was experiencing “very severe, if not extreme, puzzlement.” He referred to the comment that, “If the planning agencies cannot do the job, we will have to devise some other method.” After the 1959 survey and the 1962 NCTA report, this was “a very peculiar statement, or admission,” but it reflected the “befuddled mess” that transportation planning in the area had become. The District began with the enlightened planning of Pierre L’Enfant, but “I think today it is perhaps one of the worst in the country.” He did not think the District’s problems were any different from the issues facing any major city:

By contrast, we have this bounding [sic] around to conferences, consulting with agencies, and Good Lord, not knowing quite sure who makes the final decision or determination, no one charged with the responsibility of executing this huge program.

The planning function seems to have “become an end in itself, and you are running around and around and not getting anywhere.”

General Clarke said, “you have described the situation very well as to the confusion that exists.” Unlike all those other cities, part of the District’s problem arose from “the somewhat exclusive jurisdiction of various Federal agencies over pieces of property in the District of Columbia and in the region.” He cited NPS, the planning agencies, the Architect of the Capitol, the Smithsonian Institution, and all the other bodies that must agree to plans for “any type of facilities, be it highway, sewer, or anything else.” In other cities, officials can develop a plan and proceed. “But this is not always possible in Washington.”

The District began work on the freeway plan outlined in the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey, but the intervention of planning bodies and NCTA was “very disruptive to the orderly operation of the Highway Department.” As a result, the department did not have any plans on the shelf to build anything. “They are just devoid of plans” that would allow the city to meet the 1972 deadline for completing the Interstate System.

Referring to his comment about devising some other method of planning, General Clarke told Representative Blatnik:

What I had in mind is that it seems to me that over the past year or so the planning agencies were not able to agree really on anything in the highway program; and, if the District of Columbia and the State of Maryland and the State of Virginia are to meet this 1972 deadline, if the planning agencies cannot bring this all back into a package so we can make orderly progress, I think we are going to have to come back to the President or to the Congress and say we have got to find another way to do it outside of the planning agencies.

Maybe an ad hoc group that would have enough authority to agree on a concept, and we would feel sufficiently confident of the concept that we could go ahead and do our programing and getting this program underway again.

Mr. Fallon. In the meantime, we are doing nothing.

Mr. Blatnik. That is exactly it. [pages 150-152]

General Clarke said the city was advancing the Interstate projects in its current budget, such as the Center Leg and East Leg, and would complete the reexamination under the President's instruction as quickly as possible. When Representative Cramer recalled the earlier statement that BPR would not approve planning funds for the Center Leg, General Clarke clarified that the city would do what it could:

Mr. Cramer. You cannot do much if they do not give clearance for Federal money.

General Clarke. You are absolutely correct on that.

Mr. Cramer. So for all practical purposes, that is stymied, and that is a necessary link no matter what happens to the north leg, is it not?

General Clarke. I believe so.

Representative Cramer summarized his view that Washington was "becoming a national example of the hodge-podge that results from lack of long-range planning and programing and actual construction, when you apparently get involved in a fight for prestige position between mass transit proposals and highway proposals." The Interstate System in the District was "now being bogged down and is likely to be more so in the future," with other cities experiencing similar problems "as the result of this overriding consideration now of municipal planning in general, and mass [transit] planning in specific."

He added that he became concerned about this issue during the hearings on the miscellaneous bills because if these problems spread around the country, the Interstate System "conceivably would not, and probably would not, be completed by 1972 in the most critical areas, meaning the urban areas."

General Clarke agreed that in the District, "an effort far beyond that we have been able to put forth" would be required to meet the deadline:

Mr. Cramer. I would hate for any other city in the country to use what is happening in Washington as an example of what they should do on extensions in their communities.

General Clarke. I would agree with that. [page 152]

Representative Blatnik was "amazed by this type of thing . . . completely perplexed." Here was the very important engineering program with decisions to be made. "The whole thing is suspended—suspended animation." He asked if General Clarke agreed that, "The Congress or the executive branch are the ones that can move and break the deadlock." General Clarke agreed.

The Congressman said:

I do not think we should be a party to sitting here and standing by and hoping someone sometime in the future is going to break the deadlock. These men know what has to be done, and they know how to cooperate with the agencies . . . .

You have a continuous flow of operation and not just a jerky, stop-and-go, “don’t go through the tulip bed operation.” But here it is the north leg, the east leg, the inner loop, the Three Sisters Bridge—and you go on the bridge and cannot get off. It is not your fault, but this type of operation is serious enough and inexcusable enough to warrant going right into it and seeing if we cannot get the logjam broken and get the show on the road.

Chairman Fallon agreed that city officials had been undermined. They were planning in accordance with congressional direction and the 1959 plan. “And then another agency is added to the Government . . . and they say that the engineers and the people with the responsibility of location and design did not know what they were talking about.” The NCTA report implied the incompetence of the very people whose experience “shows you have one of the best records for this type of work in the country.”

As far as he was concerned, NCTA officials might know something about mass transit, but “I do not consider them experts on the Interstate System or the design of an interstate system.” The District’s highway officials were the experts in that area:

And to have a garden club or somebody else come in and say that you are wrong because you are going through a tulip bed . . . .

Representative Blatnik pointed out he had referred to “tulip bed” only as “shadowboxing and sparring around,” but did not mind “this tiptoeing around the edge of it.”

Chairman Fallon told the Congressman, “I did not tiptoe . . . . I think we should find the answer and find it soon.” [pages 153-154]

Representative Cramer asked about the people being displaced. General Clarke replied:

In the past 2 years I have not felt any particular objections from the property owners in any area.

I recognize that part of the north leg goes through an area of a lot of people of low income and low-cost housing, and they are not the type of people--

Representative Cramer interrupted to say, “If some is slums, you will be just as well out of there.” General Clarke continued:

Some is slums, and some of it above that category, and with a little more attention to the housing code and all it could be usable housing. These are not the type of people you hear from individually. Collectively on this problem we have heard many objections.

Under current plans, relocations per week were about three to five. “To me this is not an insurmountable problem.” The city was seeking congressional approval to use Federal funds authorized for urban renewal for relocating those displaced by highway projects.

Chairman Fallon pointed out that the Committee on Public Works also approved dams that could flood out farmers and towns upstream for the greater good. “That is going on every day, and you find that in almost every public works project.” General Clarke agreed but clarified:

I think perhaps the difference involved in relocation in the city as compared to many of the flood-control projects, Mr. Chairman, is, of course, the low-income status of the people and the difficulties they have in relocating. [pages 153-155]

Representative John F. Baldwin, Jr. (R-Ca.) commented that NCTA clearly had violated its authorizing legislation and the will of Congress:

Certainly it is not the intention of Congress to authorize a program of this magnitude and have some individual independent agency have the right to veto and block the intention of Congress.

NCTA, he said, had “acted in a completely arbitrary manner” and had not cooperated, as Congress directed it to do, with other planning agencies that “had a far greater history in planning.” Section 134 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 called for a 3C planning process in metropolitan areas around the country. That NCTA violated this concept by acting arbitrarily and ignoring the reliable planning agencies “is even more reason for us not to allow this to continue.” He told Chairman Fallon that “this committee should make it [sic] views known in the strongest manner possible.”

Chairman Fallon closed out the testimony by saying he hoped to have NCTA officials appear before the subcommittee to explain why they did not feel they had to comply with “the wishes of the Congress and our legislative process.” [pages 156-159]

Testimony continued on July 9 with the appearance of Vice Chairman Brewer and Donald Gingery of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. In a brief opening statement, Brewer made clear that the commission was “unanimous” in support of the District’s freeway plans, including the Three Sisters Bridge, the North Leg, and the Potomac River Freeway. It may seem odd, he said, that Maryland supported the Three Sisters Bridge, which was to be built between the District and Virginia, but “our people will use the facilities, and we feel they are vitally needed, and the sooner the better.”

The commission also supported rapid transit “and, if the Congress, in their wisdom and judgment decides that they wish to provide a billion dollars for rapid transit in this area, we welcome it.” He continued:

But we do feel very strongly about the need for the highways, and we do not think that the highways should be sabotaged in order to provide future rapid transit at a date which we feel is sometime in the future, and we feel that the highways are needed now.



Gingery supported construction of NCTA's rail transit system by 1969, but could not agree with the omissions of the freeways NCTA opposed. "Without them, the hundreds of thousands of vehicles going to and from and through Washington daily will aggravate existing traffic congestion by jamming local streets, increasing bottlenecks and deteriorating property values."

He said the moratorium or freeze on freeway construction in northwest Washington west of 12<sup>th</sup> Street had "far-reaching effects" and had "made a bad situation worse in the most heavily congested section of Washington." It blocked extension of freeways to serve workers and professionals who lived in Montgomery County but worked in the District. "It has, in effect, placed a Chinese wall around the Northwest section of the Nation's Capital by denying easy, convenient access to thousands of Marylanders who must work in downtown Washington."

Trying to solve the area's transportation problems without the three freeways NCTA had rejected would be "foolhardy." On a map, he showed the vast area of Montgomery County that had "no radial road plan programed or approved by any agency in the State or in the District of Columbia" to serve "this vast human mass of people to get in or out of the District of Columbia." And yet, under the freeze, "there cannot be any planning or building of highways in the whole Northwest section of Washington."

Gingery said that when Maryland and Virginia agreed to the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, officials believed they would have veto power over NCTA's plans. "There was written into the act that we would have complete cooperation of the NCTA. This cooperation has never occurred." As a result, the veto the two States thought would work has not worked. "It has not worked, and it will not work as long as this one Administrator, who really appoints his own administrative body, runs the Transportation Agency." He thought NCTA would run better with three Administrators, one from each of the main jurisdictions in the area.

Without such a change, "we are in real trouble, real trouble." Because of the way NCTA has operated, Maryland and Virginia lost 2 full years in highway planning. "And mind you, gentleman, the Transportation Agency has little or nothing to do with highways, yet has succeeded in blocking the consideration of the inner loop where all Maryland roads must connect in the District of Columbia."

Every agency, except NCTA, thought the 1959 plan was sound. "And who came along and changed it? The very Agency we set up under that 1959 plan."

Chairman Fallon observed that the National Capital Transportation Act was under the jurisdiction of another committee. He asked if NCTA had cooperated with the Maryland commission. Gingery replied that NCTA had, but "the cooperation was almost silly; it was childish." He explained:

We would go down to the meetings, and we would be shown a plan—no backup statement. And that is what the Department says. We have never yet been able, on a reasonable basis, to get in and meet with the Transportation Agency and work out our various problems.

Cooperation, Gingery said, had been “failing from the word go.”

Brewer agreed. “I have had innumerable meetings with Mr. Stolzenbach, and I think the difficulty is the fact that we are not a party to the development of those plans.” His impression was that NCTA officials wanted to defer freeway construction “in order that they might make feasible the statistics they furnished for rail rapid transit.” [pages 167-173]

Chairman Fallon asked how the freeze on the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg affected planning in Maryland. Brewer reply that with the 5-year freeze on the northwest quadrant and the NCTA-inspired reexamination, “we cannot really plan.” Trying to plan “might be just throwing the taxpayers’ money down the drain.” Unless the District can plan its network with certainty, “we certainly cannot do any planning.”

Brewer added that the commission supported mass transit, but was opposed “if it means our highways are going to be sabotaged and we are not going to be able to move our people.” [pages 173-174]

Representative Cramer asked about progress on the 1959 plan. Gingery pointed out that highways and transit were interrelated, but NCTA came along and “left the 1959 plan and embarked on this idea that they would do away with highways, they would freeze them, and they would fool around with transit to supplement highways, stop all the highway building.” And they were successful in “stopping every bit of highway planning and construction from the Baltimore Expressway to the Potomac River.” Maryland could not acquire property or program a road from the Outer Belt Freeway until the District settled issues related to the Inner Loop “with finality.” Things were moving along nicely:

And the Transportation Agency comes in and says, “We are not going to have an inner loop. We are not going to let you connect this road, or connect that road, or connect this road to the inner loop. We are knocking the whole top off it. It is going away. It is going to be served by a subway.

So here was “poor old Maryland” unable to provide links in accordance with the 1959 plan. And here was Virginia “bringing this tremendous Route 66 in, and they suddenly find this six-lane road has to be dissipated into the existing bridge crossing [Key Bridge], which cannot even comply with interstate roads.” Unless Congress did something drastic about NCTA, the two States and the District were going to lose millions of dollars in Interstate funds—and probably had spent \$20 to \$30 million “illegally because they cannot comply with the interstate regulations.”

Representative Cramer said that as far as he was concerned, highways were being “put into second place in order to try to accommodate mass transit facilities, and so you wind up with the tail wagging the dog.” [pages 176-177]

Representative Fred Schwengel (R-Ia.) wanted to know if NCTA imposed the freeze on freeways in the northwest quadrant. No, Brewer told him, it was “put on, unfortunately, by the Congress of the United States on the recommendations of certain people who favored the idea of a freeze.”

Asked to be specific about the people involved, Brewer replied:

I think there were certain people then associated with the staff of Senator Bible. I think Mr. Fritz Gutheim was the leader in it. I think Mr. Stolzenbach . . . was probably a party to some of this freeze . . . .

The Congress was convinced to put this freeze on because they were afraid of the so-called Wisconsin Avenue corridor . . . . Somebody told me there had been a map prepared, a map held by an official agency of Government . . . which shows the homes of every Congressman, every Senator, every administrative assistant, every legislative assistant, who lives in Northwest Washington, and that they were hoping to freeze and prevent any roads from going through this area which would disturb these homes, and they encouraged people to oppose the construction of any corridor in that area to put a freeze on.

He could not verify his statement about the map, but that was what he had heard. Representative Schwengel, who lived at 4005 Nellie Custis Drive in Arlington, asked to see the map, but Brewer did not know where it was or even if it existed. [page 205]

Representative Schwengel asked who in NCTA was “most responsible for this problem, do you think?” Gingery replied, “There is one Administrator who is virtually a dictator,” namely Stolzenbach. He had advisers “who come from all over the country, some of them.” The Congressman asked if any of them lived in the District, but Gingery did not know.

(Of the eight NCTA officials listed in the 1963 *Congressional Directory*, Stolzenbach lived at 10515 Meredith Avenue in Kensington, Maryland, while J. Neal Tomey, Director of the Office of Administration, lived at 6004 Osceola Road in Bethesda. All but one of the other officials lived in Arlington or Alexandria. The exception was Richard R. Haratine, Director of the Office of Public Information and Community Services, who lived 1634 I Street, NW. [*Congressional Directory*, 1963, Government Printing Office, 88th Congress 1st Session, page 591])

Discussing the Department of Commerce’s report on NCTA’s recommendations, Representative Cramer said he had asked Administrator Whitton several questions regarding “why he should now change his position.” The Congressman was “not satisfied with those reasons” because “the facts are the same today as they were before [in 1959].” The only thing he could think of that had changed was the new President.

Gingery said, “Well, there has been a lot of pressure put on these Government agencies by somebody.” The pressure, Representative Cramer agreed, “is obviously going to have a deleterious effect on highways throughout the District of Columbia.”

Brewer pointed out that Governor Tawes had designated the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to be the coordinating agency with NCTA. Even so, Stolzenbach insisted on seeing the Governor. Brewer recalled the discussion:

Governor Tawes: Have John Funk and Mr. Brewer seen this?

Stolzenbach: They have looked at the maps.

Governor Tawes: It is a problem which I am sure they are capable of dealing with, and they are the approving authorities.

It was a short meeting, but that was what NCTA considered cooperation. All the commission wanted was to be represented when planning is underway so they know what was being considered for their community. "We do not feel this is true today."

Representative Cramer read the language in the law calling on NCTA to cooperate with other agencies and the States:

I am very disturbed by the fact that apparently the provisions written into the National Capital Transportation Agency Act of 1960, with the specific intention that all other planning groups and the States of Maryland and Virginia should be specifically consulted, and, as a matter of fact, the Governors of the States – I am reading from section 204, subsection (d), which begins:

In order to facilitate the transition from a Federal agency to an interstate proprietary agency and to further coordination within the National Capital Region (the NCTA) shall submit the transit development program and any revision thereof . . . (5) to the Governors of Maryland and Virginia or such government agencies as they may designate for approval of the location and extent of proposed agency facilities and the time table for the provision of such facilities within Maryland and Virginia, respectively –

We have been advised in these hearings before that the NCTA did not bother to consult hardly with any other agency, even though so instructed by the Congress.

I am reading now from subsection (f) of the same section 204 –

that the NCTA shall conduct research, surveys[,] experimentation, evaluation, design, and development, in cooperation with other Government agencies and private organizations when appropriate, on the needs of the region for transportation.

And time after time in the act are references to cooperation, consultation.

Again in section 205, subsection (a), paragraph 7, the NCTA –

shall cooperate with Government agencies to facilitate cooperation with coordination of location, design, and construction of freeways, parkways, and other arterial highway facilities with the transit development program. [for clarity, ellipsis not used]

Representative Cramer continued:

So, Congress wrote into this transit authority, in section after section, the requirement that they consult with the Governors . . . . I understand now that that was not done, in direct

violation of the instruction of the Congress of the United States, a complete usurpation of authority by the NCTA.

Brewer assured him that if Congress would amend the law to provide equal representation from Maryland and Virginia, “that kind of cooperation is going to occur.”

Representative Cramer, referring again to language in the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 imposing the northwest freeze, asked why the communities couldn’t plan for a freeway through the area since planning was not prohibited. Brewer answered that “we do not want to be planning unless we know we are going to be able to build it.” The District could not plan; therefore, neither could Maryland. He added that the freeze was put on “to serve the selfish interests of people who were concerned about the construction of a road which might disturb their home or some other building . . . or other thing that they own. This is not the way to do business.”

The Congressman then read the language in “freeze” provision stating that “the Agency shall not later than January 10, 1965, submit to the President, for transmittal to Congress its recommendation as to whether any such freeway or parkway should thereafter be built.” Brewer responded that he could not understand why NCTA “should be the ones to make this determination,” instead of organizations such as his that had been in cooperation with the District since 1928. Asked if he thought NCTA had the sole authority to determine whether freeways or parkways should be built through the northwest quadrant, Brewer responded: “That is the way it appears, sir, and that is what has been happening, and that is the effect of it.” [pages 207-210]

Representative Baldwin explained his view that under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, every motorist in the country was paying the gas tax to build the Interstate System. Anyone who deliberately blocked construction of that system in the District of Columbia was “barring 2 million people, directly and indirectly, from getting their proper returns on the Federal gasoline tax and barring all the rest of the tourists in the United States from getting their proper return . . . .” Brewer said of the Congressman’s entire statement, “this is the finest statement I have ever heard.” [pages 210-211]

Representative Schwengel asked about Presidential adviser Charles Horsky. “He is presumably interested in the development of this whole area, including the District of Columbia.” Had he been in touch with the planning commission or involved in any way? Brewer pointed out that Horsky lived in Maryland. Brewer knew him, but not well. “As far as I know, he has not injected himself into the picture too strongly.” He added:

He may have been working with Mr. Stolzenbach. I do not know. But they are good friends, and I guess they might be working together. I do not know. I think he did have some meetings with General Clarke before he departed as Engineer Commissioner.

I cannot figure it out exactly. There seems to be something, a veil some place, that we just do not seem to get through. And somebody—I really must say I cannot understand how this information gets to certain places.

Representative Schwengel concluded that Horsky had “shown no great interest in this very, very serious problem.” [page 211]

(According to Professor Schrag:

The most important defender [of NCTA’s plan] was President Kennedy, whose enthusiasm . . . Stolzenbach later attributed to Kennedy’s being the only president to grow up in a city with a subway.

(In late March 1963, after the Commerce Department and the District released their denunciations of the NCTA recommendations:

Horsky – the president’s gatekeeper on all matters affecting the capital – reluctantly realized that the White House and the Bureau of the Budget would have to referee this dispute. Though he “recoil[ed] at the idea of another study,” he suggested that some pressure from the top was needed.

(The result was President Kennedy’s June 1 letter to Tobriner calling for studies of the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg based on the assumption that the NCTA transit system would be built. [Schrag, page 57])

Representative Cramer read from NCPC’s conclusion that despite the extensive rapid transit system NCTA had proposed, “most of the travel in the National Capital region in the year 2000 will take place in automobiles.” NCPC called for completion of the Center Leg, Northeast Freeway, and continuation of the Southwest Expressway. “It seems to me that the highways in the District of Columbia are . . . suffering from strangulation of overplanning [sic].” He wondered how often transit systems for the District of Columbia was going to be planned, recalling the 1959 plan, the 1962 plan, the Year 2000 Plan, and now the District needed funds to conduct studies on sociological, economic, and aesthetic aspects. Gingery said:

I can tell you that if this idea of bringing in another study and another study continues—and this is an age-old device to stop a project. You fellows have been around too long not to realize, if you want to stop something—let’s get another study going and spend a million more. This is precisely what is taking place.

He urged Congress to “get the thing back on the even keel” or “we will all be old men before we have the highways built or the transit, either one.”

Asked to provide an example of NCTA’s invalid estimates, Brewer described his concerns about NCTA’s ridership estimates for the subway. NCTA expected it to be at full capacity during the morning and afternoon weekday peak periods. Possibly, Brewer said, the subway might be at full capacity downtown, but in the suburbs, he had serious doubts about ridership of the rail transit lines. He did not want to wait until the transit facilities were built to see if NCTA’s estimates of ridership and income were accurate before freeways could be built. With cooperation and the lifting of the freeze, local officials were ready to build those highways now:

The Congress can do it if they want to. We know that, if the Congress stand up [sic] and says, “We want it, we have got to have it, and the people are entitled to it,” we will get it, and not have a lot of little people rubbing around town here stopping it.

Representative Cramer said Brewer had “put your finger on what the philosophy is.” The mass transit planners thought, “We will force people to ride mass transit by simply not building highways.” That, he said, is what the NCTA proposal “amounts to.”

The Congressman was concerned that transit advocates were urging “that all other cities should do as Washington is doing—delay the highways in order to give consideration to mass transit.” If that was the case, “the completion of the Interstate System in the urban areas by 1973 . . . will be impossible.” He pointed out that he did not usually agree with editorials in *The Washington Post*, but an editorial about the Three Sisters Bridge made a “pretty sound observation”:

The eventual builders of the bridge will be able to make their cofferdams with the baled volumes of the consultants’ reports . . . . As long as our system of government pushes all political issues off onto the technicians in the weak hope that eventually someone will devise a computer to solve them, precisely that long will the city remain trapped in its circle of expensive, redundant, and vulnerable engineering studies. [pages 212-216]

(The title of the July 9 editorial was “In Lieu of a Decision.”)

Other witnesses concluded the hearing, also in support of building the freeways. However, the Subcommittee on Roads did not hear from Stolzenbach or other NCTA officials.

### **The New Engineer Commissioner**

General Clarke left office on July 8 to become chief of military construction for the Chief Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He was, as he admitted, leaving many unsolved problems, and not just on the freeway disputes. Given the number of agencies involved in decisionmaking, disarray was a normal condition, he told WWDC’s “Report to the People” on May 25.

The transportation controversy, he said, was the most challenging problem he had faced as engineer commissioner. He hoped Congress would break the deadlock later in the year by authorizing funds for rapid transit while giving the go-ahead for freeway construction.

His successor was Colonel Charles M. Duke, a Texas native. Among the posts he held before President Kennedy chose him to be the new engineer commissioner, Colonel Duke had been district engineer for the New York district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. His most recent assignment was as chief of supply and logistics for the Army’s 1<sup>st</sup> Corps Group in Korea.

On July 8, with about 100 city officials and guests in attendance at the District Building, Commissioner Tobriner gave the departing General Clarke a key to the city. “With this key go the thanks of the District for a job done with extraordinary fairness, honesty and effectiveness. You have brought to us your wisdom, strength and example. And you take from all of us our respect, our love and our unqualified admiration.”

Colonel Duke took his oath of office during the ceremony. Tobriner said, “he comes at a time in the city’s history when a technical skill, balanced judgment, seasoned experience and, most importantly, human goodness and compassion and understanding are critically needed.” [“Clarke Leaves His Office In Usual Confused State,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 27, 1963; “Col. Duke Sworn In As D.C. Commissioner,” *The Evening Star*, July 8, 1963; “Duke Is Welcomed To District Board As Clarks Gets Key,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 9, 1963]

Colonel Duke moved with his family to 5712 26<sup>th</sup> Street, NW., in the District’s Chevy Chase neighborhood, a short distance from Rock Creek Park.

A few weeks later, on “Report to the People,” Colonel Duke explained that as a former “strap-hanger” on the New York City subway, he understood the value of rail rapid transit. “It is no secret that I and the Board of Commissioners support the principle of rapid transit.” The question was how to balance highways and transit. The proper blend, he explained, was the key to reexamining the North Leg Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge, as President Kennedy had ordered. He hoped the report on the reexamination would be completed in December, in time for its recommendations to be reflected in the President’s message to Congress on the District’s budget. [“\$19,000 Family Income Seen For D.C. Area in 40 Years,” *The Sunday Star*, August 18, 1963; “Road Restudy Finish Slated In December,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 18, 1963]

### **Searching for a Solution**

Area officials continued struggling with what to do. The Montgomery County Council, for example, decided not to vote on a request by NCTA that it support the agency’s transit plan. The problem was that officials could not be sure what transit facilities would be provided to the county. As County Manager Mason A. Butcher explained, “Whatever is built to Tenley Circle and on to the District line is sure to come into Montgomery County, but we don’t know what it will be.” Council members also were upset that the NCTA plan opposed construction of the North Leg, the Three Sisters Bridge, and the related Potomac River Freeway, all vital arteries as far as county officials were concerned. [“Rapid Transit and Dam Fail in County Council,” *The Evening Star*, June 19, 1963]

On June 18, Chairman Natcher held a public hearing on the District’s Appropriations Act, 1964, for non-government groups and individuals. Witnesses discussed a range of topics, including highways. Peter Glickert of the Capitol Hill-Southeast Citizens Association was pleased that unlike in previous years, he did not have to urge the committee to shift the location of the East Leg. “Logic has finally prevailed in this matter and even the Highway Department has decided to be sensible in locating this road along the Anacostia River.”

Still, the association was concerned that highway officials “failed to grasp all the opportunities given them for easing the harm which this road can do to the city.” He hoped the committee would remind the District Highway Department that if it is more careful “with its right-of-way and its programing, the closer the District can be to having some sort of freeway system when the District’s freeway money runs out.”



Glickert pointed out that many witnesses talked about the shortage of funds for building schools:

We wish to remind this committee that it is, to a great extent, responsible for this situation.

The committee had reduced the Federal payment to the city in lieu of Federal taxes and used general funds for police services. In addition, “in the last 3 or 4 years, \$8 million to \$12 million of school money has been put into freeways.” In view of the furor erupting at the time about school funding, he asked, “will this immoral diversion of funds be reinstated or will the money be used to promote the welfare of the District’s people?” In short, the city had a “shabby school system . . . partly because District road plan [sic] are so enormous.” [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1964, Hearings on H.R. 7431 Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 1963, pages 1089-1090]

(In the rapid turnover of witnesses, the subcommittee did not comment on Glickert’s assertion regarding diversion of funds from schools to freeways.)

Polly Shackleton, District Democratic Committeewoman, said her group firmly supported President Kennedy’s decisions on the transit and freeway debate. The committee was committed to balanced transportation, and recognized the importance of the Interstate System, but “we seriously question the necessity of providing a blockwide, high-speed truck route through the very heart of the city”:

The ruthless destruction of countless homes, schools, churches, playgrounds, the tearing asunder of entire neighborhoods, and the cruel uprooting [sic] of thousands of people unfortunately are included in the price that must be paid to let the trucks roar through in safety at speeds of at least 50 miles an hour.

In view of the “extensive human suffering” that was inevitable, she urged the committee “to stand firm and not be swayed by the self-interested, well-heeled and highly organized lobby which had chosen to make Washington its battleground and openly fight the President.”

Representative Robert N. Giaimo (D-Ct.) of the committee asked if she was saying that highway projects should be halted only because of the disruption to homes, churches, and schools and other facilities. When she said that was “a very good reason” for reviewing the program as the President suggested, Representative Giaimo pointed out that highway and urban renewal programs throughout the country involved the taking home, businesses, and other structures. “There are many Federal programs we have to do just that in order to obtain a good result.”

Shackleton was not persuaded. She cited one unspecified route that would involve 13,000 people being uprooted. “It would involve whole neighborhoods and communities.” She definitely thought that officials should “stop and look this over and see whether it is trucks or people in this city.”

Representative Giaimo pointed out that Congress had approved funds for the program. “And you are now saying Congress is wrong?” When she replied that she was supporting President

Kennedy, he wondered what would happen if the President changed his mind. Shackleton replied, "I am very glad President Kennedy and I happen to be on the same on this issue, as we are on most other issues."

In view of the Democratic Committee's overriding concern about housing displacement, Representative Finnegan pointed out General Clarke's testimony that never more than 7,000 families would be dislocated and that relocation arrangements could be made week by week. Shackleton said, "That is very doubtful. I think some of us are still to be convinced by the allegations of General Clarke."

She reminded Chairman Natcher that she had testified the year before on basically the same points. Her committee was very concerned about the people of the District:

They have not proved to us, General Clarke, or anyone else, that they are going to be able to relocate these 13,000 or 15,000 individuals. I think you are aware of what is a very explosive situation . . . . I do not think it would help it by throwing people out of their homes and disrupting neighborhoods.

Representative Giaimo again made the point that people were being dislocated around the country for the Interstate System. "This is a problem in all our urban areas."

Mrs. Shackleton pointed out that she was for the highway program, "but I do not know why they should go right through the heart of residential sections of cities." In San Francisco the previous fall, she said, there was a bond issue "which they passed for a subway because they were sick and tired of these freeways destroying the city."

Representative Giaimo said:

I do not find much merit in the argument about the fact that you have to build a highway through an area where there are homes. You have to build a highway through places where there are people. That is nothing new to us.

Chairman Natcher thanked her for "your splendid statement," and moved on to the next witness. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1964, pages 1104-1107]

The following day, June 19, one of the witnesses was Moe Lerner of Air Transport, Inc., testifying on behalf of the Citizens' Traffic Board of the District of Columbia. (Air Transportation, Inc., was involving in providing ground transportation to and from airports in the area.) After introducing himself as chairman of the subcommittee on mass transit, he began:

Progress in the development of the Washington highway program, including portions of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, has virtually ground to a halt and the Nation's Capital is threatened with strangulation unless planned highway improvements are permitted to go ahead on schedule.

The Mass Transportation Survey proposed "an effective system of freeway and highway improvements," but NCTA recommended "a severe \$600 million cutback" in those plans.

The Citizens' Traffic Board agreed with the District commissioners' analysis of NCTA's report. In particular, "highways are of prime importance to the efficient conduct of our major industry—the Federal Government." The Washington area's second largest industry, tourism, required "good highway facilities to bring him and his dollars to our city," given America's preference for traveling by cars for vacation travel. Further, the business community could not transport goods without good roads:

In short, we need freeways and improved streets and I recommend that this committee give its wholehearted support to the District of Columbia highway program. If there is a need for a rail transit program, let it be considered on its merits, but not at the expense of badly needed highways.

In 1950, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission agreed on a plan for freeway development "that had the wholehearted approval of the engineers and officials." The Mass Transportation Survey "again emphasized its freeway plans as essential no matter what other types of transportation [sic] would be needed:

Now, new faces are attempting to turn back the highway clock and have succeeded in freezing many of the projects—even some that have already been started.

Officials should encourage and support development of a good transit system. "It should be attractive and handle our rush-hour traffic efficiently in air-conditioned comfort." It should be "a show window for the rest of the world." But, Lerner wondered, why hold up the Three Sisters Bridge, the North Leg, and the Inner Loop concept? He concluded:

For a balanced transportation program we need both the freeways planned to meet the highway needs of the District of Columbia and a mass transit system; therefore, we should not allow the traffic problem to be ground to death in an argument between highway and transit.

During public hearings, with many witnesses to speak, Chairman Natcher and his colleagues often had little to say after each presentation. Lerner's presentation was an exception. Chairman Natcher said, "I want you to know that as just one member of this subcommittee I could not agree with you more." He was convinced the area needed rapid transit and a highway system. The idea of killing off the highway system to promote rapid transit "is a serious mistake."

He had been in the House, he told Lerner, for 9 years. During that time he voted for a bill that resulted in construction of District of Columbia Stadium that "is a beautiful stadium, probably the most modern stadium in the United States." At the time, he was told it would cost between \$6 million and \$7 million. Instead, it cost \$19,800,000, with the District having to borrow about \$800,000 a year to pay the interest. "It was a white elephant when it was completed. It is a white elephant today."

As this example of unreliable cost estimates demonstrated, taxpayers should be "informed carefully and thoroughly about any mass transit system":

If it is going to cost \$1,150 million, to be paid for over a period of 30 to 40 years, with bonds to be guaranteed by the Federal Government or a great portion of them, we want to know what the share of the District is going to be. The burden is to be placed upon the taxpayers here in the city of Washington . . . . I am not in favor of killing off the highway program here in the District in order to obtain a rapid transit system. That is my feeling about this matter and I believe I am right.

Before we have any rapid transit system or any other program in the District, I think the people ought to have all of the facts because it is people like you who are going to have to pay for it.

He added:

I am not against rapid transit. I never have been, but I say to you that I am not in favor of a rapid transit system here in the District of Columbia that is brought about as a result of killing off and destroying the highway program here in the city of Washington.  
[pages 1152-1154]

On the evening of June 20, the committee heard from additional witnesses, including David Sanders Clark of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. He said the committee strongly supported President Kennedy's position on the District's highway plans, particularly his call for a careful reexamination of the highway program and a delay in funding for the North Leg, Three Sisters Bridge, and the related Potomac River Freeway until the outcome of the review was known:

We firmly believe that any new freeways and bridges planned for Washington should be so located, designed, and constructed as to uproot as few people as possible from their homes and places of business, and do the absolute minimum of damage to the appearance of this city. These three ill-considered projects clearly do not meet the criteria.

Instead of appreciating the President's support for the rest of the highway program, highway advocates had "taken to lambasting the President for daring to suggest that certain parts of the program warrant further study." Clark added, "the most vociferous and intemperate criticism seems to come from individuals who are definitely not residents and taxpayers of the District of Columbia." Members of Congress were receiving letters from all over the country in support of the projects, with truckers particularly solid in support for the Three Sisters Bridges.  
[pages 1221-1222]

When Chairman Natcher asked about the cost of the NCTA transit proposal that the Committee of 100 supported, Clark could only restate NCTA's estimate. The chairman asked if he was including interest on the bonds over a 30- or 40-year period. Clark hoped the system would make money, as NCTA believed:

We do not think that is the really important thing. We feel that a transit system is a public service, just like a fire department or the post office, or the highway department. It is

something that people in a major metropolitan area have to have and people in the area are going to have to pay for in one way or another.

Chairman Natcher restated his view that killing off the highway program to bring about a rapid transit system was “a serious mistake.” He asked Clark if he believed Congress would appropriate \$20.5 million in the first year, \$50 million in the second year, and underwrite and guarantee \$600 million worth of bonds in the third year. Clark replied that he hoped so because every major city had similar problems.

The chairman said, “That would set a precedent from the standpoint of guaranteeing the bonds.” Clark said if so, it would be “desirable to set a precedent for the Federal Government supporting mass transit for cities just the way that the Federal Highway Act . . . set the precedent for the Federal Government helping out with highways.” [pages 1222-1224]

The subcommittee also heard from Peter Craig of the Northwest Committee for Transportation. Discussing the history of transportation planning, he explained that in the 1950s, planners acted on the assumption that highways would have to carry the primary transportation load. In 1955, automobiles carried 57 of peak-hour travel; planners assumed this trend would continue for decades. In 1980, 66 percent of all peak-hour trips would be in an automobile, with only 34 percent by transit, namely buses. NCTA wanted to reverse those percentages. “Numerically, the difference is about 50,000 peak-hour auto trips – enough to fill five eight-lane freeways to capacity.”

Unfortunately, debate over transportation “at times has been highly emotional, complicated by false issues and by erroneous or irrelevant factual claims.” In short, the debate should not be about subways or no subways. The issue was not highways or no highways. Both were needed. “The issue is one of degree: how much more highway capacity, where, for what purpose, and with what capacity.” He commended the Whitener committee hearings in 1962 and its unanimous report that was highly critical of the highway plan.

NCTA had proposed “a workable transportation system” that had been endorsed by NCPC, NPS, the Commission of Fine Arts, and President Kennedy. Craig’s committee also endorsed the plan, as well as President Kennedy’s call for reexamination of several freeways in view of the NCTA plan. “It is important to emphasize, however, that this pending reexamination of the District’s highway program need not, and will not, stop highway construction activity.” If the Committee on Appropriations approved the District’s proposed budget for FY 1964 of over \$60 million, it would be “by far the largest highway appropriation in the history of the Nation’s Capital.”

Craig offered several reasons why the reexamination was needed. First, he cited planning realities. The assumption behind the original freeway network was that the city would not have rapid rail transit. “It makes no sense to build a subway system to handle over half of Washington’s commuter needs to the central city, and also superimpose a highway system designed to carry 100 percent of such traffic.” Such needless overbuilding could hurt everybody, “placing both the subway and highway systems in financial jeopardy.”

Second, Craig cited fiscal concerns. It was, he said, a “demonstrable fact” that the District could not expect to receive enough funds to complete more than a fraction of its freeway program. President Kennedy, in his budget message, had made the same point about the District’s highway fund: “The highway fund . . . will face critical deficiencies after 1965.” Craig estimated that in the District, the deficiency would be about \$88 million. “There will not be funds available to pay for any of the eight freeway projects still under study – even those upon which the NCTA and the Highway Department are in complete agreement, such as the center leg and the Northeast freeway.” NCTA had provided “full justification” for its financing plan, but District officials had not provided any such justification for their plans.

Finally, Craig said the District’s highway program should be appraised to determine the degree of highway construction the city could physically tolerate. The full network would make the city even more dependent on the automobile than it already was, while requiring a 45-percent increase in parking spaces:

A freeway once built is permanent. Before any new commitments are made, the planners, the public, and the Congress must be certain that the irrevocable step is required. That proof does not exist today.

During the question period, Craig said he had some reason for hope that the District’s highway planners were rethinking their ideas:

For example, on two of these projects, the Northeast Freeway and the North-Central Freeway, we have seen a change in the attitude of the District Highway Department since a year ago and it now seems to be seriously considering the NCTA’s recommendation that those two freeways be combined as a single freeway facility, utilizing the right-of-way of the B. & O. Railroad. Such a combination of interstate routes, NCTA believes, would meet the truck and auto needs in conjunction with rapid transit and if so, the District is the gainer.

That was encouraging, but for “some reason,” the District highway department “adamantly stuck by its original plan” for the Three Sisters Bridge, “even though the assumptions which underlay those plans have now been shelved.” There was, he said “no conceivable need for that bridge, for autos, for trucks, even for bicycles, and it is only if you want to assume that rapid transit won’t carry anybody or that sometime beyond 1980 there may be some horrendous traffic increase, that there could conceivably be a traffic justification for the bridge.”

In 1960, Congress had faced a similar situation where freeway construction was planned in the northwest quadrant that would parallel and compete with a likely location for rail rapid transit. Congress concluded “that if there is any doubt, let’s build the subway first and see if it works and defer a parallel and competitive freeway for consideration at a later time.” The result was the 5-year moratorium included in the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960.

Craig was not opposed to all freeways, citing his support for the Southeast Freeway, the combined freeways in northeast, and the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. The Three Sisters Bridge was “one of the most frivolous highway proposals.” He asked, “There are such essential freeway

requirements—why can't we proceed on those in which there is full agreement, particularly given the critical fund shortage in the District highway funds?"

When Representative Giaimo pointed out that given the problem of suburbanization, highways were needed to get people into and out of the cities, Craig explained that he was not arguing that highways, automobiles, and trucks were not needed:

The problem is how do you alleviate the congestion. One subway line can carry as much traffic as four eight-lane freeways. In other words, in terms of traffic congestion alleviation, one subway line can do as much as four eight-lane freeways . . . . Yet if you build the freeways, you have only compounded the problem in terms of a central city because you must park those cars at the other end and each of those cars takes 300 square feet. [pages 1244-1248]

Not all witnesses who discussed transportation opposed the District's freeway plan. *The Evening Star* report on the hearing pointed out:

Indorsement of the District's highway program was voiced by spokesmen for five business groups—the area's Automotive Trade Association, a new car group; Eastern Greyhound Lines; the Oil Heat Institute of Greater Washington; the area's Tire Dealers and Retreaders Association, and the area's Laundry-Dry Cleaning Association. ["Hearing Brings Clash On Highway Cutback," *The Evening Star*, June 21, 1963]

With District officials concerned that the reexamination President Kennedy had ordered would affect the schedule for the Center Leg, Administrator Whitton told reporters on June 28 that he saw "some possibility" that engineering studies for the project could start during the year. Clearly, the White House-ordered study "will affect what we do on the Center Leg," and that might result in delay. "A restudy of the North Leg is a good idea and is needed regardless of any controversy," but whether it was built would affect the location of the Center Leg.

The other problem was a dispute with Maryland over how the Center Leg would be linked to Maryland's segment of I-95 at the District line. While the dispute was unresolved, he thought the District could work on the southern half of the Center Leg, which would be unaffected by the later decisions on where the "troublesome northern section" would link with I-95 in Maryland.

As for the East Leg, BPR was "willing to consider" its relocation along the west bank of the Anacostia River, as favored by President Kennedy. ["Studies on D.C. Center Leg Freeway May Start This Year, Official Reports," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 29, 1963]

As June 1963 ended, *Star* editors took a look at the situation:

It was inevitable from the beginning that the bitter dispute over Washington area transportation would end in the lap of Congress. And the need now is for cool heads to resolve the feud—not perpetuate it.

The only way they could do so was if committee leaders accepted a simple premise:

That the controversy over highways and the controversy over rapid transit are separate issues, not competing solutions to the problem of moving people in and out of Washington.

Rapid transit was absolutely necessary. “The most extensive system of freeways alone would not suffice.” Congress should approve legislation to begin work on the transit system.

At the same time, the editors blamed NCTA for the current crisis. The agency’s “unjustified attacks on the freeway program” invited retaliation by highway advocates. However, NCTA’s “major blunder” should not jeopardize the needed transit system.

Chairman Fallon had been correct in calling NCTA “the bottleneck” blocking decisions on freeways, but the White House “took the NCTA off the hook” when President Kennedy called for reexamination of the Three Sisters Bridge/Potomac River Freeway and the North Leg. Further, BPR was the agency threatening to withhold funds for the Center Leg until the controversy is resolved.

The editors offered a “clear” course of action. The Center Leg should proceed because it was “needed regardless of other decisions on the road system.” Similarly, if Congress can convince the Kennedy Administration to relax its order, the Three Sisters Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway “should move ahead immediately.” These actions would leave questions only about the North Leg:

The engineering, esthetic and relocation problems involved in this project all are difficult. But we are confident that they can be solved. The studies to provide the necessary answers should be undertaken immediately. [“Transportation Crisis,” *The Sunday Star*, June 30, 1963]

### **Appropriations 1964**

On July 8, the House Committee on Appropriations completed work on the District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964. The committee’s report on the bill included a section on the city’s highway program. The committee had “very thoroughly” examined the District’s highway program with officials of the District and BPR. Bringing important highway projects to “a complete halt is a serious mistake.” Highways and rapid transit were both needed to meet the city’s transportation needs. The report traced the history of the Interstate System to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, which authorized designation of the System, and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 which authorized funds to build the network around the country, including in the District.

For FY 1959 through FY 1963, Congress had appropriated funds for the Potomac River Freeway totaling over \$17 million. “Additional obligations in the sum of \$11 million are imminent.” In FYs 1962 and 1963, Congress appropriated funds for the design and partial construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. “These two projects are not in the embryonic stage.” Further, they were consistent with the national program “and have been reviewed repeatedly by the Congress. “The District now has \$330,000 available for the Three Sisters Bridge and \$1,248,000 is remaining available from prior year appropriations for the Potomac River Freeway.”



In addition, the committee's bill appropriated \$900,000 for the North Leg in FY 1964. The section concluded:

The Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac River Freeway and North Leg of the Inner Loop should proceed without further delay.

The committee recommended appropriations for the North Leg (Center Leg to Northeast Freeway, \$900,000), the East Leg (\$450,000), 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and approaches (\$400,000), the Center Leg (\$1,294,000), and the Northeast Freeway (\$903,000). It did not appropriate funds for interchange "C," with the city's consent, because it had funds from previous appropriations that were sufficient for needs in 1964. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964, Report to Accompany H.R. 7431, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 499, July 8, 1963, pages 2-3, 11]

The House considered the bill on July 11. In introducing the measure, Chairman Natcher discussed the many aspects of District activities the bill covered. When he came to the freeway controversy, he expanded on the report language. With many other controversial issues to be debated on funding for schools, welfare, and other aspects of the District, the freeway portion of the appropriation bill did not generate debate.

Nevertheless, several members of the subcommittee commented on the freeways. Representative Giaimo, saying that he was new to the committee, told his colleagues that he was not opposed to a rapid transit system for the District. "I am, however, opposed to a philosophy that says that rapid transit should and could exist without highways." He had cosponsored legislation in support of rapid transit, including a bill that would establish a rapid transit system linking the eight States in the northeastern megalopolis. "But never did I anticipate that such a system would preclude the use of highways."

Of the projects that President Kennedy had asked the city to reexamine, he said, "it would be extremely damaging and wasteful to abandon these projects." These projects could be completed in 4 years while the rapid transit system was, according to some estimates he had heard, as much as 10 years off. The transit system would undoubtedly have an effect on the highway planning that would be conducted after it was built. "But this does not mean that the construction of a rapid transit system precludes any highway program whatsoever." He added:

In the event that Congress authorizes a rapid transit system for the District of Columbia, I have little doubt that it will receive sympathetic attention from our committee. Until such time, however, I would like to echo the feeling that the projects presently underway should be completed. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, *Congressional Record-House*, July 11, 1963, pages 12453-12454]

Representative Finnegan told his colleagues that President Kennedy, "on advice that we members of the Committee considered to be in error," had delayed several projects for reexamination until the NCTA plan "could be further implemented." The District commissioners, Administrator Whitton, and the subcommittee supported continuing these projects, "not, of course, to the exclusion of any transit plans." Both highways and transit were the answer to the District's

transportation problems, but rapid transit would not be completed for 10 years. Therefore, he “unequivocally” recommended construction of the Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac River Freeway, and North Leg. The first two projects did not need funds at this time, but he supported the \$900,000 in the bill for the North Leg. He hoped “all proceed with such speed as is proper.” [pages 12454-12455]

Representative Baldwin also expressed his views. He referenced the Subcommittee on Roads hearings that had been completed the day before. His colleagues, he thought, would like to think that Washington was leading the Nation in the construction of Interstate highways through metropolitan areas. “Unfortunately, this is not the case.” On the contrary, the Roads Subcommittee’s hearings demonstrated that:

. . . the Washington situation was a sea of confusion and when we got into the meat of it, to find out why this sea of confusion existed, we found despite the recommendations in 1959 of every responsible planning agency in Washington, D.C. . . . that the recommendation of one agency which has come into the picture in the last few months, for all practical purposes had brought the Federal interstate highway program in the Washington area to a standstill.

All other responsible agencies and officials who testified, he said, “were united that this program must go forward.”

Representative Baldwin explained his concern that the taxpayers of the District and the surrounding area were not getting the highways their highway user taxes were intended to provide. “The reason they are not getting them is primarily because of the obstructiveness of the National Capital Transportation Agency.” This blockage must be broken. Everyone in the country was receiving the benefits of the Interstate System they were paying for, except for District residents who were “being penalized by a theory that apparently the National Capital Transportation Agency has that if they can bar any improvement in the highway system in the Washington, D.C., area, they can force sufficient support for a mass transit program.”

If NCTA thought that obstructing a program Congress overwhelmingly supported was how to gain support for rapid transit, its officials were going to “find that some of us who would otherwise support it will probably oppose it until the NCTA withdraws its opposition to completion of the program for Federal interstate highway construction in the Washington area as contemplated when we enacted the Highway Act of 1956.” [pages 12455-12456]

The House approved the bill on a voice vote, forwarding it to the Senate for consideration.

## **Senate Considers the Appropriation Act, 1964**

On September 23, the District Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations began hearings on the District's FY 1964 budget. City agencies testified about the usual wide range of city business, including the Department of Highways and Traffic. The department's tables showed that the House bill had approved all requested funds for freeway projects except the \$330,000 requested for interchange "C." Neither the Senators nor the District officials discussed the freeway issues beyond a brief reference by city officials. [District of Columbia Appropriations for 1964, Hearings on H.R. 7431 before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, pages 20, 31]

On September 25, Senator Byrd opened the subcommittee's public hearing on the District's appropriations bill for FY 1964. Over 150 witnesses and spectators filled the hearing room. Of course, they were interested in a variety of subjects, but several wanted to talk about the freeway controversy. For example, Polly Shackleton expressed her concern about the relocation of District residents. She favored a central relocation service. "Urgent efforts by public agencies and private groups already are underway to increase the supply of much needed low- and middle-income housing." She was "particularly gratified" by President Kennedy's decision to order a restudy of the social, economic, and esthetic impacts of the North Leg, Three Sisters Bridge, and Potomac River Freeway.

She was hopeful that officials could find a way to "largely eliminate or at least minimize the loss of homes and destruction of neighborhoods and community facilities." Along those lines, she favored the Center Leg in general, but was not satisfied with the proposed route that resulted in the "entirely unnecessary destruction of homes and church and neighborhood facilities." [pages 793-794]

Similarly, Grosvenor Chapman, chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Washington Planning and Housing Association, testified that his group did not question parts of the Inner Loop, but had serious questions about the need for the North Leg, Potomac River Freeway, and Three Sisters Bridge. "We believe that construction of these facilities to interstate standards would result not only in a waste of public funds but also in the destruction of properties, neighborhoods, and scenic and traditional values of uncountable value." [page 798]

Several witnesses spoke in favor of the freeways. Harold Wirth of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company appeared on behalf of the Washington Representatives of Rubber and Tire Manufacturers:

Gentlemen, we should honestly face up to the urgent requirements of this situation from the viewpoint of the harassed motorists in the northwest quadrant of our metropolitan area. My own humble experience is merely one [that is] similar to thousands upon thousands of motorists who must traverse this quadrant daily on their way to and from their homes and offices.

In response to a question, Wirth said he lived in Rock Creek Hills, Montgomery County, and worked at 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Since moving to the Washington area in 1938, he

found that traffic had grown, but “not one thing has been done to ease traffic congestion and its accompanying driving hazards during these past 24 years, with the exception of allowing Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues to carry four lanes in place of three going north in the afternoon.” They both were, he said, “death highways.”

In his view, the Three Sisters Bridge and Potomac River Parkway were “the most important part of the entire freeway system”:

It should be built first before any other portions of the inner loop in view of the tremendous congestion existing in this northwest area caused by constant postponement of relief freeway construction . . . .

The early approval of the appropriation for the Three Sisters Bridge would assist in easing some of our congestion by permitting motorists from the western, middle, and northern areas of Montgomery County now crowding the only remaining streets [that] they can use to come into town, to approach the District through the George Washington Memorial Parkway now under construction on the east side of the Potomac River.

The east-side parkway, to be located entirely in Maryland, could not link with downtown Washington until the Potomac River Freeway was completed, “and this freeway cannot be completed until our highway engineers know where they may cross the river.” This relief was urgently needed. “Senator, it is all well and good to talk about esthetics and beauty, but when we have human lives at stake we should forget the beauty and get down to basic facts.” [pages 789-792]

AAA’s Miller testified about the “urgent need” for the Three Sisters Bridge. He described Virginia’s plans for I-66 and I-266, with eight-lane I-66 crossing into the District on the six-lane Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, which is restricted to passenger vehicles. He said, “Unless the Three Sisters Bridge is built to accommodate trucks, and the additional two lanes of vehicular traffic, there will be a traffic jam of colossal [sic] dimensions at the approaches to the Roosevelt Memorial bridge.” Trucks would have to cross at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. “So far as the Key Bridge is concerned it is presently loaded to capacity and is not capable of handling the additional traffic which will be approaching on Route 66.”

Miller supported the entire proposed Interstate System. “The freeway system in the National Capital region is one entity and you cannot remove sections of it, as the NCTA is recommending, and still have an integrated system.” Without the Three Sisters Bridge and with the North Leg reduced to a “junior freeway,” as NCTA recommended, BPR might not be able to provide the full 90-percent Interstate funding promised for the full network.

He emphasized that AAA did not oppose the rapid transit system; if Congress decided to appropriate funds for its construction, “we will raise no objection.” However, AAA favored the full system the Mass Transportation Survey identified in 1959, including its transit component. AAA had “tried desperately” to avoid the conflict between highway and rail transit proponents. The association had urged NCTA to limit its recommendations to transit. “We even took our

recommendation to Charles A. Horsky, Advisor to the President on National Capital Affairs, but all to no avail.”

Instead, NCTA recommended cutting the highway program “by \$600 million, including a reduction of 70 miles of freeways,” bringing the highway and rapid transit plans “to a grinding halt in the form of a stalemate.” On behalf of the “overwhelming majority of the motoring public,” he said:

It is now quite obvious, as a result of what has transpired during the past 3 months, the quickest way to move ahead with all our transportation plans is to get the freeway program back on schedule at once . . . .

We believe that the people have been deliberately misled into believing that the rail rapid transit system would do away with the need for any further highway building in the District. Gentlemen, this is totally inaccurate. [pages 795-798]

Director Aitken, Deputy Director Airis, and their colleagues appeared before Senator Byrd’s subcommittee on September 28. Aitken summarized projects completed in the past year:

We have completed Anacostia Freeway from East Capitol Street to Pennsylvania Avenue [and] opened to traffic the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Expressway, from the Southwest Freeway to Constitution Avenue. We have opened to traffic the Washington Channel Bridge [and] the Southwest Freeway from Washington Channel Bridge to the center leg. This latter section of freeway was opened to traffic on August 26, and within 2 days it was carrying approximately 32,000 vehicles per day. We expect to complete the freeway between the center leg and South Capitol Street about May 1964.

Several projects were underway. The Southeast Freeway from South Capitol Street to Sixth Street, SW., was to be completed by June 1965. The city expected to complete the Potomac River Freeway from E Street to the K Street interchange in late 1965. The Theodore Roosevelt Bridge was to be opened to traffic in early 1964, the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge (east structure) early in 1965, the E Street Expressway from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to 19<sup>th</sup> Street in late 1965.

He told Senator Byrd that the location for the Three Sisters Bridge might be shifted to an alternate location. Senator Byrd said that in the previous year, “we marched up this hill in the face of considerable fire. Why was it you permitted your troops to go up the hill and get shot at?” He was referring to the original location and wondered why talk had emerged of moving the bridge. Aitken, saying he did not want to argue with the Senator, explained that if the bridge could be built somewhere else, the city had to consider it. Perhaps a bridge at another location would provide better service for the area.

The city had requested funds for engineering and right-of-way for the East Leg along the western bank of the Anacostia River. Aitken said the Center Leg was the “next major project,” extending from the interchange near 2<sup>nd</sup> and D Streets, SW., northerly to a connection with the North Leg. The city also wanted funds for engineering and right-of-way for the Northeast Freeway.

Engineer Commissioner Duke, who had been promoted to Brigadier General, joined the panel to discuss the newly formed Policy Advisory Committee. President Kennedy's advisor, Charles Horsky, had recommended formation of the committee to coordinate the reexamination of the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg. The committee held its first working session on July 19. It included:

- C. Darwin Stolzenbach, NCTA Administrator;
- David E. Finley, chairman, Commission of Fine Arts;
- Mrs. James H. Rowe, chairman, NCPC;
- Conrad L. Wirth, Director, NPS;
- Colonel Charles Duke, District Engineer Commissioner;
- Rex Whitton, Federal Highway Administrator; and
- John Kohl, Assistant Administrator for Transportation, Housing and Home Finance Agency.

The committee designated Duke to be coordinator.

The committee, after a 2-hour organizational meeting, issued a statement saying the members "agreed to adopt objective re-examination procedures to insure results which would command general support." The statement added that the members agreed to "accept the responsibility to support the subsequent task of designing transportation facilities which would evolve from the re-examination." As the *Star* pointed out, four of the seven members "previously have opposed building the two projects." The committee had not decided whether to hire an outside consultant to conduct the study, as the District had planned to do. ["Policy Advisers Named On Highway Restudy," *The Evening Star*, July 20, 1963; "Group Set Up to Advise City on Freeway Plans," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 20, 1963]

General Duke told the subcommittee:

We have held several meetings to date and at the moment we are involved in two simultaneous studies, one having to do with the possibility of relocating the Three Sisters Bridge. This is postponing, in effect, the discussion or consideration of the requirement for the bridge because we feel that, to a certain degree, the requirement would be tied in to the decision on the north leg itself. But we recognize full well that considerations other than strictly engineering considerations play a vital role in the decision on this project and . . . two alternate sites are being considered in an endeavor to try to resolve what one might call the other-than-engineering considerations.

As for the North Leg, the committee was considering proposals that fell into three categories:

At one end of the spectrum, having to do with the class of project that would carry the most traffic, we are considering eight-lane freeways—two different proposals, in fact. One has a minimum of right-of-way taking, and the other what the planners consider to be an "optimum" taking of right-of-way. This would be an eight-lane freeway and would have a sizable capacity for handling traffic.

At the other end of the spectrum we are considering a couple of proposals having to do with advancement of one-way streets only, with grade separations at various streets to enhance the carrying capacity as much as possible . . . .

Then in the middle, which amounts to somewhat of a compromise between these two solutions, the Committee is reviewing a proposal which has to do with the separation of the two types of traffic involved. The through traffic would be passed underneath the streets in a tunnel-type arrangement and the local traffic would be carried above the tunnel in a one-way street with controlled lighting. This would separate the local traffic, in other words, from the route traffic [sic].

Based on the Policy Advisory Committee review, the Board of Commissioners intended to send its report to President Kennedy by the end of December 1963.

Senator Byrd recalled that in 1962, the District was lagging behind the rest of the country in completion of its Interstate network. He asked about progress since then. Aitken replied:

I will comment on it but I do not like to, because I have to admit that whether it is my fault or someone else's, we are further behind now than we were a year ago.

Based on the latest ICE, "we have roughly 6 years to carry out roughly two-thirds of our program." He added, "It is going to be a very difficult picture and a difficult program because there are practical limitations on how much work you can do." [part 3, pages 2462-2496]

On November 6, the Committee on Appropriations completed work on its District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964. The committee's report did not discuss the freeway issues, but did include a chart indicating that appropriations for the freeways were the same as in the approved House bill. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 632 to accompany H.R. 7431, November 6, 1963, page 20]

The Senate approved the bill on November 19, 42 to 35. During the debate on the bill, Senators were primarily concerned about schools and Federal public welfare aid, not freeways or transit.

These other issues would delay the conference committee's agreement on a unified bill. The conferees continued to meet through mid-December even as the country adjusted to the November 22 assassination of President Kennedy and the transition to President Lyndon B. Johnson. Finally, on December 17, conferees resolved differences on the hiring of additional teachers and welfare workers.

On December 18, the House considered the conference committee report. Chairman Natcher, in summarizing the final bill discussed the rivalry between advocates of highways and rapid transit ("Rivalry between these two groups is dangerous and certainly not in the best interest of our Capital City."), but the House approved the bill without debate. The Senate also approved the bill on December 18 without discussion of the freeway controversies. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, *Congressional Record-House*, December 18, 1963, pages 24905-24910;

District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1964—Conference Report, *Congressional Record-Senate*, December 18, 1963, pages 24999-25003]

President Johnson approved the legislation on December 30, 1963 (Public Law 88-252).

### **Waiting For Hearings on NCTA's Transit Plan**

While officials debated the freeway network for the Washington area, NCTA and transit advocates were trying to secure congressional support for the plan. On January 11, 1963, NCTA released a 124-page appendix on *System Planning*.

NCTA estimated that during peak periods Monday through Friday in 1980, 19,600 vehicles an hour, at most, would want to cross the four Potomac River bridges (14<sup>th</sup> Street, Arlington Memorial, Theodore Roosevelt, and Key), which collectively would have a capacity of 21,500 vehicles. "This means that central area bridge capacity will exceed demand by nearly 10 percent, even without the Three Sisters Bridge." If the forecast was wrong, additional capacity could be provided by building ramps connecting the Key Bridge with the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia and the Palisades Parkway and Canal Road in the District. These changes would increase the bridge's capacity by 40 percent. The Three Sisters Bridge would be redundant.

As pressure had grown around the country for increased rapid transit, Washington officials tried to divert metropolitan areas from considering expensive fixed-rail or subway systems to developing less expensive express bus systems. The White House had made the suggestion for the Washington area in the fall of 1962, but NCTA's November 1962 report had rejected the idea in only one paragraph.

Now, in an appendix, NCTA explained why an express bus system would be impractical. Buses operating on city streets would be caught in the same congestion as the automobiles, possibly even making it worse because of stops. A subway for express buses would cost \$4.5 million more than a rail subway because of additional ventilation that would be needed. Finally, NCTA argued that an express bus system would be subject to weather. "During a recent blizzard in Cleveland, rail operations had a single two-hour delay; bus operations of the same transit company remained chaotic for a week." The report stated:

In sum increasing bus-subway capacity either by adding tunnel lanes or by widening stations would add substantially to the cost of a system that even without these changes would cost more than rail transit.

No one has ever operated a comprehensive express bus system, let alone a comprehensive bus subway system. It has to be established that a bus-subway system could be scheduled and operated in a fashion that would attract a large volume of patronage.

Skeptics had questioned NCTA's expectation that a rapid rail system would operate at a profit. The new report predicted that the rail system would lose money for 5 years, but would be net profitable due to increased patronage. By 1980, fares would bring in \$79.2 million, while another \$4.8 million would be raised from advertisements, vendors, and other sources. With



deductions for subsidies to feeder bus operators (\$7.5 million), and depreciation (\$5.2), the system would have a net income of \$43.4 million.

The report also summarized NCTA's views on the District's remaining freeway network. The East Leg, the report explained, was not needed and would be disruptive of homes and families, especially in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor where District officials planned to build it. NCTA recommended a route that crossed the Anacostia River on the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and continued north on the east side of the river via the Anacostia Freeway and Kenilworth Avenue, both of which would be widened.

As for the District's consideration of running the East Leg on the west side of the river, NCTA pointed out that "much of the traffic that would use an eastern bypass originates or terminates in Washington and Montgomery County, on one hand, and southern Prince Georges on the other." Under NCTA's proposal, this bypass traffic would not have to cross the river on the crowded bridges in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street area. Putting the East Leg on the west bank would "encourage portions of such traffic to cross to the west, thereby further crowding these bridges."

The District initially had proposed extending I-70S in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, but in 1959 had changed preferences to the North Central corridor for I-70S along Florida Avenue between Pennsylvania Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street, NW. The Montgomery County traffic that would have used I-70S in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor would instead use a parkway/freeway combination along the Potomac River. NCTA proposed to replace the city's planned eight-lane North Leg Freeway with a four-lane "express street system" in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. The system would include grade separations at major intersections on Wisconsin Avenue or a parallel street. "The route would be designed for higher capacity at the points where it joins the freeway system and where traffic will be heavier."

The express street system could carry 3,000 vehicles an hour, but NCTA projected actual traffic in 1980 as between 2,500 and 3,000 vehicles an hour. The expanded western end, moreover, could carry 3,600 vehicles an hour

With construction of the express street system, NCTA concluded that a freeway in the North Central corridor as proposed by the District was not needed. Much of the traffic expected to use the North-Central Freeway would instead use the express street system in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor or the routes along the Potomac River. Eventually, a depressed four-lane facility would be needed in the North Leg corridor. However, this facility was not planned for construction for several years; planners did not have decide on it now.

NCTA had compared its projected highway system with a mathematical model to predict transit use:

The recommended highway system, together with the refined rapid transit system, will permit motorists to travel even in the peak hours at speeds substantially greater than is possible on today's congested highways . . . .

What the results showed was that—given the agency’s recommended transportation system—1977 peak-hour speeds would be 30 per cent faster than 1959 speeds. [Clopton, “NCTA Plan Is Defended In Report,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 12, 1963; Flor, Lee, “NCTA Explains Alternative of Express Buses,” *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1963; “Transport Agency Would Separate Traffic at Wisconsin Crossings,” *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1963]

On January 25, the Prince George’s County Commissioners sent a telegram to Stolzenbach letting him know they approved NCTA’s \$793-million rail rapid transit system “in principle.” The commissioners joined Fairfax and Arlington Counties in Virginia in support of the plan. The District, Montgomery County in Maryland, and Alexandria in Virginia had not taken a formal position. [Clopton, William, “Prince Georges Backs Plan for Rapid Transit,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 26, 1963]

As explained earlier, the District and Montgomery County would express many reservations about NCTA’s plan. On March 28, the District Commissioners’ Planning Advisory Council called for progress to complete the Inner Loop and the proposed subway. The council, which the commissioners had reactivated in 1957 to advise them on planning matters, said construction of the downtown subway should begin immediately. “Feeder lines using existing rail lines, should be fed into this inner loop as early as possible. Further study can then be made of the controversial sections of the subway system.” The council’s head, Frank Wolfsheim, said:

Considerable doubt has been thrown on the accuracy of some of the cost and revenue figures of the NCTA report. These doubts should be cleared up before final authorization of construction funds is made by Congress.

In addition, the council recommended construction of the Three Sisters Bridge and Potomac River Freeway “at the earliest possible date.” [“Early Start On Transit Plan Urged,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 29, 1963; “Speed in Building Urged for Road and Rail Transit,” *The Evening Star*, March 28, 1963]

A month before President Kennedy released his recommendations, the Department of the Treasury sent an advisory letter to the Bureau of the Budget on April 16 indicating that it should not make direct loans to NCTA. Treasury might be willing to make loans to the District government or guarantee bonds sold to the public to pay for the rail network, but direct loans to NCTA would set a dangerous precedent for the Federal role in transit systems in other cities.

Even a loan to the District was problematic because such loans ordinarily go to the agency with sufficient taxing power to “stand in front of the Federal guarantee.” The special situation in the District “may warrant waiver of this requirement,” but only if it did not set a precedent:

Some extraordinary handling of the National Capital area mass transportation system is warranted by the peculiar status of the area relative to the Federal government. Such special treatment, however, should be provided in a form that will not place the Federal government in an untenable position in regard to the overall mass transportation program.

The other issue was whether the District, if it borrowed the funds from the Treasury at interest, would be willing to pass the funds on to NCTA. General Clarke told reporters the commissioners “do not know enough about the import of this to be able to comment.”

The Treasury Department’s decision would increase the cost of the rail rapid transit plan by as much as \$135 million. NCTA had expected to receive loans at 4-percent interest, along with guaranteed loans from private investors at 4.5 percent. If the entire amount had to come from private investors at 4.5 percent interest, the total cost would be \$911 million instead of \$776 million. [Clopton, Willard, “Treasury Dashes Hopes For Transit Loans Here,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 17, 1963; Doolittle, Jerry, “Estimated Cost Of Subway Up By \$135 Million,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 22, 1963]

As discussed earlier, President Kennedy announced his decisions regarding the Washington area transportation network on May 27, 1963, and sent a bill to Capitol Hill for “prompt and favorable” action. The President’s letter was consistent with the Treasury Department’s decision in relying on private investors. The three-page bill, which Representative Broyhill introduced as H.R. 6633, did not address financing issues.

Except for the financing issue, President Kennedy had given NCTA and Stolzenbach virtually everything requested. As noted earlier, Stolzenbach was optimistic that construction could begin in 1964.

While waiting for the hearings, officials and organizations announced their views. On June 3, the National Capital Regional Planning Council, after an intense 3-hour discussion, reversed its support of the 1959 plan to endorse rapid transit and a downtown subway. The council’s resolution was carefully worded in view of the divided views of the representatives of area jurisdictions. It did not endorse “rail,” which meant its resolution could refer to express buses rather than a rail network. The resolution had been drafted in part by Mrs. Rowe who, according to Lee Flor, was “an ardent rail transit supporter who has become known for her opposition to freeways.” The resolution did not mention highways. [Flor, Lee, “Planning Council Backs Downtown Subway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 4, 1963]

The Fine Arts Commission praised President Kennedy on June 18 for his “leadership . . . in requesting the Congress for authorization to proceed with plans for the rapid transit program formulated by the National Capital Transportation Agency.” The system was “urgently needed to prevent further seizure of parklands for highways.” The resolution, approved unanimously, also said the rail transit system would “curb the proliferation of car parking lots in important areas to the detriment of the appearance of the city.” [Lewis, Robert J., “President Wins Praise For Supporting Subway,” *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1963]

On July 3, Senator Byrd took a 2-hour tour of the sites of the new and proposed highways and bridges in the District, including the Three Sisters Bridge, the Potomac River Freeway, the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, the Washington Channel Bridge, and the interchange, under construction, between the Southwest Freeway and the proposed Center Leg of the Inner Loop. At the Roosevelt Bridge construction site, he put on a hard hat and climbed up a 30-foot ladder to the bridge floor. The *Post* reported:

Byrd, a onetime welder . . . showed that he still knew how to work with his hands. After a one-minute lesson, he fastened some reinforcing rods together with wire. Could he be made into a competent rodman? “Oh, we could do it eventually,” said rodman foreman John Casteel.

After the tour, Senator Byrd met with reporters in his office. He said the “consensus in the Congress” was that the area needed a rapid transit system as well as the freeway system sought by the area’s highway departments. He was concerned about the delay in completing the Interstate System in the city. “I don’t see why [the Interstate System] should stop here in the District of Columbia.” He thought the Three Sisters Bridge was the best approach to improved trans-Potomac travel while the Potomac River Freeway and North Leg were essential. (Aitken had told him that not building the North Leg would be “like having half a wheel on a vehicle.”)

He also was concerned that J. George Stewart, the Architect of the Capitol, had not issued a permit for construction of the Center Leg under the Capitol grounds. Aiken had told the Senator that after 6 years of negotiations, Stewart had still not issued the permit. Senator Byrd said he might summon Stewart to the hearing “so that we can go into the matter with him.”

Senator Byrd also was concerned that the study requested by the President had not yet begun. “I certainly hope this reexamination and decisions are reached with reasonable dispatch.” It should be started as soon as possible so that “we can find out where we are going with our freeways.” [Mintz, Morton, “Both Freeways, Transit Needed Here, Byrd Says,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 4, 1963; Flor, Lee, “Road, Rail Backing Seen in Congress,” *The Evening Star*, July 4, 1963]

### **Transit Program for the Capital Region**

On July 9, 1963, Chairman Whitener of the District Subcommittee opened hearings titled “Transit Program for the National Capital Region.” Stolzenbach was the first witness, but before his presentation, Representative Broyhill wanted to introduce a prepared statement and raise some questions he wanted the NCTA Administrator to address. The brief statement indicated, “I recognize a definite need for a rapid transit system for this area,” but also was convinced “that no such system will eliminate the need for an expanded highway system to service the region, particularly for through traffic.”

Representative Broyhill recalled the history behind the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960. The Mass Transportation Survey had indicated a need for a transit system to complement the highway system. That was why Congress created NCTA. The purpose was to create an agency “to develop a program, study the financial feasibility of a mass transit system, and then to come back to Congress and get the authority to go ahead with it.” Not much was said during the Joint Committee’s hearings and deliberations about the new agency conducting a new study of the needed highway facilities. The survey had already projected the highway and bridge system needed:

So it comes as somewhat of a surprise, and to a degree a disappointment to some, that one of the major points in your recommendations is the holdup or postponement or delay or

abandonment of some of the highway projects. Many of the people in the area feel that we are going to need all of the highway freeway projects that are in the pipeline right now before we come to any real solution to our problems here. What we are doing here now is just delaying something that is inevitable.

The District was not taking advantage of the 90-10 Federal program for constructing the Interstate System, and the city's delay was affecting the ability of Maryland and Virginia to use their funds to the best effect. Given the need for the "up-to-date highway and freeway program," he would "like to have that point developed quite extensively during your statement, Mr. Stolzenbach, as to why we need to hold up on these highway programs which have been approved and are in the pipeline." He also hoped that nothing in the committee's proceedings would indicate support for the delay resulting from NCTA's report.

He complimented NCTA for calling for a \$60 million contribution from the local jurisdictions. "I do not believe we have much chance of getting this program approved by the Congress unless there is some willingness on the part of the local community to pay a portion of the cost." He wanted Stolzenbach to address whether the local communities have indicated support for their participation in the cost. In view of the questions about ridership, Representative Broyhill thought that local contributions would result in more participation by the riding public.

His third point was "the most serious one." He wanted to know if NCTA had "taken full cognizance in their study and in their recommendations of all of the existing transportation facilities, such as the existing rail lines, but more important, the existing transportation system." During deliberations on the 1960 Act, he said:

The committee expressed deep and grave concern as to whether the creation of any mass transit system would destroy or injure private enterprise, and the committee did express its intention, its desire, its determination to see that these privately owned and operated transportation companies were not injured and certainly not destroyed, but, on the contrary, took the view that these privately owned transportation companies should be exploited, expanded, and improved as a part of an overall improvement of transportation services here in the metropolitan area.

Chairman Whitener, in something of a rebuke, pointed out to Representative Broyhill that NCTA's report of November 1, 1962, had addressed the issue of existing mass transportation facilities in chapter 2 and also went into the highway situation:

I would hope that in the hearings that we can approach this matter as a serious study of the need for a rapid transit facility in the District of Columbia and in the metropolitan area, and not as a battle between advocates of one form of transportation and advocates of another.

Some, he said, thought the Whitener subcommittee "was opposed to the highway program. Of course, there is no basis for that allegation." He made his view "as one member of the committee" clear:

I am not in favor of a highway program or any other program which would uproot thousands of people from their residences without some plan to relocate those people. I think it is one of the bigger problems here in the District of Columbia. It is nice to be able to bring folks in from outside of Washington on highways, but I think it is even nicer to have places for people who are living in the District of Columbia to go to bed at night.

He added that someone from Washington had been calling people in his North Carolina district and providing “completely erroneous information as to the purpose of these hearings.” As far as he was concerned, “anyone who has any views on this matter can set them forth here in the record and give their testimony.” [Transit Program for the National Capital Region, Hearings before Subcommittee No. 6 of the Committee on the District of Columbia, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 1963, pages 9-13]

The chairman did not speculate on who was calling his constituents, but the *Post* and *Star* speculated that he was referring to pro-highway lobbies.

Stolzenbach said he wanted to explain how NCTA had carried out its mission under the 1960 Act and to seek favorable congressional action on the President’s bill seeking authority for NCTA to begin construction of the proposed rapid transit system. “The Agency’s recommendations with respect to highways have been taken under advisement by the President and the other agencies concerned and the bills presently before this committee do not concern these recommendations.”

He summarized the first stage of NCTA’s review, namely “forecasts of future travel within the region.” He told the subcommittee:

The key conclusion of the Agency’s traffic analysis is that without a rapid transit system, and even assuming a highway system larger than that proposed by the District Commissioners, congestion will increase. But with a rapid transit system, and vigorous freeway program, not only can we accommodate the additional traffic that will develop, we can substantially improve today’s conditions and give the city a real measure of relief.

The NCTA proposal embodied in the White House bill, would create “a truly regional mass transportation system consisting of more than 80 miles of rapid transit service, an additional 15 miles of commuter railroad service, and over 50 miles of express bus service on freeways.”

He emphasized that in developing the proposal, he, Deputy Administrator Quenstedt, and their staff had held “countless meetings” with the public, private organizations, and “a wide variety of other agencies and governmental bodies,” as directed by Section 204(g) of the 1960 Act.

The legislation also had directed NCTA to study a subway from Union Station capable of dispersing passengers “to the principal employment centers of the District of Columbia and its immediate environs.” NCTA “literally examined dozens” of plans and settled on “the one that we decided was the best one.” He displayed a map showing the expected concentration of employment centers in 1980. On a second map he highlighted the downtown subway system, with its 15 stations that he said were “so located as to bring 80 percent of the prospective downtown employees to within a 5-minute walking distance of their offices, and that some 92

percent will be within an 8-minute walk of their office . . . .” The system also would be “an efficient economical means of bringing shoppers into town during the middle of the day,” as well as “a means of internal circulation within the downtown area that will greatly relieve the congestion we now find on downtown streets all during the day.”

The 1960 Act also called on NCTA to design a downtown subway that could be extended to serve other parts of the region. Using space already dedicated to transportation service would minimize disruption to the community as would avoiding residential areas:

The program before you involves no defacing of the city, little interference with the life and homes of our people, and, at the same time, provides the city and the region with a system capable of handling the traffic volumes expected in 1980 and beyond.

In planning the system’s eight transit radials, “the Agency closely adhered to the congressional requirement that railroad and highway rights-of-way be used wherever possible.” Six used railroad or highway rights-of-way. As a result, the proposed transit system would provide areawide coverage “while at the same time minimizing construction costs.” He identified the radials in clockwise order:

- The line from Rockville to downtown “utilizing the right-of-way of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.” The trains “would, without interruption, stopping at Union Station, go right on through into the downtown distribution system.”
- To serve the northeast, NCTA proposed a rapid transit line in the median strip of proposed I-95. “This line would merge with the B. & O. line” before going into the downtown distributor.
- Continuing to the east, NCTA proposed to establish a commuter railroad along the Pennsylvania Railroad’s main line from as far as Bowie, Maryland. “Trains on this line would come into Union Station where the people could get off and by an over-the-platform transfer board the subway system and thereby get anywhere in the downtown area.”
- In the southeast, NCTA would place a rapid transit line in the median strip of the proposed expressway going to the Henson Creek area of Prince George’s County.
- For the southwest, NCTA would place a line in the right-of-way of the Richmond-Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad “from Springfield into Alexandria, serving the city of Alexandria, serving Pentagon City, a large office building and apartment development complex now going up there, serving the Pentagon, going under the river and into the downtown subway distribution system.”
- A rapid transit line to the west would run in the median of I-66 serving Arlington and Fairfax Counties. It, too, would connect with the subway distribution system by crossing the Potomac River in a tunnel.
- NCTA could not find an existing right-of-way in northwest, but proposed a subway line “going out Connecticut Avenue, eventually over to Wisconsin and out through the Bethesda business district past NIH [National Institutes of Health] to Pooks Hill.” The subway would be carried at least to Tenley Circle.

- Finally, NCTA proposed another subway line that “originates in the vicinity of Quincy Street and Georgia Avenue, and joins this Northwest route near Florida Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street, bringing people here into the downtown distribution system.”

He added:

In addition, the dotted lines on the map show the various locations of the 50 miles of express bus service . . . . We propose express bus service running on the George Washington Memorial Parkway from Cabin John in Montgomery County, Md., direct to downtown Washington.

The rapid transit line on Route 95, would be served by express buses operating on the highway between the transit terminal and points further out.

In the southeast, express bus service on the existing Suitland Parkway, and on the Anacostia Freeway, would bring passengers into the rail rapid transit line serving that sector.

Similarly in the southwest, express bus service on the proposed expanded Shirley Highway would bring people to the Pentagon where they could transfer to the downtown subway.

Eventually the program contemplates express bus service on the access road to Dulles International Airport. The FAA, incidentally, is interested in the ultimate possibility of having a spur of the train line serve the airport, but I think that is some time in the future.

He summarized:

Here then is an express rapid transit system that truly covers all quadrants of the region, and provides far better service for bringing our people into downtown than can be accomplished by any other means.

NCTA’s rapid transit system “represents the most modern, up-to-date system that American technology can devise.” The system, in short, “represents as much of an advancement over the older subway systems in this country as the Thunderbird does over the model ‘T’ Ford.” The system would operate twice as fast as the New York City and Philadelphia systems:

In addition to their high speed, the rapid transit trains will have modern styling, they will be air conditioned, seating will be comfortable, and the cars will be attractively appointed and well lighted.

Stolzenbach summarized some the advantages of the system within the District. A trip from the State Department to Capitol Hill now took 25 minutes; it would take 5½ minutes by subway. When the subway was completed, 77 percent of all downtown jobs would be within 5 minutes of a station and 90 percent would be within an 8-minute walk. “As a result, the rapid transit system will provide excellent service during the off-peak, as well as the peak, hours and it will serve throughout the day as a fast means of traveling around the city.”



Suburban stations had been designed “to provide some 50,000 parking spaces so that a very large percentage of the passengers will be able to use their cars to get to the rapid transit lines.” Special bays would be made for passengers arriving at the station on feeder buses:

In short, this is an auto-age rapid transit system designed to provide an attractive alternative to driving all the way to town.

In considering cost, Stolzenbach pointed out that the committee creating the 1960 Act “refused to accept the proposition that a regional rail rapid transit system here in Washington must be a deficit operation. Neither do we.” Nothing was to be gained, he said, by looking at operations in other areas, except to use the experience elsewhere to make the Washington system more efficient. “We have a new slate to write on,” and NCTA had applied “a hardheaded, businesslike manner” to finances:

We have done this, Mr. Chairman, and it is abundantly clear that given the conditions now existing in the National Capital region and the dramatic growth expected in the years ahead, the transit development program before you today will be largely self-supporting, and over a period of some 35 years, will repay all borrowing for capital requirements. And notwithstanding the comment this conclusion has excited in some quarters, it is not concocted of legerdemain and wishful thinking. It is based on the facts.

The key ingredient for success exists here in Washington, but not in any other rapid transit city; namely, a history of realistic, economical transit fares. Unlike these other cities, where transit fares have been kept artificially low, with the municipality making up the deficits out of general public funds, fares in the Washington area have kept pace with the cost of providing transportation service.

The idea that the transit development program would be “largely self-supporting is the cornerstone of the financial plan” NCTA had proposed. The capital outlay of \$793 million was to be raised “through a combination of private borrowing and Government grants.” NCTA had assembled an advisory committee on finance consisting of businessmen from around the country. “The recommended plan satisfies all the tests.” It would have “a minimal impact on Federal budget expenditures, and calls for equitable participation by the local governments.”

Stolzenbach agreed with President Kennedy’s observation that establishing an interstate compact agency, with its own financing powers, was the appropriate form of organization. Establishing the compact was going to be a difficult task “beset with complex constitutional, legal, and political considerations.” While negotiations are underway, the President believed, “work on the transit development program should go forward vigorously.” If the compact had not been approved at the point where private borrowing was necessary, Congress should establish a corporation with borrowing authority to carry the program forward.

During this testimony, Stolzenbach did not address Representative Broyhill’s three questions. Committee questioning was postponed to allow out-of-town officials associated with NCTA to testify before leaving the area. [pages 13-24]

Testimony resumed on July 10, with Deputy Administrator Quenstedt and Chief Counsel Seeger presenting statements. Quenstedt discussed the schedule for construction of the rapid transit segments, while Seeger addressed several issues, including how the proposed network would be able to pay for itself out of the farebox. He cited examples from other parts of the country. Chicago, Cleveland, and Philadelphia “meet operating expenses plus a share but not all of the capital costs.” New York met its operating costs, but made only a “a minor insignificant contribution to capital cost.” Boston “doesn’t even meet operating expenses.” Some commuter railroads, such as the Long Island Railroad, were profitable, while others lost money.

The reason the District system could rely on the farebox was that it would charge a zone fare. “So the man who is traveling a longer distance, and who costs you more to carry him, pays a proportionately larger fare.” By using zone fares, “not only will this system meet its operating expenses but it can meet its capital charges as well.”

Representative William H. Harsha (R-Oh.), a longtime highway supporter who also served on the Committee on Public Works, interrupted Seeger’s testimony. With the House considering national urban mass transportation legislation, already approved by the Senate, at the same time as the NCTA bill, he wanted to know if Seeger was saying that the national financing problem requiring Federal funds could be “solved by a realistic rate.”

When Seeger would not go that far, Representative Harsha asked, “if your theory is accurate, it would apply in any situation, wouldn’t it, as long as you raised the rate to meet the demand of operating costs and capital reduction?”

Seeger replied, “Yes, I would say yes.”

Representative Harsha concluded, “In other words, we don’t need this [national] mass transit bill they are trying to shove down our---“

Seeger tried to divert Representative Harsha by explaining that the mass transportation bill included a provision for loan guarantees to help cities that wanted to charge higher fares to finance their systems out of the fare box. “But I think the administration’s position . . . is that what you charge is properly a matter of city policy, and is not to be a matter of Federal policy.”

Representative Harsha was not convinced. Under Seeger’s theory, “you could finance the bonds anywhere in the country,” without Federal assistance.

Allowed to continue his statement, Seeger concluded with a discussion of a survey to measure potential ridership. “The final conclusion of the survey was that a potential market as high as 85 to 90 percent of the downtown employment in Washington exists for rapid transit.” [pages 57-70]

Stolzenbach returned to the stand for the question period. Chairman Whitener began by saying that based on questions he had received from other Members of Congress, the biggest concern about the plan was the cost; “some of them are a little leery about supporting such a system here in Washington.” They also thought the two States and local jurisdictions should contribute more than presently planned.

Stolzenbach said the estimated cost was the minimum necessary for a regional rapid transit system. The overall cost should be “weighed against the value to the community that is going to result.” However, NCTA was not asking for a cash gift from the Federal Government to pay for the system. “What we are asking for is underwriting of a project which we are convinced will be self-liquidating in the long run.” He added that in deciding on an appropriate State and local share, NCTA was using the formula in the Senate-passed national mass transit legislation.

NCTA, Stolzenbach said, had consulted with the governing bodies of regional governments about the financing plan. “The invariable response was, ‘Well, that seems reasonable.’” Representative Broyhill wanted to know who made these commitments. Stolzenbach was vague, referring to elected officials. “It varied.” Since the plans were not yet approved by Congress, the officials could not put it before their local bodies for a formal vote.

Representative Broyhill thought the issue would come up on the floor of the House. He wanted a more formal commitment from the suburban communities stating they were ready to participate in the cost. Stolzenbach said, “I don’t think these people are in a position to make anything that could possibly be considered as a legal commitment at this point.” The NCTA bill had been written so that construction would not proceed without the required contribution. “In Virginia, for example, we don’t go beyond Pentagon City until they do make a commitment.”

Chairman Whitener wondered if those communities would be willing to contribute more if the feeling in Congress was that they were not doing enough. Stolzenbach thought that when communities saw the system in operation, they would be willing to contribute to ensure it reached their territory.

The chairman asked for NCTA’s answer to the many concerns raised about the agency’s impact on the area’s Interstate network and on networks elsewhere in the country. (As described earlier, Chairman Fallon was conducting hearings that were considering this point at the same time as the NCTA hearings.) Stolzenbach said NCTA proposed “a tremendous freeway system” for the area, with the differences between NCTA and area highway agencies “actually quite small.” The studies directed by President Kennedy were intended “to resolve some very practical problems of seeing just how you can meet the highway requirements in certain sectors of the city, where . . . the proposal is to build an interstate freeway of eight lanes, which is going to be very disruptive.”

Stolzenbach agreed that cities around the country were objecting to freeways:

The desire to have those needs met by alternative means, such as rapid transit is a phenomenon that has occurred in many other cities before it ever happened in Washington. I am thinking of San Francisco, New York, Boston, and Chicago.

And I think actually the refusal to go along with certain freeways in the heart of some of these other cities is of greater magnitude than anything that we have proposed.

The highway people in Maryland and Virginia wanted the Interstate network as planned, but NCTA felt “under a mandate to evaluate the plan put forth in 1959,” a view that Chairman Whitener’s report in 1962 confirmed. NCTA consulted with many highway officials, he said.

The fact that they may not agree with the recommendations “doesn’t imply any lack of cooperation.”

Chairman Whitener asked about a concern by highway officials around the country that highway user revenue would be used to build rapid transit. Stolzenbach replied, “We have never entertained such a thought nor in any of our studies, reports or recommendations will you find the slightest hint of that idea.

Perhaps mindful of Chairman Natcher’s off-stated concern about cost increases, Chairman Whitener asked if “you are confident that this transit system will do better in paying off its bonds than the D.C. Stadium has done.” Stolzenbach replied, “Yes.”

Chairman Whitener asked how NCTA could be so certain that construction of the rapid transit system would cause “a minimum of difficulties in the everyday life of the community.” Based on soil conditions, NCTA and its consultants had determined that most of the subway construction could be accomplished by tunneling “which involves no disruption at the city street level except at stations.” Some disruption might occur in a few sections where, due to soil conditions, cut-and-cover construction might be best. The disruption, even in those cases, would be “minimal.”

Representative Broyhill’s question period was next. He asked about consultation with area highway departments. Stolzenbach told him, “we consulted with them to the greatest degree that was possible.” Did the District or State highway officials, the Congressman asked, agree with NCTA’s recommendations. Stolzenbach replied, “No.”

Representative Broyhill saw this issue as a problem because those highway agencies had experts who had made the technical decisions on which projects to advance, but given the conflict between those officials and NCTA, Congress was being asked to do something it was usually reluctant to do, namely “sit in judgment between experts on various technical proposals.” He was “most reluctant” to hold up freeway projects already approved by engineers, and yet NCTA was proposing to delay freeway construction “for quite a number of years,” and that was based on the assumption that Congress would complete legislation and that subway construction could begin in 1964. “I do regret that you haven’t been able to work out that particular problem and have come to this committee with that unresolved.”

Before Stolzenbach could reply, Representative Harsha had a question about cooperation with highway officials. He pointed out the highway officials, including Administrator Whitton, who had testified recently before the Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, that consultation was absent or “silly.” Moreover, the Commerce Department’s formal comments to the White House on NCTA’s report said “NCTA failed to cooperate.”

Stolzenbach summarized the consultation efforts, stating that BPR and the three highway agencies were fully aware of what NCTA was doing. They all wanted the Interstate System to proceed as planned, claiming NCTA did not have authority to review the highway plans. They implied, “Just go along with our highway plans and maybe we will go along with your rapid

transit.” He said that he did not think the 1960 Act “contemplated the requirements that this Agency get the agreement of all these highway departments.”

Chairman Whitener pointed out that President Kennedy, the highest authority of all, had reviewed NCTA’s report and gone along with it. Representative Harsha said the President did not have the opportunity to review the report as thoroughly as BPR, but the chairman replied, “I believe the buck stops right down at the White House, doesn’t it?”

When Stolzenbach referred to the NCTA study as a “truly joint project” and that the personnel borrowed from BPR had contributed to the technical review, Representative Harsha countered that, “If it was such a joint project and so well coordinated and cooperation was the utmost, why would they [the Commerce Department] come out with a stinging report like this?” Stolzenbach answered:

I can only presume they didn’t agree with our conclusions. It was understood in this joint project that this Agency has a responsibility for making recommendations.

Representative Broyhill, whose district included several privately owned commuter bus companies, returned to one of the questions he had raised the day before:

Mr. Broyhill. Did you consult with the operators of privately owned transportation companies in coming up with this report?

Mr. Stolzenbach. We made every effort to, Mr. Broyhill.

Mr. Broyhill. You made every effort. You mean, they refused to consult with you?

Mr. Stolzenbach. Yes.

Mr. Broyhill. The private companies refused to consult with you?

Mr. Stolzenbach. Yes.

He clarified that he initiated cordial consultation with D.C. Transit’s Mr. Chalk. In 1961, Chalk asked if NCTA would support his concept for a super-rail-transit system from the car barns in Georgetown to Dulles International Airport. Stolzenbach said he could not; NCTA had not completed its evaluation of the type of system the area needed. Moreover, Chalk did not have engineering specifications NCTA could consider. “I am sorry to report that his immediate response was, and I quote, ‘This is the end of all cooperation between us. Period.’”

The area’s other bus companies rejected overtures from NCTA. However, NCTA’s plan was based on providing facilities for bus service, such as stations and parking lots, but the bus companies would own the buses.

Representative Broyhill was concerned that the rapid rail lines would “take the cream” of traffic and leave the privately owned companies with “the feeder service, that in many instances . . . might not be profitable.”

Seeger responded that NCTA included \$7 million a year in its plan “to pay for feeder bus service that, in our judgment, would not be profitable, but would be important to the rapid transit system.” In addition, the plan included private bus service on trunklines such as the Shirley Highway and George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Representative Broyhill was not completely satisfied that the private companies in northern Virginia were being treated fairly, but his question period ended. [pages 72-88]

Representative Harsha was next. He was not, he said, opposed to NCTA's rapid rail system, which he thought was "certainly needed." He was less concerned than Representative Broyhill about the private commuter bus companies:

I am sure no one needs to hold their hand. They will look after themselves. I don't think you have to get down on your hands and knees and beg them to meet with you.

He was, however, vitally concerned about the "curtailment of the highway program." He said that apparently Chairman Whitener and Stolzenbach "think that the last word on what is to be done here does rest with the White House." He asked for Stolzenbach's reaction to the fact that the Appropriations Committee of the House has said, "We must carry the highway program along with any and all proposals concerning a rapid transit system," and have, for 5 consecutive years beginning in 1959, appropriated funds for the Potomac River Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge. For FY 1964, the committee included \$900,000 for the North leg. "What is your reaction to that? Do you care to comment?"

Stolzenbach began, "May we start backward?" The \$900,000 was for the portion of the North Leg that was not in dispute. It was what the District wanted, NCTA "went along with" it, and the President included it in his budget. "It has never been in dispute at all." The rest of the North Leg, the part in dispute, "hasn't even been planned."

NCTA also did not oppose the Potomac River Freeway:

The only reason that is being held up is because until you know whether there is going to be a Three Sisters Bridge, it affects the design, and they were actually ready to start constructing parts of the Potomac River Freeway. That is not in dispute.

The only thing that is in dispute is one bridge, and the design of a highway corridor through the north leg, which was not contemplated to be built for another 6 years.

Representative Harsha wanted to confirm that NCTA did not object to the Potomac River Freeway. "That is right," Stolzenbach told him. What about the Three Sisters Bridge? Stolzenbach replied:

Our findings show that for a long time to come, even without a rapid transit system, you don't need the Three Sisters Bridge to handle the river traffic, and these are using the D.C. Highway Department's own figures.

NCTA, he said, was "not fighting this problem." It was simply one agency of the executive branch that had made a recommendation to the White House.

Representative Harsha turned to a NCTA brochure that referred to Washington as "a model area." Therefore, its mass transportation must be a model system. "The 212 metropolitan areas of the country will look upon the National Capital Transportation Agency and its work as a

model from which they can draw knowledge to help them in their growing problems of mass transportation.” The Congressman wanted to know if the advance of NCTA’s plans would be “the cue for the cities all over the United States to curtail their interstate highway development program within their community area?”

Stolzenbach replied that NCTA hoped to “build a model transit system here.” At this point, the mechanics of an integrated transportation system left “something to be desired,” but “this is just one of the facts of life in a complicated jurisdictional area in which there is great disagreement as between localities as to what the highway system should be.” Maryland and the District of Columbia, he said, were “further apart as to what highways should be running between the District and Maryland than any of the differences that lie between us and the D.C. Highway Department, for example.” All NCTA could do is “consult and cooperate” as well as making recommendations.

Representative Harsha commented that if NCTA wanted to be a model system, it would in his view not encourage other cities to change or curtail their highway programs.” Stolzenbach disagreed, saying, “Long before this Agency was created, highways . . . were being curtailed by action of city governing bodies in innumerable cities throughout the country. This is nothing new. It didn’t start here.”

What, Representative Harsha wanted to know, would happen to the Interstate System if cities decided to curtail freeways and use rapid transit instead? Stolzenbach replied that NCTA had proposed “a continuous interstate system” for the District:

I think it is reasonable to expect that if you are going to have a regional rapid transit system that is going to move twice as many people by public transportation than you would otherwise have, that this might call for some modifications in a highway system that was planned before 1955. This is literally what we are faced with here. The inner loop was designed in 1955.

Representative Harsha understood that NCTA was primarily concerned with moving people. Had NCTA given any consideration to national defense? Seeger, using a map, explained that “there isn’t any question about having a complete interstate system in the District of Columbia.” The map included I-66 from the west, I-95 from the south, and I-70S from the northwest to the Center Leg “of the loop and providing a continuous interstate system with trucks from Route 66 coming across the Jefferson Davis Highway over onto Route 95.”

The Congressman asked how NCTA’s map differed from the Mass Transportation Survey’s map of Interstate freeways. Seeger said the District proposed separate lines for the North-Central Freeway (I-70S) and the Northeast Freeway (I-95). NCTA recommended combining the two “and the great advantage of this was that you could, instead of going through the heart of north central Washington with tremendous displacements, you could follow the railroad right-of-way and get the highway in easily and smoothly without a big public fuss.” The District has said it could not see any “insuperable obstacles to this proposal.” In addition, NCTA recommended building the East Leg of the Inner Belt on the east side of the Anacostia River, but that idea was not adopted; the plan for construction on the west side was going ahead.

The only real issues, Seeger continued, were the Three Sisters Bridge and a portion of the North Leg:

My only point at this moment is that whatever may be said about the desirability of having Three Sisters bridge or the north leg of the loop, given this tremendous interstate system that is really agreed upon for all practical purposes, there need be no delay whatever in the District's highway program.

There are projects to keep them going for a good number of years to come.

The District, he said, had "a great deal of highway" ahead of it without worrying about the Three Sisters Bridge, "and no one was even proposing to build the north leg of the loop until 1969, anyway." The District's real problem was not whether to build a bridge or a portion of the Inner Loop, but how to pay its share of the cost for the Interstate highways that everyone approved. "It will take every cent the District has to do them, and there is no reason at all why the Three Sisters Bridge question should delay the completion of an interstate system."

Representative Harsha, recalling Stolzenbach's testimony before the Joint Committee that, "Highways and mass transit are and will always be competing facilities for mass transportation," asked what that meant. Stolzenbach said the modes competed for public choice, "but if the public has no alternative but highways, there can't be any competition." If government agencies want to establish a balanced system, they were not competing but were complementary.

When Representative Harsha again said the highway program was being held up, Stolzenbach told him that the Three Sisters Bridge was not even in the District's highway program when NCTA was created. The bridge, despite appropriations for it, was being held up by President Kennedy's call for a reexamination. At this point, agencies were trying to put together a balanced system that would give the individual traveler the choice of whether to use public transportation or the highways.

Representative Harsha changed directions by asking about Stolzenbach's activities, before becoming NCTA Administrator, as chair of a civic committee that promoted rapid transit and curtailment of the automobile. Stolzenbach said he was reflecting the views of the Interfederation Council of the Greater Washington area, which believed that the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey put too much emphasis on highways. "That was the simple view and this is what we expressed to the Congress at the time."

Representative Harsha asked if the council recommended "that certain police restrictions should be employed restricting the use of private automobiles in the area." Stolzenbach did not recall everything he may have said, but "one way of being sure that our highways are adequate to handle peak-hour traffic is to provide some means of controlling it":

When I talked to the traffic director of the city of Los Angeles last year, I asked him what is the solution to Los Angeles freeway problem [sic]. He said, "I am hopeful that we can eventually get some means of keeping the number of people who get onto these highways down to the limit that the highways can handle at a reasonable speed."



The Federal Highway Administrator told me, not long ago, that they are working on and doing research on means of controlling traffic so that the freeway systems in cities will work, instead of having freeway traffic come to a grinding halt as it does in Los Angeles twice a day.

Did the council advocate, Representative Harsha wanted to know, that the highway departments of Maryland and Virginia come under a regional agency's control. Stolzenbach said he was speaking for a group, but "I haven't taken any position on this question." But had he not advocated, the Congressman asked, that the regional transportation agency have the power to establish and operate a regional highway system "whether or not the local authorities agree." Stolzenbach did not recall saying that, but he pointed out that if each jurisdiction has a veto, "this may cause some problems."

Representative Harsha summarized that if Federal agencies were going to usurp State and local authority and control people, "where are going to go? Everything is going to be dictated from here in Washington as to what these people are going to do with their roads and how they are going to . . . ." Stolzenbach interrupted to say he did not think a central bureaucracy in downtown Washington should dictate decisions. "The real tough problem here is how do you organize this region to not only do regional planning but to get regional decisions."

What would happen, Representative Harsha asked, if local jurisdictions decided not to go along with NCTA's transit plan. Stolzenbach said NCTA planned to build, first, an economically viable system in the District. It would be self-sustaining, but would not provide regional service if other jurisdictions rejected the plan.

Representative Harsha asked about the difference between NCTA's November 1962 report and the transit development program released in the summary report of May 1963 and cited in the White House bill. Seeger said they were identical except in dropping interim-Federal loans that the Treasury Department had opposed earlier in the year.

The Congressman was concerned that if Congress approved the bill adopting the May 1963 report, Congress would "block ourselves by curtailing the Three Sisters Bridge, accepting your recommendations and these others."

Seeger said the bill did no such thing; it did not even mention the highway program. "It simply sets forth the engineering details with respect to the transit program, and the bills that have been introduced would do no more than that." The summary report did not mention NCTA's highway recommendations or the Three Sisters Bridge.

Representative Harsha said he had additional questions, but the House was in session, and the committee adjourned. [pages 88-96]

On July 9, O. Roy Chalk was in the Mediterranean on vacation. However, his office sent his letter to President Kennedy transmitting a "preliminary report on transportation" in the Washington area. The area should take advantage of "the maximum efficient application of the

most advanced technological developments in mass transit” to create the best transit system in the world.

The enclosed report explained that D.C. Transit System’s “exhaustive, critical analysis” of NCTA’s report revealed weaknesses that undermined the “very foundation” of its recommendations. A “vast wealth” of information and resources “was ignored, wholly or substantially,” while transit innovations, some in the experimental stage, were never mentioned or “glossed over briefly and dismissed summarily.” By ignoring “rudimentary principles of sound transportation planning,” NCTA made “many theoretical and dubious basic presumptions,” the result being “an inadequate definition of the present and future transportation problems of the area, thus preliminarily casting considerable doubt upon the proposed solutions.”

The problem with subways was that they were “a permanent fixture” that could not be “moved from place to place as the demands upon it may require.” Building such a network “could have drastic consequences,” especially if based only on “a mere 2-year study.”

The Washington area, the letter said, was familiar with the streetcar, motorbus, and surface railway. Now, however, Congress had appropriated \$25 million for the Housing and Home Finance Agency to study alternate methods of transit. Research included:

1. Pneumatic tube systems.
2. Ground effect machines.
3. Superrail.
4. Monorail.
5. Monobeam (an elevated beam that can carry transit vehicles in both directions).
6. Hydrofoil.
7. Carveyor (a “people mover”).

D.C. Transit suggested that a combination monorail-subway was another option worth studying, as was an underground automobile highway.

The company was not simply opposing construction of a rail rapid transit system; it was simply suggesting that the area wait until the recently financed research was completed before committing more than \$1 billion for “a permanent, inflexible subway system.” In the absence of “a panacea for the mass transportation ills,” officials should employ patience and careful planning, “as opposed to panic,” in deciding what to do.

The company, under its franchise approved by Congress, had the right to operate any mass transit system in the area. D.C. Transit was “ready, willing, and able” to incorporate the rapid transit system into current operations. The company was continuing its research “into the transportation needs of tomorrow” and was “redoubling our efforts to develop media to meet those needs.” The report concluded:

We respectfully submit that our efforts should not be thwarted even before we have had an opportunity to experiment with and to develop the fresh, embryonic concepts which have emerged as a result of these efforts.

The 16-page report contained drawings of futuristic modes of transit such as monorail and “ground effect machines” riding on air cushions.

The *Post* contacted Dr. John H. Kohl, who was in charge of the housing agency’s transit experiments authorized by Congress. He did not recommend delaying the Washington area system. “The problem is too urgent,” he said. “Various approaches can be taken and the decision as to the type of approach is essentially a local one.” He thought that NCTA’s plan “was pretty well engineered.”

Charles Horsky acknowledged that the White House had received several copies of the report, but thought that Congress was “the proper forum” for considering Chalk’s views in the course of its hearings on the NCTA bill. “I imagine that Congress will invite Mr. Chalk to discuss his proposals. The transportation agency probably will have its chance to reply to the Chalk charges at that time.” [Eisen, Jack, “Chalk Raps Transit Plan As Dubious,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 12, 1963; Flor, Lee, “Chalk Urges Delay on Area Rail Transit,” *The Evening Star*, July 12, 1963; the report, minus illustrations, was included the hearing record, pages 296-299]

Stolzenbach and his NCTA aides returned to the hearing on July 16. Representative Harsha began the questioning by trying to get Stolzenbach to admit that the views about curtailing highway construction he had expressed on behalf of the Interfederation Council were his own views. He had, for example, chaired the committee that drafted the report to this subcommittee. Stolzenbach was cautious. The report reflected the views of the council; he would not “entirely disassociate myself” from the conclusions. He did not “seriously disagree” with the conclusions, but they were a result “a drafting committee.”

Representative Harsha said that if Stolzenbach was on the drafting committee that prepared the report, “then it did reflect your personal opinion and your personal views” on curtailing highways use, did it not. Stolzenbach replied, “Certainly,” but as NCTA administrator, “I have not found it necessary to take a position . . . on a lot of the questions that were involved at that time.”

Representative Harsha pointed out he was not asking about Stolzenbach’s NCTA tenure. In his previous role, had he not recommended that the highway departments of Maryland and Virginia should come under the control of the agency that became NCTA? No, Stolzenbach said, “I never recommended that.” What about curtailment of the automobile? That was the council’s position and he “certainly felt at the time and the vast majority of the people who testified felt . . . that there was overemphasis on highways in the 1959 plan.”

Upon questioning about the Interstate System in the District, Stolzenbach was hesitant even to admit that he had seen a map of the network since the D.C. Highway Department had not published one. “It is difficult to say, for example, that our recommendation that the center leg of the inner loop be an interstate facility is in conflict with the plans for the highway people because the Bureau of Public Roads and the District of Columbia Highway Department have been in agreement on that problem.”

Would construction of the Three Sisters Bridge, Potomac River Freeway, and the North Leg have any effect on NCTA's plans? Stolzenbach replied, "They would have practically no effect."

The 1960 Act called on NCTA to research facilities, equipment, and services to meet the area's transportation needs. Had NCTA studied anything besides conventional subways? A NCTA consultant, Operations Research, Inc., had studied "the whole range of possible vehicle systems, ranging from the conventional things we have today into the most esoteric type of systems, such as ground effect machines." At one point or another, he said, NCTA had considered "every conceivable combination."

Referring to D.C. Transit System's report to President Kennedy, Representative Harsha asked about the flexibility of the NCTA proposal. Stolzenbach replied, "Considering the economics of the whole problem of urban mass transportation, I think it is the most flexible system that I have ever seen." He added the NCTA proposal was "essentially a radial system and the rail portion of it does not attempt to provide crosstown suburban transportation."

Representative Harsha questioned NCTA's assumption that costs related to the automobile, including parking fees, would increase substantially by 1980, but transit fares would remain constant and possibly decrease. Stolzenbach based his assumptions on the law of supply and demand. "There will be a greater demand and the price will have to go up." Seeger added that parking costs would continue to increase "faster than other costs, including the operating costs of the transit system and the fares paid into the transit system."

The NCTA officials agreed when Representative Harsha said they had not considered the movement of goods or services or materials. He suggested that NCTA had recommended "the so-called Junior Expressway or one-way street system" for the North Leg in the vicinity of S Street, NW. Stolzenbach denied that NCTA had made such a recommendation. Instead, it had recommended studies of alternatives to an eight-lane freeway in that corridor.

He did not recall how many people would be displaced by an express street system. But he agreed that NCTA's proposal would displace 5,400 people, with 20 percent displaced by the transit plan and the remainder by the highway program. No, NCTA had not made any plans for relocating people. "That is not our job."

How many people would be displaced by the Three Sisters Bridge? Stolzenbach replied that none would be displaced by the bridge itself. What about the Potomac River Freeway? Not very many.

Representative Harsha asked about NCTA's modal-split conclusions. Stolzenbach agreed with the Congressman that the Department of Commerce considered its forecasting procedures to be still in the developmental stage. He added that, "all the techniques in this whole business" were still being developed.

Representative Harsha asked Stolzenbach to confirm that the rapid rail system would carry about 20 percent of trips during peak hours, while the rest would be on highways. Yes, Stolzenbach said, adding that the breakdown was based on a joint traffic forecasting project conducted with

personnel of NCTA, the D.C. Highway Department, and BPR. Many of the decisions leading to the forecasts “were made by the Highway people. [sic]”

Stolzenbach answered a question about the Junior Expressway in the North Leg corridor by saying it would have about half the capacity of an eight-lane freeway. He did not have an estimate of the difference in safety.

Representative Harsha asked if it was possible that NCTA’s estimate of the cost of building the subway might “be very low.” Stolzenbach replied, “It is always possible that estimates can be off.” Finding that NCTA had done few test borings, with many coming after the report on November 1, 1962, Representative Harsha suggested that NCTA “just gambled and took a chance that it would show up as it did.” Seeger did not think the three engineering firms employed for the purpose “would consider themselves as ‘gambling.’”

Was not the 10-percent contingency included in the cost estimate “way below the normal practice”? Seeger explained that other systems had used 30 percent, but the additional percentages reflected anticipated inflation. NCTA had not projected inflation in its capital cost estimates.

Representative Harsha found through questioning that the estimate did not take into account the increase if personnel costs or the cost of construction went up about 14 percent. Did the estimate of \$793 million include interest on loans? No, it covered only capital outlay. NCTA projected it would borrow about \$800 million at 4.5 percent interest. The total cost, counting interest, would be about \$1.5 billion.

Representative Harsha concluded his 1½ hours of questioning by summarizing that the cost was \$793 million “if we do not have any increased costs.” [pages 118-132]

Representative Frank J. Horton (R-NY), whose district included Rochester, wanted to understand the philosophy of NCTA’s highway studies. Stolzenbach said that the philosophy was “to develop a balanced system,” and that also was the philosophy of highway officials who had endorsed NCTA overall transit plan. “The area of disagreement is quite small.” The 1959 Mass Transportation Survey had been the starting point for the highway studies.

Was the highway program in direct competition with the rapid transit program? Was NCTA trying to eliminate competition? Stolzenbach said, “That was never the intention.” Seeger added that the NCTA plan included a highway network costing well over \$800 million, “and we would not have recommended a highway system anywhere near that figure if our intent was to eliminate competition.”

What if NCTA had been directed only to study the highway network without a rapid rail system. According to the 1959 survey, Seeger replied, even with a \$500 million rapid transit system, the area would need \$2 billion worth of highways. Without transit, the area would need even more. “Now, I am talking about a highway program that is vastly beyond anything that is contemplated by the District of Columbia Highway Department.” [pages 132-134]

Representative Broyhill was next. He wanted to clarify that NCTA contemplated operating only the subway system, not bus lines. “That is right.” Could free enterprise survive with development of NCTA’s transit plan. “Yes.” Would a subsidy be needed? “Some of the lesser feeder lines that will be necessary possibly would not be profitable, and we have provided in our financial estimates for a certain amount to be paid.” NCTA would pay about \$7 million a year in subsidies out of annual operating revenues.

NCTA had not checked these figures with the existing companies, which had refused to cooperate. The subsidy might have to be considerably larger.

Did NCTA consider restricting the subway to the District and letting bus lines bring passengers from Maryland and Virginia into the city. Yes, NCTA had considered the idea, using I-66 as an example. Seeger said, “The conclusion was that it would be cheaper in the long run, taking into account operating costs and capital costs, to provide the rail service. There was also the fact that we felt that the rail service in that corridor would attract more passengers than would buses, largely because of the transfer problem.”

Representative Broyhill wanted to confirm that the system within the city could survive if the surrounding jurisdictions did not go along with their projected contributions. Stolzenbach agreed. Without suburban extensions of the rail line, the bus lines could continue providing radial service. In that event, Stolzenbach said, NCTA had proposed short extensions to Woodside and Silver Spring in Maryland and Pentagon City in Virginia, “which we feel are appropriate terminal points.” But Representative Broyhill emphasized the point that the subway could be kept within the District and that NCTA should explore letting “other types of transportation” bring people to the subway.

Did NCTA consider an all-bus system, without a subway? The 1959 survey concluded it was impractical. NCTA took another look at the idea, but decided that “as far as flexibility is concerned, we feel you get the greatest amount of flexibility and service, bringing everything together, by having these rail lines go as far into the suburbs as there are people to ride them.”

Representative Broyhill emphasized that his questions did not necessarily reflect his opinion. They were questions he thought would be asked on the House floor.

He asked about NCTA’s conclusion that three times as many people would ride rapid rail transit as buses. “How in the Sam Hill could a person know which he would prefer and how could you rely on his answer and, the second part of question is, Is that your sole source of information as to predicting the habits of people, what people do in riding rapid rail versus buslines?”

Warren Wittreich of National Analysts, Inc., explained the survey. The idea was to ask the question in as unbiased a way as possible to convey equal options. Of those who expressed a preference, 48 percent said they preferred rail because it avoided traffic and weather problems. Others thought rail was more comfortable or safer. Of those who preferred buses, 27 percent said their reason was greater mobility, while 24 percent thought buses provided greater comfort, and 15 percent said the bus would get them closer to their destination.

Had NCTA contacted the Housing and Home Finance Agency about its \$25 million research study? Yes, NCTA had been “in frequent contact” with the agency’s John Kohl. The housing agency “endorsed our program very heartily.” [pages 135-139]

Chairman Whitener asked if NCTA had considered D.C. Transit System’s assertion that it would have the right to operate the system? Seeger replied, “We were satisfied, Mr. Chairman, that under the D.C. Transit Franchise Act there is no right to operate the system. This is wholly a matter for Congress to decide. We have made no recommendations on that point.” The chairman read language in the 1960 Act that said NCTA should encourage private transit companies to provide needed services and that NCTA should not operate competing services, but may make agreements with private transit companies to provide services.

Seeger said he understood that language to keep NCTA out of the bus business, but the language is silent “on the question of who should operate the rapid transit system.”

Would NCTA operate the rapid rail system? NCTA proposed to construct the system but had not made any proposal on operation. A Federal corporation or an interstate compact agency were two alternatives for operating the system or Congress could provide for contracting operation to a private operator.

A private operator could run the system at a profit? Yes, although the bond period might have to be extended. The profit could come out of the farebox? “There is nothing profitable about this system,” Seeger replied. “All we have ever said is that it would pay its capital cost which isn’t very exciting to an investor.” A management contract might be possible, with the operator paid out of the farebox, if the bond period were extended.

What did the language in the 1960 Act mean: “shall encourage private transit companies to provide needed services in a manner consistent with the transit development program”? Seeger said NCTA interpreted that language to encourage maximum use of private operators, particularly for buses, “but I interpret the whole act as being a hedge on the question of operation of the rapid transit system.”

Chairman Whitener said that he and Representative Broyhill were raising the question “as to whether or not it was not the intent of Congress at the outset to first preserve existing transportation facilities, and secondly, to encourage existing, taxpaying, transit operators to operate a system required to meet the public convenience and necessity here in this area.” Seeger suggested that if the committee interpreted the language in that way, “that is dispositive.”

Chairman Whitener asked about the claim in D.C. Transit System’s recent report to the President that NCTA had overlooked new developments in the transit field. For example, NCTA thought the transit company’s proposal to operate a monorail, partly in tunnel, to Dulles International Airport was not feasible. Seeger said that NCTA’s engineering studies indicated that the tube for monorail would have to be larger than for a subway. “You would be spending more money and you wouldn’t get anything back in exchange for the additional money that you are spending.”

Did NCTA consider the new modes listed in the D.C. Transit System report? Yes, and NCTA had provided the study to the committee for the record.

How does NCTA respond to D.C. Transit System's claim that the NCTA report cited other transit systems in the country in support of the proposed system, but they are "deficit operations and are publicly owned and operated?" Seeger said he had addressed that point the previous day:

Our point is that in other cities rapid transit fares are kept low as a matter of city policy, that in this city there already exists a zone fare, that the policy established by the Congress was not to keep fares low but to charge a fair price for service and that the result is that we will be different from the other cities.

The system would have a 25-cent fare within the central zone, plus a 15-cent fare outside that zone.

As for ambiguous language in laws, NCTA thought transit usage would increase, and D.C. Transit System apparently thought so, too, as reflected in its recent acquisition of one of the Virginia bus companies. "So, conceivably they agree with this idea that there will be stimulation and it will occur in the suburbs and they are placing themselves in a position to profit from it."

Representative Harsha asked if NCTA was projecting more transit patronage because of the curtailment of the highway program. Quenstedt said, "There is an unfortunate identification of this agency with regards to the highway program." NCTA did propose a smaller freeway network than the 1959 survey, but so did the D.C. Highway Department. NCTA did not think the Three Sisters Bridge was necessary, but even if the entire highway program were built, "there is a need for transit. I believe everybody is agreed on that." During peak hours, NCTA projected that 60 percent of people coming into the District's central area would do so by the proposed transit facility. District highway officials said that at present 40 percent of people came into the central area by public transportation. "They say that that same absolute number will come in." This was a disagreement among responsible groups.

Representative Harsha asked if NCTA could sit down with the area's highway agencies and planning commissions "and come up with an acceptable compromise that will meet the needs of this community and correlate this program with the highway people and the other interested groups." Quenstedt said that all the groups were subject to President Kennedy's direction, and he had called for reexamination of the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg. BPR's Whitton had told the Subcommittee on Roads that he thought the reexamination was necessary, as did General Clarke. Quenstedt said he had read Aitken's testimony, but he had "ducked it every time they tried to him down." [pages 140-146]

On July 18, Deputy Director Staats of the Bureau of the Budget appeared before the subcommittee in support of the legislation. The Federal interest in this issue, he said, was clear. Aside from the fact that the Federal Government employs nearly half of the workforce in the area, "the entire Nation has an interest in preserving the beauty and dignity of the National Capital region." Mass transportation "has a direct relevance to the future appearance and dignity of the Nation's Capital."



NCTA's plan "should meet both present and long-range needs of the region." It was based on the legislative mandate of the 1960 Act, could get underway with a minimum of delay, and its transportation development program was "essential to the achievement of long-range regional development plans." The Federal contribution to the project was consistent with the national legislation the White House had endorsed based on a two-thirds/one-third ratio for a national mass transportation program. As a result, a Federal contribution of \$120 million for a system that would cost nearly \$800 million "is not out of line."

Chairman Whitener asked if the plan was financially sound if jurisdictions outside the District refused to contribute their share. Staats was confident that area jurisdictions would agree to participate, but if not, "the total system might be less, or the fare structure adjusted but I think, so far as the payoff period is concerned, I think that the answer would be 'Yes.'"

Would it be financially sound if the system were extended only to Woodside and Friendship Heights in Montgomery County, Bowie in Prince George's County, and Pentagon City in Virginia? Staats thought so, but emphasized he wasn't suggesting that the system be limited in that way.

Representative Harsha asked if Staats thought the farebox could support the program. Staats thought "the assumptions here are reasonable." Many assumptions had to prove valid, but he cited two reasons why this system would be self-sustaining when many other systems were not. First, the fare would be higher than in areas such as New York City where people were used to paying a lower fare that did not equal costs. Second, by building a new system from scratch, "obviously you are going to be able to take advantage of what the manufacturers have learned in research and development of the most efficient system and the most comfortable system for transportation." That would make it more attractive to the public. Admittedly, the assumptions could prove wrong, in part "because we are dealing with human psychology," but based on review of the financial plan by several agencies, "we think they are not out of line."

When Representative Harsha asked about subsidies to local jurisdictions outside the District, Staats explained that those subsidies came out of operating revenues, not the Federal contribution.

Staats realized that President Kennedy's call for reexamination of the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg had prompted controversy. "We are willing to take our share on this one." The two projects had "generated much controversy in the community." The White House concluded that "a careful analysis and statement of the alternatives—in terms of benefits and costs to the community—is required to resolve this controversy and produce a clear community consensus":

It should be emphasized that the issues surrounding these highway projects would have required resolution regardless of the NCTA report. That report reinforces reasons already present.

He cited Administrator Whitton's statement before the Subcommittee on Roads that "this study needs to be made." Further, the District was continuing a very large highway program of projects not in dispute. However, the District did not have all the funds needed to complete these

ongoing projects. Meanwhile, the District scheduled the Three Sisters Bridge and a portion of the Potomac River Freeway for early construction, but included the North Leg in a much later program:

Therefore, we see no basis to the contention that the highway program has been damaged. On the contrary, we believe that the proposed review will enhance its soundness by insuring that the program will meet in the best possible way both the needs and the desires of the entire community. Hasty action on parts of the program which are in dispute could seriously damage the future of this program in terms of community acceptance.

The decision to reexamine the two projects was consistent with the committee's 1962 report. "That report clearly reflects the philosophy that transportation facilities are provided as a service to the entire community and should be consistent with and maximize desired community development objects." He did not see any reason why the reexamination should be "a long-drawn-out affair." Contrary to statements in the press, the reexamination did not mean "an indefinite delay. This is not true at all. It is not contemplated." With cooperation from all parties, Staats expected the reexamination to be completed "in a very few months." If Congress approved the national mass transit bill, the White House would be ready to submit recommendations on the highway program in 1964. "We think that this kind of time would enable Congress before it commits itself to the appropriations to have the results of this review."

Representative Broyhill said the controversy about the highways was jeopardizing the mass transit legislation. "One of the things that the so-called highway people object to is the fact that they feel that this thing has been pretty well studied for a number of years." Other committees of Congress were concerned that the studies were called for only to make way for mass transportation:

In fact, I was told by a member of the House Public Works Committee the day before yesterday that if this bill comes to the floor this session, he predicts every member of the House Committee on Public Works will oppose it.

Staats wanted to dispel the idea that deferral of the three highway units had anything to do with whether the region would have highways or mass transit. "We need both. And I think that these three units would have been held out even if there had not been such a program." For example, the Three Sisters Bridge had been studied for years, but area officials still didn't agree on where it should be built, if at all.

Representative Harsha, a member of both committees, said his Public Works colleagues were concerned that NCTA was "recommending the curtailment of the highway program and, as such, may be attempting to have a captive market for this rapid transit system in an effort to make it pay off." They were concerned as well by the notion that the District system would be a model for all other communities to curtail development of the Interstate System in favor of mass transit.

Staats thought that an adequate mass transportation system would reduce pressure for additional Interstate routes in cities. It also would reduce pressure for additional Interstate highways to meet purely local needs. [pages 153-169; Staats' formal statement is on pages 171-176]

Architect of the Capitol Stewart appeared before the committee on July 24. He was concerned about NCTA's transit proposals that affected the Capitol grounds. The subway tunnels would have to be constructed "far underground" to avoid interference with the existing subway connecting the House and Senate wings of the Capitol. The plans would require "costly and extensive underpinning" for the Capitol. He was concerned the transit plans would interfere with extension of the Capitol to include a large underground garage and other facilities under the east plaza where NCTA proposed to place its station.

Further, NCTA had never consulted with him, his office, or congressional leaders. The only contact by NCTA that he was aware of was a request for information, such as on soil borings taken for the proposed extension; the Speaker of the House, as chairman of the Commission for Extension of the Capitol, had granted permission to provide that information to NCTA.

Stewart had been aware of NCTA's study, but the first he knew of how it would affect the U.S. Capitol grounds was when he saw the map in the newspapers covering NCTA's report. In response to questions from Representative Harsha, Stewart said he had no specifications, no detailed drawings, and no information on the planned depth of the line, the width of the tunnels, or what they would displace. The Congressman asked:

How could they, as responsible engineers, arrive at a cost of this thing, if they haven't progressed enough in their plans to determine the depth of their tunneling and the displacements and all the additional shoring they may have to do when they go into these other buildings or highways?

Stewart replied, "I don't know how they do it. He added, "I am not here to censure what they have done or what they haven't done." He was there only "to make a plea" that Congress not approve construction of transit facilities under the U.S. Capitol Grounds until NCTA joined in a study with his office, the Commission for Extension of the U.S. Capitol, and other congressional leaders. Speaking only as one member of the extension commission, "I would like to see it a little further away, near enough to service the building, but not underneath it, practically." In reply to questions from Representative Harsha, Stewart could not estimate how long coordination would take, how much it would cost, or whether it would affect NCTA's overall cost estimate.

Representative Broyhill pointed out that Stewart's testimony provided another example where NCTA failed to carry out the intent of Congress by not coordinating with other agencies and organizations affected by the proposed rapid transit system:

I think that this is most regrettable. I just think that we are spending a lot of time here and we are just not going to get anywhere; \$793 million in itself is a really difficult appropriation to get through this Congress. Certainly, with the Speaker and the Architect of the Capitol feeling the way they do about this matter, I think these are pitfalls that the Agency could well have avoided. [pages 202-211]

Polly Shackleton was the next witness. She said that a Member of Congress told her that some people considered her “merely a lobbyist or tool for transit interests.” She denied it:

I wish to state in no uncertain terms that I am not employed for money or other consideration by any transit equipment manufacturer or supplier, commercial interest, or business or professional group which stands to profit financially from any type of transportation program or related activity. Nor am I a stooge, paid or unpaid, for either D.C. Transit, the railroads, the roadbuilders, the National Capitol Transportation Agency, or the Bureau of Public Roads.

Chairman Whitener reassured her by saying, “Mrs. Shackleton, if you stick around here, you will be accused of a lot of things.”

The Democratic Central Committee favored the bill under consideration “because we are convinced that a rail rapid transit system for this area is absolutely essential.” She and her committee were not qualified to judge costs or methods of financing. “But we do suggest that any alternative to an efficient subway, rail transit system will be far more costly in human terms, as well as in terms of the viability of the city.” She also praised Chairman Whitener’s report of the Special Subcommittee on Traffic, Streets, and Highways. [pages 211-213]

She was followed by Dr. Kohl of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. The agency’s Office of Transportation had reviewed NCTA’s report, including its appendices. “We have found no objections to the NCTA transit proposals as they relate to the national program” that Congress was considering. The national program had a dual role of stimulating local transit development and of assisting regional efforts to meet transportation demand. NCTA’s plan was consistent with these goals.

Without naming D.C. Transit System, Dr. Kohl also addressed “disappointment and criticism” that someone had expressed because NCTA had not embraced more advanced technology. Some had said, he recalled, the transit program should be delayed pending the results of the agency’s research program:

While apparently appealing claims are made for new transit media, few can be found to have real substance when analyzed in the cold light of fact. Most of the HHFA demonstration projects, even those dealing with new equipment potentials, are actually refinements of the conventional rapid transit system. Only one project is underwriting the development of a radically different system, and this may be some years in the experimental stage before its practical application can be assured.

Other systems, such as the monorail, have been thoroughly explored with due regard to the statutory obligation that any recommendation be capable of early implementation. In view of all the circumstances with which NCTA was faced in preparing its recommendations, its selection of a modern rail facility of established capabilities seems reasonable. It may be regarded as a progressive, but not a “way out” solution.

Chairman Whitener asked specifically about D.C. Transit System's view that NCTA had not adequately considered pneumatic tube systems, ground effect machines, superrail, monorail, moonbeam, hydrofoil, and carveyor. Dr. Kohl believed that NCTA had studied these alternatives:

A number of these systems have specialized application, and in the light of the requirements of an areawide rapid transit system would not be suitable. Many are still in the early promotional stages and have not been proved either as physically feasible or as acceptable to the riding public, and therefore, I think many stages of development [remain] to be accomplished before most of these systems can be regarded as practical for urban mass transportation.

With the research funds authorized by Congress, the Housing and Home Finance Agency was encouraging new looks and hoped to identify some substantially new technology. "But at this particular time the conventional system is the one of established capability."

Representative Harsha asked if by the time the conventional system proposed by NCTA was completed, it would be obsolete? "No," Dr. Kohl replied, "I don't think so." He cited the monobeam as an example. It was "nothing more than a narrow gage bus on elevated concrete roadway." It might be helpful in some specific applications, "but where you are dealing with a major urban area, with peak-hour volumes of the magnitude that are likely to occur here in Washington, where you have to have interchangeable parts of an areawide system," a conventional system was the best option. He added that nothing was likely to result from his agency's study that "would justify altering the kind of conclusion that was reached. [pages 217-224]

O. Roy Chalk testified on July 25. He began by saying that his company favored a modern rapid transit system in the range of \$300 million to \$400 million. Only the newest, most advanced modes of transportation should be employed. The company favored "a greatly expanded and integrated highway system capable of piercing the bottleneck in the heart of the city." Further, "we are in favor of private enterprise being continued indefinitely as the exclusive operator of any transit system in our Nation's Capital pursuant to the mandate of Congress" as expressed in S. 3073 in 1956. (Chalk was referring to the Senate bill that became the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority Act granting a franchise to D.C. Transit System, Inc.) Finally, Chalk said, "we are violently opposed to the extravagance of public ownership and operation, and the illegal violation of S. 3073."

He said his testimony was intended to "fill the obvious vacuums" in Stolzenbach's testimony and correct "any erroneous impressions" he left with the committee. "The deliberate exaggerations replete throughout the NCTA testimony are only exceeded by the bald minimization of truth which appears in the Administrator's plan." Many of NCTA's recommendations were "the result of a subtle technique of fallacious inverse argument" to reach a predetermined conclusion based on "alleged imaginary facts" lined up to fit that conclusion.

He endorsed the ideas in the evaluation that Martin Wohl had prepared for the Commerce Department but that had not yet been included in the committee's record. He had identified

numerous “grossly inaccurate and incorrect estimates and calculations.” Besides inaccuracies, NCTA’s report favored an inflexible “corridor” concept that “is completely shortsighted and long ago outmoded.” Chalk pointed out that, “Today’s main ‘corridor’ becomes tomorrow’s little used branch line.” Instead of simply eliminating the bottlenecks, NCTA proposed to solve transportation woes “by unnecessary and costly substitution of the entire bottle.”

He stated that as noted in his report to President Kennedy, NCTA gave no credence to the idea that the results of the transit experiments were worth waiting for. Instead, it was trying to “panic Congress” into approving its supposedly \$793 million proposal. “To be realistic and honest, the plans of the NCTA, if brought to fruition, would undoubtedly cost in excess of \$1.5 billion and could set a pattern for similar wasteful spending in many other cities of the United States.”

Chalk also discussed his claim that D.C. Transit System had the franchise, under S. 3073, “to operate a mass transportation system of passengers for hire.” No street railway or busline that would compete with his franchise company was to be established in the District. NCTA had ignored this statutory restriction. True, NCTA referred to feeder bus systems and subsidies, but “Who in his right mind would expect private enterprise to hang on, losing money, and accept the crumbs of service which fall from the table of a publicly operated major service line?”

(Section 3 of the 1956 Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority Act read:

No competitive street railway or bus line, that is, bus or railway line for the transportation of passengers of the character which runs over a given route on a fixed schedule, shall be established to operate in the District of Columbia without the prior issuance of a certificate by the Public Utilities Commission of the District of Columbia (referred to in this part as the “Commission”) to the effect that the competitive line is necessary for the convenience of the public.)

D.C. Transit was providing excellent service, at no cost to the Federal Government, with “the largest fleet of new air-conditioned buses in the world, of which we are particularly proud.” Even so, NCTA’s plan was “to disregard and to violate the rights of private ownership and operation of transportation facilities in the metropolitan area.” NCTA paid lip service to the congressional mandate that private enterprise be used wherever possible, but its recommendations presume government-operated transit lines “and that its expenditures should be of such astronomical proportions as to forever preclude the likelihood of economic operations with profit.”

Chalk recommended that Congress reject NCTA’s proposal and reaffirm D.C. Transit System’s existing franchise under S. 3073. Costs should be limited to not exceed \$400 million, with no more than 5 miles of subsurface tunnels if needed. Selection of technology should be delayed at least 2 years to allow the results of ongoing experimental projects to be known.

Representative Harsha asked if D.C. Transit System had cooperated with NCTA. Chalk said the company had tried to work with Stolzenbach virtually from the day he was appointed. Nothing happened for a long while, but the company eventually submitted its proposal to NCTA. NCTA “refused and ignored even to consider this proposal.” At their last meeting, Stolzenbach made

clear he would support a fixed-rail subway system “and that there wasn’t much point to discuss what he, I think, described as newfangled ideas.” Since his mind was completely closed, “there wasn’t any point in our assisting him, and that was the last time that I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting with Mr. Stolzenbach.”

Chalk denied the precise wording that Stolzenbach had said ended their discussion and that it had anything to do with a line to Dulles International Airport. “The point is that he said he had already made up his mind and there was no point in discussing any other ideas. There is a big difference.”

Asked about Dr. Kohl’s testimony on new technologies, Chalk said he hadn’t heard the exact wording, but said that Dr. Kohl had “indicated to our organization that he is most enthusiastic about this type equipment, and that it offers possibilities for the solution of certain phases of the problem.” He thought officials should wait for the results before going “off the deep end in expending in excess of \$1 billion.” He suggested, for example, a tunnel might be built for a monorail suspended high enough that automobiles could use the tunnel as well. Another alternative was a tunnel for mass transit during peak hours that automobiles could use at other times.

With “a little courage,” officials could establish regulations to control traffic by keeping certain vehicles out of bottleneck areas during peak hours. In that case, “you would have no need for subways. You wouldn’t even have a problem.”

As it was, if Congress adopted the NCTA plan, D.C. Transit System would gradually go out of business by about 1970. Meanwhile, the company was in the process of unifying bus service in Maryland, Virginia, and the District. Passengers would be able to travel around the region without changing vehicles. “Now this is a very convenient matter . . . . We are living in an age of convenience, and this is a great convenience.” [pages 263-269, 299-304]

Louis Justement was one of the witnesses on July 29, this time as chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Washington Building Congress, Inc. The congress, he said, considered a rapid transit system “desirable and necessary for Washington and this is the time to try and get it.” The fact that NCTA’s calculations suggested the system would be self-liquidating was pleasing, but “we do not believe that the acceptance of the rapid transit plan should be conditioned on this fact or its irrefutable substantiation by supporting data.” He asked, “Freeways are not expected to be self-liquidating; why should we expect more from rapid transit?” Although the Federal Government paid 90 percent of the cost of Interstate construction, the District’s 10-percent share was only “a first installment [because] a freeway requires continued maintenance and results in extensive and permanent loss of taxable real estate, costs which must be borne by the District of Columbia and adjoining counties.”

Rapid transit questions could “not be resolved by computing machines which, depending upon the data which is fed into them, could favor an all-automobile or an all-rapid transit solution.” What was certain was that if the city [the metropolitan area] was going to grow to 3.5 million people, “it must have a rapid transit system, and the sooner the better.” The NCTA transit plan was better than the plan proposed by the Mass Transportation Survey, but too many concessions

had been made to reduce the total cost. “We believe an adequate downtown distribution system must be provided with a center loop with local service and frequent stations.” The downtown section was the key, because whatever it consisted of was “just about final.”

Freeway controversies could be left to the future. Once the regional transit system was in place, it would create “an ideal framework for all other planning.” Flexibility might be excellent in some cases, but not for transit. “Rail rapid transit, by its very rigidity, will serve as the framework for all other planning, the body structure around which the living city grows and develops.” As others had said during the hearings, buses were more flexible, but they had some disadvantages, particularly the need to stop at virtually every corner in a congested city. Unlike a rapid rail system, a bus that can go anywhere does not provide a basis for sound city planning.

By contrast, as a rapid rail system spreads around the area, the tendency would be “to erect a vast majority of the new, important traffic generator structures in the immediate vicinity of the stations as they were planned.” Instead of uncontrolled sprawl, the growth of population “would be largely served by these new centers.”

Speaking only for himself, not the Washington Business Congress, he reacted to earlier suggestions that instead of incurring the enormous expenditure proposed by NCTA, the area should experiment with a small expenditure by building a trial line, such as one from Rockville to Union Station along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks, expanding from there with special bus routes. He was referring to testimony earlier in the day by Delmer Ison, Executive Director of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, who had said:

We feel, though, that before we rule out an all-bus system that perhaps a study should be made, an engineering study and passenger study, but in the meantime, rather than delay this program, we recommend that we experiment with a rail system, say running from Rockville down to Union Station. [page 322]

Justement did not consider such a proposal a “fair test in any sense whatever.” He compared such a trial with “expecting an arm to function by itself out in midair, as a trial.” He continued:

[It] violates the main function that a transportation, a rail transportation, system can use from the point of view of planning, in that it is labeled a “trial”; it is labeled something that may or may not be permanent, and it develops no stations along its way; there are no new stations developed.

Further, a trial would push off a final decision to some “indefinite future” based on experience in the absence of the “most important part” of a rail rapid transit system, namely the downtown distribution loop:

Now, if you had to do something that was just a partial system I would much rather start with the body and have the downtown distribution system to which you could always add arms, but I would never try to make an arm function without a body. [pages 361-367]

As the hearings were moving to a conclusion on July 31, the *Post* carried an analysis by reporter Jack Eisen. He had been the newspaper’s principal reporter on city and metropolitan planning



(1957-1961), but had spent the previous year as associate editor of *The Los Angeles Times*, where he got to see a “wholly automobile-oriented city,” which he described as “a monstrous example” of the type. Eisen began:

Washington’s rapid transit program is getting more and more to resemble a ghost train shuttling eternally to and fro on a shadowy side track. Is it not about time somebody got it out onto the main line?

He would like to report that “after all these years,” plus 3 weeks of hearings, the city was ready to move forward. “But the course of the hearings had been just the opposite.” The solid ground transit advocates had expected to find “had been churned into vast clouds of dust . . . obscuring the main issues.” The subcommittee members were “baffled, perhaps even a bit angry.”

The question came down to what kind of city people wanted. A transit-oriented city was closely tied to its downtown. A highway-oriented city, such as Los Angeles, “tends to explode ever farther across the landscape.” In Washington, the argument was being carried to extremes, “and being flaunted, often in scary half-truths, by the highway lobbies.”

The debate between highways and transit should not occur. Everyone agreed an adequate freeway network was needed. The question was “how wide, how well-located, how well-designed and how well-adapted they should be in the special character we want to keep for the Nation’s Capital.” Surely even the most “dedicated mover of earth, pourer of concrete,” agreed that the area needed “an adequate, fast, safe, heavy-duty means of mass transportation.”

Stolzenbach had concluded, reasonably so according to Eisen, that a conventional subway was needed at least in downtown. However, another section of the 1960 Act “provided NCTA with its unhappy status as a lightning rod” by calling on NCTA to “evaluate” the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey. NCTA’s conclusion that the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg should be dropped and the White House’s call for their reexamination “brought the highway lobbies into the arena in a howling fury.” The highway people already were concerned about interest in mass transportation in other cities and the legislation the Senate had passed authorizing a national transit program. If the NCTA plan could be defeated, the highway people thought it would be “an omen of victory for the highway forces.”

Even without the national implications, Eisen thought “the transit bill would have a rough time,” as reflected in the testimony before the concurrent hearings of the Whitener subcommittee and the Subcommittee on Roads. The primary purpose of some of the testimony before both subcommittees was “to clobber NCTA and all its works.” Stolzenbach had been accused of having an anti-freeway bias, of rigging statistics, of ignoring agencies that disagreed with him, and being unrealistic in thinking his system could pay for itself. “And so the charges go, all emphatically denied but each leaving a residue of doubt in the minds of the District committeemen.”

Chairman Whitener had been “the most neutral member” during the hearings. He appeared to be most concerned about the displacement of families by construction projects. “Clearly, if he had

his druthers on this issue, Whitener would choose the subway. It displaces fewer people than freeways.”

Representative Harsha was on the opposite side, having been the most vocal member of the subcommittee “in his insistence against any highway curtailment.” He favored mass transit, “but his interest is focused on buses.” He had “bored the hardest on Stolzenbach’s anti-freeway statements.”

Representative Broyhill, the only member of the subcommittee from the area, “followed a familiar tactic by suggesting a retreat before the outer ramparts of the transit defenses had been breached.” He suggested limiting the subway to the District,” a view that “squares with his lamentations over the harm that might befall the present bus companies.”

As for what the subcommittee might do, “the choice will be politically and intellectually tough.” If it approved the legislation, it will be accused of ignoring the evidence. The possibility of rejecting the plan “seems unthinkable to those with the city’s welfare in mind; a start must be made toward solving a problem that isn’t getting any easier.”

Eisen wondered if “a middle ground” existed. “Is there something—part of the commuter railroad line, facilities for express buses, a section of downtown subway, perhaps a station or terminal—that could be started soon.” In the meantime, commuters could be sure “that the ad writer wasn’t talking about his daily journeys when he wrote that seductive line: ‘Getting there is half the fun.’” [Eisen Jack, “A City Must have a Heart and Arteries,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 28, 1963; the ad line was for Cunard Lines’ luxury ships]

The Whitener hearings ended on July 31 with citizen groups endorsing NCTA’s transit plans. Edward J. MacClane said his group, the District Federation of Civic Associations, still opposed the Three Sisters Bridge and North Leg, suggesting that commercial interests were behind support for the District’s freeway program. Peter Glickert of the federation did not want the dispute over the transit organization to delay its plan. Representing the Fairfax Federation of Civic Associations, John Ellicott criticized “persons or groups who because of their own selfish interests deliberately or unwittingly delay or defeat” the proposed rapid transit plan. John Hoke, chairman of the Interfederation Council representing 400 civic associations in the area, said his organization was enthusiastic about the NCTA rail rapid transit system.

The only opposition on the final day, and it was mild, was from Arthur Miller of AAA’s district branch. “While we have no opposition to a rapid transit rail system,” he said, his group was concerned that the rapid transit plan was being presented as the one answer to the area’s transportation problems. “We are deeply concerned by the unjustified sabotaging of the highway program by the NCTA report.” [Flor, Lee, “Citizen Groups Testify For Rail Transit System,” *The Evening Star*, July 31, 1963]

### **While Whitener Considers the Options**

While the two subcommittees held nearly simultaneous hearings on related issues, the debate in the public arena continued.

In early July 1963, a meeting at the New Bethel Baptist Church resulted in formation of the Citizens Committee on Homes and Highways to fight “all who place the selfish interests of highway users above the needs of human beings.” The chairman, Eugene Davidson, was a member of the D.C. advisory committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and a vice president of the Washington Real Estate Brokers Association. The new group, determined to represent displaced families, called on District residents to engage in President Kennedy’s “careful reexamination” of the freeways. Davidson said the committee would “give voice to the feelings of the community about the effect the proposed Three Sisters Bridge-North Leg Inner Loop truck highway complex would have on countless homes and community facilities.” He said:

The proposed freeways would take the homes of at least 19,000 residents and require condemnation of homes, churches, businesses and schools valued at some \$190 million.

A special committee had concluded that 19,000 residents, many within the Northwest Urban Renewal area, would be displaced, although the District placed the figure between 7,000 and 12,000. [Flor, Lee, “Foes of Loop Fear Ousting Of 19,000,” *The Evening Star*, July 3, 1963; “Citizens Join In Attack on Freeways,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 3, 1963]

On July 10, the Maryland State Roads Commission met with a delegation of citizens from North Chevy Chase about the impact of the Capital Beltway through Rock Creek Park between Kensington Parkway and Edgemoor Drive. The *Star* explained:

More than 100 North Chevy Chase citizens complained to State road builders and Maryland members of Congress last month that the half-mile stretch of planned roadway would uproot a large number of trees, cut across five or six homesides and adversely affect 50 other residences.

State road officials, who planned to award a construction contract later in the month, said they could not route the highway through a marshland north of Rock Creek, but would consider small realignments to save more trees to lessen the impact on homes. Maurice Donegan, representing the citizens, told reporters after the 2½-hour meeting, that he was “optimistic and hopeful.” He said, “Mr. Funk cannot guarantee or commit himself to changes but we feel he will do all he can to help us.” [“Beltway Route Revision Due,” *The Evening Star*, July 11, 1963]

Eugene Davidson told District Commissioner John B. Duncan on July 12 that the Citizen Committee on Homes and Highways wanted to participate in the reexamination requested by President Kennedy. Davidson thought that instead of spending additional funds, the District should rely on the studies NCTA had already compiled. Further, he wanted the study to not be limited to families displaced by freeways; it should be expanded to all government actions resulting in displacements. [Schuette, Paul A., “New Group Would Join Road Study,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 13, 1963]

(Commissioner Duncan had taken office on July 24, 1961. He was the city’s Recorder of Deeds when President Kennedy nominated him for the position. He was, as newspapers put it at the time, “the District’s first Negro Commissioner.” Judge David L. Bazelon of the U.S. Court of

Appeals administered the oath of office “before an overflow crowd in the public hearing room at the District Building.” During an organizational meeting after the ceremony, Duncan was named to oversee the city’s health and welfare activities previously handled by outgoing Commissioner McLaughlin. Duncan said:

I believe that the only way that we can win the goals we seek at home and abroad is for all of us to work together on a united front, irrespective of any personal interests we may have by reason of our different circumstances.

If this feeling of togetherness is adequately developed, I see the possibility of the greatest degree of progress that our city has ever witnessed.

(The appointment was for 3 years with an annual salary of \$19,000. Duncan, a graduate of Howard University, lived with his wife and two children at 5330 Second Street, NW. in the Petworth neighborhood. [“Duncan Gets Commissioner Nomination,” *The Evening Star*, July 11, 1961; Pierce, Charles D., “Duncan, ‘Taking Oath, Asks ‘Togetherness,’” *The Evening Star*, July 24, 1961])

By mid-month, NCPC had approved a route “in principle” for the East Leg along the west bank of the Anacostia River from an interchange with the Northeast Freeway above New York Avenue and the Southeast Freeway on Virginia Avenue near the Navy Yard. At the urging of T. Sutton Jett, NPS district area chief, NCPC insisted that any park land taken for the road be replaced.

The planners also retained final say on “precise alignment, grades, connections, landscaping and replacement of parkland.” Joseph Barnett, representing Administrator Whitton, voted against this retention of authority. “That’s the trouble with this commission,” Barnett said, “it spends too much of the staff’s time on detail.” This practice was “insulting” to highway agencies. Barnett thought construction could begin in 1964, with completion in 1965. [“NCPC Approved Route for Inner Loop,” *The Washington Daily News*, July 19, 1963; Lewis, Robert J., “Anacostia Renewal Boundaries Fixed,” *The Evening Star*, July 18, 1963]

On July 27, Aitken appeared on WWDC’s “Report to the People.” Freeway construction, he said, had come “quite near” to a halt in the city because of the reexamination, negotiations with the Architect of the Capitol on the Center Leg, and additional approvals needed on the East Leg. Although NCPC had approved the East Leg in principle, Aitken said the District would need “several months” to work out details. He estimated that construction would not begin for a year to a year and a half.

Asked if he could “conceive of anything” that would make the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg unneeded, he said highway builders were “never short of customers.” Transit could meet some needs, but the “bulk of the trips” will still be on freeways and streets. [“Near Halt Seen in D.C. Freeways,” *The Sunday Star*, July 28, 1963]

In early August, Lee Flor reported that Virginia highway officials were in no doubt about the need for the Three Sisters Bridge. In a January letter never officially released, Governor Albertis S. Harrison, Jr., had said that Virginia was “not opposed to rapid transit,” but he objected to

NCTA's claim that rapid transit would seriously cut the need for highways. More recently, F. A. Davis, deputy commissioner of the Virginia Highway Department, had written to Chairman Fallon, with copies for the State's congressional delegation, in support of the bridge. Not building the Three Sisters Bridge would be "an almost intolerable situation." Davis sincerely hoped Chairman Fallon's subcommittee would recommend construction of the bridge. "It is our feeling that all of the highways now planned will be needed, particularly those on the interstate system, regardless of any mass transit system as now proposed."

The uncertainty about the bridge was delaying completion of plans for I-66 "because we have no way of knowing the number of lanes that will be required." The planned freeway was to be eight lanes through suburban areas, but an interchange was to separate six lanes to cross the Potomac River on the six-lane Theodore Roosevelt Bridge while other lanes were diverted to the Three Sisters Bridge. [Flor, Lee, "Virginia Will Press For Sisters Bridge," *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1963; "State Halts Planning on River Route," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 3, 1963]

Colonel Duke, in an August 17 appearance on "Report to the People," said officials had still not decided whether the city would hire expert consultants for the reexamination. The concern was that the resulting report would be just another expert report to be piled atop other, conflicting reports on the same subject. Instead of resolving the dispute, it might simply prolong it. Nevertheless, the District expected to complete the reexamination in mid-December. ["Road Restudy Finish Slated In December," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 18, 1963]

As Congress returned from its August recess, the District of Columbia was awaiting action on measures affecting such subjects as crime, urban renewal, home rule, and transportation. NCTA's proposal for a \$793 million subway and rapid rail system was among them. Chairman Bible was delaying action until the House completed its work on the proposal. However, Representative Broyhill thought that passage of legislation was "highly improbable" in the first session of the 88<sup>th</sup> Congress. The national bill to establish a national urban transit program was in trouble in the economy-minded House:

Since the local bill calls for twice as much total expenditures as the national bill, it would be premature to try to push through the local bill, Mr. Broyhill said.

He did not see any evidence of "a vicious highway lobby opposing the transit program," but he recognized that highway supporters were defending freeways from cutbacks that NCTA had recommended.

Meanwhile, O. Roy Chalk continued seeking legislation that would ensure a private role in the transit plan. He promoted a bill calling for a Senate study of D.C. Transit's profits. A House bill would establish a 6.5-percent rate of return as a floor rather than a ceiling. He favored a bill that would transfer decisions on the company's fuel and real estate tax exemptions from the D.C. Public Utilities Commission to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission. ["Sheaf of D.C. Bills Waits in Congress," *The Sunday Star*, September 1, 1963]

On September 3, the District commissioners held a public hearing to consider the Center Leg and South Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway. The hearing began with discussions of the Center Leg by Albert A. Grant, chief engineer of the District's Office of Planning and Programming, and the South Leg by NPS Director Wirth.

Grant said the Central Leg Freeway, from the Southwest Freeway to New York Avenue, would be built in a tunnel under the Mall on the west side of the Capitol. In all, it would displace an estimated 630 housing units with 1,600 occupants, and 105 businesses. However, by using the airspace over the freeway, the District could completely replace the housing. (Congress had approved air-rights legislation nationally, but Grant said that Congress would have to pass legislation allowing the District to build over the freeways.)

BPR had questioned the eligibility of the Center Leg for Interstate 90-10 funds because it was too close to another Interstate route. Recently, however, BPR had informed the city that the Center Leg Freeway was eligible for Interstate funds. As a result, the District's 10-percent share amounted to \$4.6 million instead of \$23.3 million if built on the 50-50 matching ratio of non-Interstate Federal-aid projects.

Regarding the Center Leg Freeway, Wirth recommended that the city shift it west to avoid trees near the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial at the foot of Capitol Hill. Jack Eisen pointed out:

The project's biggest single stumbling block was not even mentioned—the refusal of the House Office Building Commission to back legislation that would permit a freeway tunnel beneath a small corner of the Capitol grounds at Independence ave. and Canal st., sw.

This action, apparently reflecting the views of the late House Speaker Sam Rayburn, would block the freeway or distort its design. Rayburn didn't want the freeway to run close to the new House Office Building that now bears his name.

Despite such concerns, he summarized the statements during the hearing:

Almost everybody who appeared before the District Commissioners either agreed the Center Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway is needed or that its construction is a foregone conclusion. The big question was what route it should take once it leaves the foot of Capitol Hill and heads toward its north end near Jersey and Florida aves. nw.

Referring to the citizen speakers, he said:

The main freeway critics were young men who are old hands at such appearances—Peter Glickert, representing the Federal of Citizens Associations, and Peter S. Craig, spokesman for the Committee of 100 on the Federal City.

Glickert suggested building the Center Leg under 3<sup>rd</sup> Street north of Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. He also said that the plan to limit east-west crossings to five streets (Pennsylvania, Constitution, New York, E and K) would hamper crosstown traffic and bus service. He also recommended

enlarging the northwest urban renewal area to make renewal funds available for relocation of those displaced by the freeway.

Craig said that in planning freeways, the city had disregarded the L'Enfant plan, but he acknowledged that it was too late to do anything about that. He commended the South Leg plans, but said the Center Leg Freeway represented a "shocking failure" in highway planning. It was "a parody on planning . . . an ugly gash . . . an impenetrable motor vehicle sewer . . . a moat." As for using freeway airspace for housing, Craig said that highway officials were showing "absolutely nothing" to prove its claims. He also recommended shifting the Center Leg to a location between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW., with vertical walls.

(Aitken responded to Craig by writing to Neill Phillips, chairman of the Committee of 100, to say that "your spokesman was unaware of or chose to ignore, other proposals for structures over the center leg. Recognizing your own objectivity and your sense of fair plan, I urge you to call these facts to the attention of the members of your committee.")

Bishop Smallwood E. Williams of the Bible Way Church located at 1130 New Jersey Avenue, NW., insisted on two recommendations. First, the Center Leg must not disturb his church. Second, he urged the District commissioners to "see to it that adequate housing be provided before one bulldozer or steam shovel demolishes any housing in the area" of the Center Leg:

The city's Negro residents, he said, "look upon the bulldozer as the people in Europe looked upon the Panzer tanks, demolishing our homes."

He also questioned the city's estimate of the number of people who would be displaced by the Center Leg.

Several witnesses were concerned about the impact on specific properties:

Similarly, other critics assailed the highway's taking of the Esso Building, the McShain Building, Holy Rosary Catholic Church and a soon-to-be-started 10-story apartment house, to cost \$2.5 million, at 3d and E sts. nw.

Other witnesses were more supportive. Robert H. Levi of Downtown Progress told the commissioners that the Center Leg was necessary to complement the "action plan" for revitalizing a 148-block downtown area through use of urban renewal powers. Groups such as the D.C. Advisory Board of AAA, the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade, and the Federal City Council supported the plans. (Harold Wirth of the board of trade urged the city to allow enough clearance in the South Leg tunnels (14½ feet instead of the planned 12½ feet) to permit their use by military vehicles in the event of a national emergency.)

Overall, as *The Washington Daily News* summarized, "The District Plans for the South and Center Legs of the Inner Loop highway system met with surprisingly little opposition at the Commissioners' public hearing today."

The South Leg segment of the public hearing will be discussed separately. [Eisen, Jack, "Width and Design of Freeway Draw Criticism at D.C. Hearing," *The Washington and Times Herald*,

September 4, 1963; “Inner Loop Plans Are Praised,” *The Washington Daily News*, September 3, 1963; “Center Leg Freeway to Evict 1,600 Persons, 105 Firms,” *The Evening Star*, September 3, 1963; “Officials Answer Highway Critics,” *The Sunday Star*, September 8, 1963]

City officials, and the editors at the *Star*, were encouraged by the public hearing. The editors wrote:

There was high praise from almost every witness for the carefully planned south leg, which will route traffic through park areas around the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. And while there were understandable protests from property owners in the direct path of the center leg, virtually no one challenged the need for the central freeway.

This is a tribute to the good sense of the community.

The only negative was the dispute with the Architect of the Capitol. “It is high time that someone in Congress, with a little more authority than Mr. Stewart, and a little more willingness to act, should stop it.” [“Support for the Loop,” *The Evening Star*, September 9, 1963]

General Duke held a press conference on September 11 to discuss the Policy Advisory Committee reexamination of the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg. The review was proceeding smoothly. The committee, which he said was “not even considering” dropping either proposal, had identified four alternatives for the North Leg as Lee Flor described them in the *Star*:

1. A pair of one-way streets, similar to the NCTA proposal;
2. Two westbound and two eastbound one-way streets;
3. Two three-lane tunnels beneath surface streets; and
4. Interstate freeways with 200- and 300-foot rights of way.

Jack Eisen provided a different summary in the *Post*:

In planning for the North Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, a crosstown route somewhere near T st. nw., Duke said one entirely new approach is being considered.

A pair of double-deck roads would be built along existing streets. The bottom decks would be 3-lane tunnels, 1½ to 2 miles long, for freeway traffic. The top decks would be on the surface, permitting access to cross streets and with signals timed for swift traffic movement.

The other four proposals are two variations on standard 8-lane freeways—one of a narrow right-of-way, the other of “optimum” width—and two combinations of express one-way streets.

The committee had assigned staff subcommittees to study each alternative. The result would be multiple reports on possible transportation corridors for the freeway.



The committee also was studying two alternative sites for the bridge (one upstream from Key Bridge and one downstream).

In reexamining the two proposals, General Duke said, the committee was covering four areas: the social and economic impact of the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Leg, estimates of costs for the alternatives, the aesthetic designs for the projects, and traffic estimates.

He acknowledged that the agencies represented on the committee had feuded in the past. "I am particularly pleased with the spirit of the group . . . it has been a conscientious group."

The key was that the resulting projects must be eligible for inclusion in the Interstate System because financing was "very important." Fortunately, he said, "the man who has a great deal [to do] with making the decision is on the committee." He was referring to Federal Highway Administrator Whitton.

General Duke told reporters that committee members hoped to get their report to the District commissioners in early November. They would, he thought, be able to reply to President Kennedy "by the end of December." [Flor, Lee, "Road, Bridge Restudy Progressing, Duke Says," *The Evening Star*, September 11, 1963; Eisen, Jack, "3 Sisters Span Shift Is Studied," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 11, 1963]

### **The Freeway-Transit Link**

By the time of the press conferences, officials and observers recognized a link between resolution of the freeway debate and initiation of legislation to launch the rapid rail transit plan. "The committee," General Duke told reporters, "is conscious that there may be a relationship developing between the re-examination and the transit bill." The schedule he outlined meant that Congress would adjourn before President Kennedy reacted to the city's recommendations. In that case, action on NCTA's rail rapid transit plan would be postponed until 1964, an election year where action might be harder.

Eisen had reported the link as early as September 7 following Chairman Whitener's statement making clear that the transit legislation would have to wait until the freeway fight is over:

His statement, made from his home-town office in Gastonia five weeks after transit hearings ended, was no surprise. The highway lobby and its allies in Congress have made it clear they will fight the Washington transit measure unless a green light is flashed for the city's freeway program.

The villain of the situation, as the highway groups—and even some transit advocates—see it, is Administrator C. Darwin Stolzenbach of the National Capital Transportation Agency.

The White House had reportedly tried to get Chairman Whitener to move on the bill and to get the Senate District Committee to hold hearings, but neither was budging. Chairman Whitener explained, "There is not much sense setting out on a collision course if the chances are good of

having our craft destroyed.” Meanwhile, Senators wanted to use a House-passed bill as the basis for their hearings.

Chairman Fallon’s Subcommittee on Roads was the heart of support for the freeways:

Fallon made it clear to a reporter that he regards completion of the freeway system here as vastly more important than a rail rapid transit system. If transit fails, it would be Stolzenbach’s own fault. [Eisen, Jack, “Subway Bill Derailed By Freeway Advocates,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 7, 1963]

Or, as the *Post* editors put it:

The political impasse is clear enough. Until the subway authorization is guaranteed, the road program will be blocked in the Administration. And until there is a guarantee of the road program, the subway bill will be blocked in Congress.

General Duke’s encouraging words suggested that if the impasse could not be broken until 1964, at least the intervening “time will have been well invested.” [“Hint of a Compromise,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 13, 1963]

Horsky had spoken with Chairman Whitener and Senator Bible about getting the transit bill moving, but they saw two major problems, namely the cost of the District portion of the plan and the opposition from the Committee on Public Works. The White House had suggested that they separate transit and freeways, but the politicians did not think such a divided plan, no matter how carefully drawn, would last through even 1 day of hearings. Chairman Whitener said, “I think it might be very helpful if the ad hoc committee made its recommendation. It would deflate the highway-transit fight, which is an exaggerated controversy in that we need both rail and highway systems.” [Bassett, Grace, “White House Prods For Transit Action,” *The Sunday Star*, September 8, 1963]

The city was, in the *Post*’s opinion, “paying the predictable price for the grievous political error made two years ago by Mr. Stolzenbach . . . who succeeding in elevating two projects, the Three Sisters Bridge and the Inner Loop’s North Leg, into symbols of the whole expressway system.” After the White House supported his views, “the partisans of the highway, convinced that the White House means to hold up the entire road construction program, are retaliating against the subway bill with vehemence and effect.” If the White House did not decide in favor of the freeways in the next few weeks, Congress would not act on the transit bill this year. Success in 1964 was even “less likely.” Failure to begin the transit program “would constitute an unmitigated misfortune to this city.” [“Symbolism and the Subway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 10, 1963]

A hint of compromise came from an unlikely source: Polly Shackleton. In brief testimony before the Senate District Subcommittee on September 25, she “offered the olive branch,” as the *Post* put it. On public witness day, she acknowledged that her committee had “opposed vigorously several Highway Department proposals because they involved wholesale destruction of homes, schools, churches, parks, and playgrounds.” Other groups shared the committee’s

“deep concern” about the impacts the freeways would have on “the thousands of families who would be uprooted.” Their combined voices had “been effective.” The East Leg Freeway had been shifted to the sparsely populated Anacostia River bank. Public agencies and private groups were attempting to increase the supply of low- and middle-income housing.

Her committee was “particularly gratified” by President Kennedy’s call for reexamination of the North Leg Freeway, the Three Sisters Bridge, and the associated segment of the Potomac River Freeway. “We are hopeful that the committee chaired by General Duke and representing the various Federal and District agencies involved will be able to come up with a solution which, unlike the Highway Department plans, will largely eliminate or at least minimize the loss of homes and destruction of neighborhoods and community facilities.”

Members of her committee were “much encouraged” by press accounts of the Policy Advisory Committee’s “completely new approach to the problem.” Because this new approach might help break the impasses, “I intend to propose to the Democratic central committee that we give careful and sympathetic study to the possibility, which has been suggested by General Duke, of utilizing tunnels under existing streets for freeway traffic, and await with interest further details of the plan.”

Briefly, she said her committee was “in favor generally of a center leg,” but not the current location. She urged the District to restudy the location “to eliminate what we believe to be entirely unnecessary destruction of homes and church and neighborhood facilities.” [District of Columbia Appropriations for 1964, Hearings on H.R. 7431 Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, pages 793-794]

The *Post* saw her brief testimony as suggesting that a truce was “rapidly taking form between the highway men and the subway men.” The Democratic Central Committee was, the editors suggested, dropping their campaign against the freeway segments, but had succeeded in focusing attention on the housing problem the bulldozers would cause:

Our future historians will find it odd that the city, in this time of great urgency, chose to waste a year in shrill wrangling over these particular projects. The Three Sisters Bridge has nothing whatever to do with either the future transit system or with relocation. The north leg of the Inner Loop will not be built in this decade.

The long debate was near a conclusion:

Washington can afford to build expressways where they do not cause a net reduction in the housing supply. Where houses must be knocked down, they must be replaced. On that firm ground the whole city can meet. [“A Negotiated Peace,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 27, 1963]

The *Star* referred to Shackleton’s statement as a “Ray of Hope” in an editorial, but added that it was too soon “to start tossing our hats in the air.” Nevertheless, her comments “offer strong hope that there may yet be a settlement of this nonsensical dispute.” Quoting several of her hopeful phrases, the editors did not want to underestimate “the job of reaching a ‘reasonable’

compromise.” Still, if the impasse could be settled “amicably,” the editorial said, “the chance for the Washington area to get to work on an equally essential rapid transit program will be increased immeasurably.” Perhaps, the editors mused, Mrs. Shackleton realized this:

If so, she is wiser than a number of others in Washington, who apparently would rather see the transit program go down the drain, too, than to see any major freeways built. [“Ray of Hope,” *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1963]

### **The Bobtail Plan**

Even as freeway advocates began to feel hopeful, NCTA’s rapid transit plan continued to lose momentum. Chalk continued to bash the plan. On October 9, the newly formed D.C. Committee for Balanced Transportation held a well-attended \$100-a-plate testimonial for Chalk in the banquet hall of the Shoreham Hotel. The committee’s invitation stated that the purpose was to recognize the “many accomplishments for the area’s mass transportation system” by Chalk and his D.C. Transit System. F. Joseph (Jiggs) Donohue, a former District Commissioner under President Truman and currently with the District Democratic Central Committee, had created the organization.

The *Star* referred to the committee’s name in quotes because it was organized by D.C. Transit System’s advertising agency. In the *Post*, Jack Eisen added, “So loaded is Donohue’s letterhead with the names of Chalk colleagues and business associates that no great mental effort is needed for a quick assumption that Chalk is giving himself a party.” He added that the committee’s address, where guests were to send their checks, was in the building housing the headquarters of AAA, which also opposed the rail transit plan.

In brief remarks, Chalk recommended that NCTA’s transit and highway program be turned over to established agencies and his private company. At present, NCTA’s proposal was impractical. The agency had proposed halting highway projects without consulting highway officials, and developed transit proposals without consulting privately owned bus companies.

Donohue, an attorney who had lived in the District for 45 years, said his committee supported the Three Sisters Bridge and the rest of the District’s planned freeway system. He said the committee would take a position on NCTA’s transit proposal at a later date. [Eisen, Jack, “‘Balanced Transportation’ Interests Slate \$100-a-Plate Dinner for Chalk,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 29, 1963; “Chalk at Testimonial Hits Transit, Road Plans,” *The Evening Star*, October 10, 1963]

While Chalk was enjoying the testimonial, Chairman Whitener had still not advanced a transit bill for review by the subcommittee. At one point, he suggested the problem was that as a member of the Judiciary Committee, he was deeply involved in the committee’s consideration of the Kennedy Administration’s Civil Rights Act of 1963. As an opponent of the bill, he was attending as many as three committee meetings a week on the subject. He thought the next step in the transit bill would be hearings in the Senate by the Bible subcommittee, but Senator Bible indicated he was waiting for the House to act. [“Civil Rights Debate Perils Subway Bill,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 15, 1963]

While continuing his efforts to halt the Civil Rights Act, Chairman Whitener had been considering the transit measure. He had concluded that the NCTA plan could never pass the House in view of its high cost. He also was concerned by opposition from the highway forces on the Subcommittee on Roads. Further, he was concerned that Stolzenbach had been unable to rally support in Maryland and Virginia.

According to Professor Schrag, Chairman Whitener recalled Louis Justement's suggestion during the hearings that, "I would much rather start with the body and have the downtown distribution system to which you could always add arms." On October 16, the chairman surprised subcommittee members by summoning them for a meeting on October 23 to consider a scaled down transit system. Jack Eisen described it in the *Post*:

The network omits most long hauls into the suburbs, with two lines stopped just inside Maryland and Virginia. Silver Spring would be served, but not Bethesda. Other suburban extensions would come later.

As revised, the system would entail 23.3 miles of track costing nearly \$401 million, contrasted with the 83 miles costing \$793 million proposed last November by the National Capital Transportation Agency.

Instead of a subway loop encircling the Mall with lines crossing at 12<sup>th</sup> and G sts, nw., the reduced system would be built around a single downtown subway along G st.

Its general shape would be a lopsided X, with lines radiating to Anacostia, Silver Spring-Woodside, Van Ness st., and Connecticut ave. nw. and Pentagon City. Short branches would go to the Rosslyn gateway to Arlington and to 17<sup>th</sup> st. and Columbia rd. nw.

. . . . The new plan contemplates an investment of \$141.7 million and borrowing of \$259 million.

From the start, the proposed network was known as the "bobtail" system. Eisen pointed out that it "bears a strong similarity to the total network proposed by the Mass Transportation Survey of 1959."

Chairman Whitener said he worked out the system following talks with NCTA and "the Public Works Committee and the highway people." The White House, which had been NCTA's strongest backer, supported the plan. The *Star* reported that, "Specifically, the proposal by Mr. Whitener has the strong indorsement of Charles A. Horsky . . . ."

The bobtail plan was silent on highway routes and bridges, a feature the chairman hoped would help it advance on the House floor. He said there would be "no elimination of needed outlying highways, at least." [Eisen, Jack, "Shorter Subway System Here Weighed," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 17, 1963; Eastman, Sam, "White House Backs Shorter Rail Plan," *The Evening Star*, October 17, 1963; Schrag, pages 57-58]

The early reaction to the bobtail plan was largely favorable. Edwin Seeger of NCTA, which had drafted the bobtail plan at Chairman Whitener's request, said officials were satisfied with the

abbreviated plan because it might lead to faster congressional action. Engineer Commissioner Duke said the District commissioners had endorsed the original NCTA plan, but liked the bobtail plan even better, in part because it might help resolve the freeway controversies. John Kohl of the Housing and Home Finance Agency also endorsed the bobtail plan, saying the proposals “seem to be consistent with the long-range plan” for the area. The Metropolitan Area Highway Users Conference endorsed the plan as “far more realistic” than the original NCTA proposal, telling Chairman Whitener in a letter that, “the proposal is worthy of serious consideration, but it must be kept in mind that the freeway program is still stalled.”

The *Star* concluded that the plan “makes good sense,” especially since the broader NCTA plan “does not have a chance of passing this year.” [From *The Evening Star*, “Scaled-Down Transit Plan Meets Favor” (October 18, 1963), “Transit-State One” (October 18, 1963), “Highway Users Back New Transit Proposal (October 20, 1963), and “Transit Aide Indorses 23.3-Mile Rail System” (October 21, 1963); “Subway Plan Hailed as ‘Realistic,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 20, 1963]

On October 23, the District Subcommittee met in executive session to consider the new plan. The chairman was hoping for a quick okay, but members anticipated the questions that would be raised during floor consideration – and they wanted answers the chairman did not have. In particular, they wanted to be sure the financing plan for the bobtail system was sound.

Instead of voting for the plan, the subcommittee decided to ask more than 20 government agencies and organizations, including civic, transportation, labor, and special interest groups, to review and comment on it by November 12. The request made clear that the subcommittee was looking for comments on the financial details and estimates that were made public only on the day of the meeting. Lee Flor summarized the plan:

According to the single financial table made public today, here is how the system would be financed and constructed:

The transportation agency would need \$120 million in Federal grants, plus \$21.7 million from the District, by 1967. The financial table shows no provision for repayment of these funds.

Then between 1967 and 1973, the transportation agency of the Federal Treasury would issue the \$310 million in Federally guaranteed bonds to pay for construction.

As Jack Eisen put it, “Washington’s bobtailed subway bill began to nose off its congressional sidetrack yesterday at the speed of a bus caught in a traffic jam.” He added that the chairman had already received one response without even asking for it. Chalk called the bobtail plan “wasteful” and “archaic,” reiterating his view that the private sector should build and run the subway. According to Eisen, Whitener replied with a “polite thank you.” [Flor, Lee, “Rail Transit Comment Asked of 20 Agencies,” *The Evening Star*, October 24, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “Congress Calling for Citizens’ Views on Budgeting Sidetracked Subway Bill,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 24, 1963]

Chairman Whitener discussed the bobtail plan on television station WTTG-TV's "Community Dialogue" program on October 27. He said highway and transit supporters should "fall in line" with the bobtail plan "because of the great need of some solution for our traffic and transportation problems here in the District." He added, "Certainly those who commute daily should look forward with great pleasure to having a rapid transit system." He anticipated that the bill would pass the House before adjournment. The Senate District Committee, he predicted, would then "move with dispatch" to complete Senate work on the bill.

Polly Shackleton, also on the program, told viewers, "We could never build enough highways to accommodate all the commuters and all the people who use them." Therefore, it was "absolutely imperative to get started on a rail rapid transit system in order to accommodate thousands of commuters . . . ."

Executive Director Delmer Ison of the transit commission raised a concern relating to the fact that the current bus system had 640 downtown stops while the bobtail rail system would have only 14 stops. He said the transit commission had "considerable doubt as to whether 14 stops can adequately replace 640 stops." ["Subway Transit Action Seen Soon in House," *The Evening Star*, October 28, 1963]

The White House endorsed the plan in a November 4 letter from Phillip S. Hughes, Assistant Director for Legislative Reference, Bureau of the Budget. Hughes wrote:

Since the proposed schedule for the longer transit regional development program extended in any event over the period 1964-73, it would not be inappropriate for the Congress at this time to authorize construction of parts of that program which are consistent with, and at the same time essential elements of, the longer range regional development plan. Indeed, the knowledge gained in the development of the limited system will provide factual data upon which to base future decisions to expand the system into the regional transit program originally proposed by the Agency.

Hughes observed that the proposed bill "would not interfere with negotiations currently underway looking to the establishment of a regional compact agency with authority for development and administration of a regional transportation program."

The White House continued to believe the original NCTA plan was "the most desirable transit system from the standpoint of service, downtown distribution, and maximum contribution to a balanced regional transportation system." Any shorter-range program should be advanced with the understanding that a large plan was awaiting implementation. However, Hughes concluded:

The system outlined in H.R. 8929 is the essential core of a long-range transit development program and is in line with recognized broad regional developmental objectives. Accordingly, its enactment would be consistent with the administration's objectives.

Also on November 4, Commissioner Tobriner wrote to Chairman McMillan of the District Committee on behalf of the District commissioners. Development of mass transit facilities was

“a critical need,” Tobriner wrote. After years of intensive study, the time had come for “positive action,” with an early start “a matter of vital concern to the District, as well as to the Federal Government.”

Tobriner commented that the original NCTA plan called for 25 miles of rail-transit facilities in the District, with a local contribution of \$21.7 million. The bobtail plan called for only 16.5 miles of rail-transit facilities, but the District’s contribution was the same amount as for the larger system:

Thus, in the substituted version, the taxpayers of the District contribute the same sum for a reduced rapid transit system. Nevertheless, the Commissioners are confident that this contribution is a reasonable one. However, the Commissioners are hopeful that no additional contribution beyond the contemplated \$27.1 million will be required of the District in the event that the system is subsequently expanded to that originally planned.

In view of the serious need to improve mass transportation facilities in the District, the Commissioners recommend approval of H.R. 8929.

The District subcommittee published the more than 50 comments received on the bobtail legislation in: Transportation Program for the National Capital Region (Supplement to Hearings before Subcommittee No. 6 of the Committee on the District of Columbia, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (Hughes letter, pages 16-17, Tobriner letter 18-19).

On November 13, the Whitener subcommittee approved the bill authorizing the bobtail plan. The chairman told reporters after the closed session that the members approved the plan without controversy. He added, “It’s fair to say that there are some members who wanted to approve the 83-mile system.” However, as Representative Broyhill told reporters, the bobtail plan was “all we thought we could sell to Congress.” He was satisfied that the bobtail plan would not harm the private bus companies with lines into Maryland and Virginia because passengers would have to use the buses to reach the rail system.

The House District Committee approved the bill authorizing the bobtail plan on December 5, 1963, by an 11-2 vote. The committee adopted only one amendment, requested by Architect of the Capitol Stewart. The amendment provided that any construction through the Capitol grounds would be prohibited unless approved by the Congressional Commission for Extension of the U.S. Capitol.

Representatives Abraham J. Multer (D-NY) and Richard L. Roudebush (R-In.) were the negative votes. The committee had rejected Representative Multer’s two amendments. One, in line with D.C. Transit System’s views, would have required that private enterprise build and operate the transit network. The other amendment would have protected labor interests. Representative Broyhill said committee members thought those issues should not be written into a bill that merely authorizes the system. [Eastman, Sam, “D.C. Subway Bill Advances,” *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1963; Carper, Elsie, “House Unit Approves D.C. Subway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 6, 1963]



The committee issued a report on the bill on December 6. The report emphasized the urgency of the need:

The National Capital region faces a transportation crisis. Its streets and highways are burdened with ever-increasing volumes of traffic creating a congestion problem that has grave consequences for the District and the suburbs alike. Traffic congestion limits mobility within the District and the region. It results in excessive amounts of premium land, particularly in downtown Washington, being used for surface parking facilities. The daily crush of commuters moving between their homes and places of employment entails costly losses in time and money . . . .

There is universal agreement that it is impossible to meet this growing demand for transportation, or to ease today's traffic problems, by means of highways alone . . . . In other words, the people of the National Capital region must be provided a real choice between using public transportation, or using their private automobiles for trips to and from their places of employment.

Commuters did not have that choice "in any meaningful sense" because of the inadequacies of bus service:

The conclusion is inescapable that if Washington is to achieve a higher percentage of public transportation – as it must do if the traffic congestion problem is to be solved – nothing short of a rail rapid transit system operating in subway and on exclusive rights-of-way can do the job. [Transit Development Program for the National Capital Region, U.S. House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 1005 to accompany H.R. 8929, December 6, 1963, pages 7-8]

The report also addressed union concerns. Unions wanted the bill to make clear that the Davis-Bacon Act, approved in the 1930s to ensure prevailing wages, applied to construction of the system. Unions also wanted the bill to establish a labor relations policy for employees after the system began operating. Because the Davis-Bacon Act applied to every contract with Federal funds exceeding \$2,000, the report said that since NCTA was a Federal Agency, the committee concluded that explicitly applying the law to the project was unnecessary.

As for the second issue, the bill provided for construction, but left open whether the system would be operated by NCTA, another Federal Agency, or an agency created by compact among local jurisdictions. With operations possibly not beginning until 1970, "the proposal for immediate establishment of a labor relations policy is premature." Further, the provision of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 on labor relations remained in effect. Under the provision, NCTA could not establish a labor relations policy until Congress established a policy on the right to organize, to bargain collectively, to arbitrate disputes, and safeguard job rights. This provision, in the committee's view, "provides adequate protection for transit workers during the construction phase." [pages 14-15]

On the day before the House was to consider the bill, opposition forces made their plans clear. Chalk accused the White House's District advisor, Horsky, of plotting to put D.C. Transit System

out of business. Horsky, according to Chalk, had applied “terrific pressure” behind the bill. Chalk said he spoke with Horsky on December 6 to ask if private enterprise would be allowed to operate the system. Horsky provided only “evasive answers.”

Chalk sent a night telegram to all 435 Representatives saying the legislation “provides for a minimum addition of \$400 million to the national debt to build an outmoded, stopgap subway system for the District of Columbia with no provision protecting private enterprise against public operation.” The bill would “saddle the government with public ownership of this system and create a governmental Frankenstein without any experience in the transit field to run it.” Chalk urged the House to amend the bill to “provide for experienced private operation by D.C. Transit System, Inc., pursuant to the act of Congress granting its franchise.” [Flor, Lee, “D.C. Transit’s Head Attacks City Rail Plan,” *The Sunday Star*, December 8, 1963]

As debate began on December 9, Chalk arrived in the House gallery around noon. “I’m very confident it will go my way,” he told reporters.

Meanwhile, Representative Multer, who represented a district in New York City, was mapping out his strategy for the floor debate. He intended to introduce his two rejected amendments during the debate. The National Transit Workers Union was canvassing House members urging them to reject the bill. The union also sent telegrams to all Representatives.

Nevertheless, Chairman Whitener was cautiously optimistic. “I don’t think it’s in the bag, but I could see no reason why we shouldn’t go on and make our decision. I hope it will be favorable.” [“House Fight on Subway Mapped Out by Multer,” *The Evening Star*, December 9, 1963]

*Post* editors were worried about the labor issues, which posed the “most immediate danger to the bill.” The editors referred to the 1960 Act’s provision calling on Congress to establish a labor relations policy:

If the unions force a debate now on labor standards, they will jeopardize the whole system upon which their members’ future jobs depend. They will only invite the opponents of the subway to strike up an alliance with the antagonists of organized labor.

If the unions were wise, they would “wholeheartedly support” the bill now and defer subsidiary issues such as labor relations “until the system with its promise of jobs is securely authorized.”

After 5 years of planning, the bill offered an alternative to sprawl and “unimaginable traffic congestion everywhere.” The editorial concluded that, “A vote for this bill is a vote for a more comfortable and convenient life for the city’s people.” [“Subway and Sanity,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 9, 1963]

## **The House Debates the Bobtail Plan**

On the House floor, Chairman Whitener asked that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole and that debate be limited to 2 hours and divided equally between Representative Broyhill and himself.

The chairman began by saying he had heard a great deal of discussion of the bill already and had “observed there is a great deal of misunderstanding about some of the content of this legislation, as well as the effect of some of the amendments which I understand will be offered.” He discussed the area’s congestion and the long battle to achieve balance among highways and transit. The bill, he said, called for a total Federal contribution of \$120 million compared with Federal expenditures of about \$75 million a year on highway construction in the region. Considering all the highways the area’s highway departments want to build in the absence of a transit system, “and that these additional highways still won’t provide the answer, it seems clear to me that the proposed Federal contribution to the rapid transit system is entirely reasonable.”

He emphasized that this bill was completely separate from the Urban Transportation Act of 1963, still pending in Congress. That bill created a national program, while the present bill was limited to the Washington area. Without Federal involvement, the District would never build a subway or the extended rail rapid transit system:

I, for one, consider the national mass transit bill to raise issues of Federal financial and administrative involvement in local matters that are completely unrelated to the issue at hand. In contrast, under the Constitution, the Federal Government is very deeply involved in the affairs of the Nation’s Capital, for these affairs were rightly considered by the framers of the Constitution to be matters of national concern.

Therefore, he supported the present bill for the Washington area while the national bill remained to be decided on its merits later.

In closing his opening statement, he addressed the two issues that had caused the most concern in recent days. First was the proposal to amend the bill to allow private enterprise to construct and operate the rapid transit system. A proposed project of this magnitude “requires the constant scrutiny of the Congress,” a goal that could best be achieved by allowing a Federal Agency, namely NCTA, to build it. By the time the system becomes operational in 4 or 5 years, “Congress will have ample opportunity to consider the question of how the system should be operated.” He did not see any reason to delay construction while Congress debated how the system will be operated.

Second was the proposal to include “a rather complicated labor relations policy” in the bill. He pointed out that in passing the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, Congress had considered a similar provision. “Congress included in the act a provision stating in the clearest of terms that before an operation could begin, Congress would enact a bill establishing such a labor relations policy.” The thinking at the time was that such a policy would be premature until Congress decided what entity would operate the system. In the meantime, labor is fully protected throughout construction by the 1960 Act and other existing Federal laws.

During the 10 years that Congress had been considering transit options for the area, “the very problem that this program is designed to solve . . . has grown worse and worse. The time for action to solve the problem has arrived, if it is not in fact overdue.” [Transit Development Program for the National Capital Region, *Congressional Record-House*, December 9, 1963, pages 23854-23855]

Representative Broyhill, the ranking Republican on the House District Committee, told his colleagues that he considered the bill “absolutely essential to the health, well-being, and beauty of our Nation’s Capital.” It involved bringing “a major innovation” to the area in the form of “a modern, high-speed, high-capacity rail rapid transit system.” He discussed the history leading to this bill, including the Mass Transportation Survey and the 1960 Act.

He assured his colleagues that the Federal cost for the bill’s bobtail plan would be \$120 million, while the District’s share would be \$21.7 million:

The balance of \$258.9 million plus interest requirements during construction will be repaid out of the revenues of the system. It is anticipated that the system will repay its bonded debt over a period of 36 years, and that we may reasonably expect a refunding of government grants during later years.

These projections were based on a 25-cent base fare within the 10-mile square of the original District of Columbia and a maximum of 55 cents to the farthest point, which was Bowie, Maryland.

The bill left “many important questions unanswered.” It was designed to begin construction of needed facilities, “a time-consuming proposition.” With construction underway, additional legislation would be introduced to authorize bond financing and determine how the system would be operated. The operational issue involved “complex questions concerning the nature of the organization which is to control and operate the system, the rights of the private transportation companies that are presently serving the region, labor relations, and many others.” These questions needed to be answered, but the answers can come after construction is underway.

Representative Charles R. Jonas (R-NC) said he was undecided about the bill, but wanted to know why the taxpayers of every State should pay 30 percent of the cost of the system while District residents paid only 5 percent. Representative Broyhill replied that the percentages were based on the national urban transit bill under consideration in Congress, where the Federal Government would contribute two-thirds of the cost of Federal-aid transit projects. Further, the taxing authority of the District was limited. “We could tax the District of Columbia to a point of diminishing returns but this would accomplish no useful purpose.” He added, “I do not think we can shirk our responsibility to see that the Nation’s Capital is properly financed or properly run.” [pages 23856-23857]

Representative B. F. Sisk (D-Ca.), a member of the House District Committee, discussed the importance of the bill, which would get construction underway:

In the meantime the rights of the private transportation companies in the area and the interests of my good friends in the labor movement will be undisturbed. In fact . . . the bill by providing new jobs here . . . will be a very great help to labor.

Transit labor's concerns would be met before operation began, while the 1960 Act expressly prohibits NCTA from acquiring "facilities, property, or rights-of-way of private motorbus companies" and operate buses or similar motor vehicles "or make agreements for the provision of motorbus service competitive with private transit companies." While construction was underway, Congress would decide whether the system would be operated by a public agency or private company. In closing, he said, "Transportation relief in Washington can come about only if the Federal Government commits itself to the task and takes the first step." [pages 23857-23859]

Representative Roudebush said that he had voted against the bill in committee. "For the life of me I am unable to differentiate between a system of this type as proposed by this legislation and those systems to be proposed in the so-called mass transportation legislation." He intended to oppose the national legislation and the current bill for the Washington area. He questioned the projection that the bobtail rapid transit system would pay for itself. "What if this curtailed system does not pay off financially." He continued:

It looks to me as though the Federal Government will not only lose its \$121 million contribution but will be saddled with [the] requirement that we make good the \$258.9 million in bonds and possibly be on the hook for the \$21.7 million for the District contribution.

He was opposed not just to the Washington plan but to Federal involvement in mass transit anywhere in the country "if the Federal Government is required to pay for it." He planned to support the planned motion to recommit the bill to committee. [page 23859]

Representative William B. Widnall (R-NJ) said it was time "to start talking sense." He was referring to "the apparently useless debate over the so-called highway transit issue." He used the phrase "so-called" because everybody agreed the area needed its Interstate highways as soon as possible and felt the same way about the rapid transit system. Only two portions of the Interstate System were in doubt, but they were "temporarily deferred to see if there is not a way to construct them so as to avoid injury to parklands and undue displacement of people." He understood that rapid progress was being made and that President Johnson would soon announce the results.

Constructing the rapid transit system was essential. "Indeed, the usefulness of the Interstate Highway System depends to a very large extent on the existence of a companion rapid transit system." He was concerned that without the transit system, the area's Interstate highways "will suffer the fate of so many other urban freeways around the country which are intolerably congested with automobiles almost from the moment the ribbon is cut." Congress owed it to the citizens of the Nation's Capital to "maintain an efficient transportation system." He would vote for the bill. [page 23860]

Representative Multer discussed his objections to the bill. First, he thought Congress should start with the highest District priorities. If Congress had only \$20 million to spend in the District, spending it on “education and educational facilities” should come first. As for the \$400 million cost of the bobtail system, anyone reading the bill will “find this is a blank check.” The bill does not limit how much NCTA will spend, but it does guarantee that whether the money comes from the Federal Government or the District, “every dollar will be Government money or Government guaranteed.”

Second, the bill “completely ignores the rights of labor.” As a member of the Committee on Banking and Currency, he was “a little amused by the irony” that the same people who often accused him “of driving private enterprise out of our system . . . and replacing it with Government” were now “advocating public ownership and operation of a new transit system in the District of Columbia.”

Third, “the planners who came in with the plan are utterly incompetent as planners, and if they are incompetent as planners, they are more incompetent as builders and operators of a subway system.” He explained this charge by saying that the best way to relieve congestion in the center city was to provide parking lots in the suburbs so people can leave their cars and take transit into the city, “as we do in New York City”:

These planners are going to compound the difficulty by building a subway first, the experimental part right in the heart of the city. How are you going to get there except by bringing the automobiles to the heart of the city in order to use the subway? That is why I say the planners were incompetent.

The bill should be returned to committee to develop “a proper plan . . . so that we can get a rapid transit system that will do the job.”

Representative Multer also took exception to a colloquy between Chairman Whitener and Representative Horton about whether anyone had testified during subcommittee hearings that private interests would construct the subway system. The chairman had replied, “I remember no such testimony.” Representative Multer pointed out that the supplemental hearing record included proposals by private enterprise to build the transit network. “They tell you they can do a job of improving transportation in the District of Columbia by spending \$103 million of their own money.” They also said that after doing so, they would “provide for a realistic test project, a rail rapid transportation system, in an area most suitable for such a system.”

The Congressman was referring to a letter dated October 31, 1963, that Chalk submitted to Chairman McMillan. Chalk said that “even to the untrained eye,” the only difference between the NCTA and bobtail plans was that “the suburban arteries, originally declared to be vital, have been eliminated.” The result was “an otherwise impractical and inadequate system is rendered even more impractical and inadequate.” He proposed the construction of 160 additional miles of express busways on separate lanes, reserved for buses during peak periods, along with a minibus service in the downtown area, all for \$103 million. Once that service was in operation, he would test the Lockheed monorail technology on 5 miles of elevated, suspended railway – all before the

area spent \$1 billion on a subway system. (Supplement to Hearings before Subcommittee No. 6 of the Committee on the District of Columbia, pages 41-44]

Representative Multer summarized his point by saying the job “must be done” to provide transit in the Washington area, but “whenever private enterprise can do the job, the Government should not do it.” He concluded:

Sure you have a lot of clamor from all around the city and all the agencies to do something about transit. I want to do it now, but I want to do it correctly.

Chairman Whitener pointed out that Chalk had sent a telegram to every member of the House “in which he said the proposal was a proposal of an outmoded system, but he wound up saying he wanted to operate it.” Representative Multer said he had not seen it, but would offer an amendment that would invite D.C. Transit System or anyone else in the private sector to take over the job. [pages 23860-23861]

Representative Mathias talked about the urgency of getting started:

We have reserved to the Congress virtually all of the authority contemplated by the Constitution to control practically everything that happens within the District of Columbia. With that authority goes responsibility. It is that responsibility which we are being called upon to discharge today.

He planned to vote for the bill “because it is a sheer necessity.”

Representative Frank T. Bow (R-Oh.) suggested to Representative Mathias that much of the congestion could be relieved if federal agencies were dispersed out of the Washington area instead of concentrating them in the District. Representative Mathias replied that the reason so many agencies are located in the Washington area is that the District of Columbia is the seat of the national government designated under the Constitution. Nevertheless, Representative Mathias said, “90 percent of the Federal Government employees today are located in places other than the Washington metropolitan area.” He added that with the expected population increases over the next 30 years, “we have to make an urgent decision now.” [page 23862]

Representative Alvin E. O’Konski (R-Wi.) wanted to put the bill in “its true perspective.” The Senate, he said, had passed the Urban Mass Transportation Act authorizing grants and loans totaling \$325 million. The House, “in its wisdom,” had refused to take up the bill. And yet:

Here you have a bill that calls upon the taxpayers of the United States of America to underwrite in one way or another \$406 million for just one little speck on the map of the United States; namely, the District of Columbia.

True, the District would contribute \$22 million, but “when the District of Columbia in its great feeling of good will says that they will donate \$22 million they will just come to us and ask for \$22 million of the taxpayers’ money as that share because they are using that money for this purpose.”

He also questioned the revenue estimates that assured repayment of the Federal contribution and payment of expenses out of the farebox. Everyone knew that every transit system in the country is “operating in the red.” Moreover, the fact that the bill calls for the bonds to be guaranteed by the Federal Government “is an admission of the fact that the bonds could not be sold on the open market; nobody would buy a dollar’s worth” otherwise.

The House had recent experience with such revenue projections in the congressional experience with the District Stadium. “The stadium is operating at a deficit, the bonds are in default, and the Government which guaranteed those bonds . . . are paying off those bonds.”

He added that no one should think “that I am naïve enough to swallow the notion that this \$259 million is going to be paid back.” In his 22 years in the House, he had never seen a single proposal where a revenue-proposal involving Federal funds resulted in the Federal Government recouping “any of its money.”

And this bobtail plan is just a start. “This is just the first bite, my friends, and remember that, when I propose a motion to recommit the bill back to the District Committee for further study.” [pages 23862-23863]

Representative Everett G. Burkholter (D-Ca.), representing a district based in Los Angeles County, said that no matter how many city streets, highways, and freeways are built, “that is not the answer to the traffic problems in the urbanized cities today.” People suggest that private enterprise would become interested in mass transportation given that over 200 communities have populations over 50,000 people. However, all statistics and reports proved that mass transportation pays its own way, with public subsidy, in only three cities. They are Cleveland, San Diego, and Chicago, “and some of them are going in the red, I have been told recently.” That was why private enterprise was not interested in financing urban mass transportation.

The number of vehicles on the roads must be reduced:

Therefore, you are going to have to go overhead or underground by either subway or elevated, such as the monorail, or any kind of mass transportation, as long as it is elevated or underground. You are going to have to provide off-street parking facilities in all of the urbanized cities.

In sum, experts said let private industry do the job; no need for public funds. “We have been talking about that for 25 or 30 years, but we are no further ahead than at the beginning.” It was time to pass this bill for the Washington area. [page 23863]

Representative Carlton R. Sickles (D-Md.) expressed concern that one of the problems with NCTA was its inadequate coordination with local jurisdictions. He wanted to be sure that once the bobtail plan was underway, NCTA would coordinate with Maryland and Virginia before decisionmaking.

Regarding the labor issue, local jurisdictions were in negotiation on an interstate compact agency for operating the transit system. As a member of Maryland’s negotiating team, Representative Sickles could tell his colleagues that, “We are just at the point of considering the issue of the



labor policy with respect to the operational employees of the system.” The negotiators would be helped greatly if they knew the congressional policy. He had reviewed the labor policy proposed in 1960, “and for the life of me, I cannot see the reason for the delay in their consideration.” His constituents who worked for the transit company were “concerned, deeply concerned, about their seniority rights, and pension benefits, and they are concerned now.” He intended to vote in support of the labor amendment. [page 23765]

Representative Harsha questioned passenger predictions based on surveys that he considered inadequate. Only 2,005 commuters had been surveyed. They had been asked:

Considering bus and rail vehicles, with no difference in cost, time, or convenience, which would you prefer?

The Congressman emphasized the word “convenience” because the bobtail system would be less convenient than NCTA’s original system, if only because of needed transfers or having to drive somewhere, park, and board a transit vehicle. “Now, in this age of convenience, this is not equivalent to the convenience of a commuter’s automobile.” As a result, patronage would decline, meaning that the financing plan is not sound – “and the taxpayers have to subsidize the program.” He wondered how anyone could vote for this bill but against the national bill. He urged the House to reject the bill. [pages 23865-23866]

The time had come for amendments. First was Representative Multer’s amendment prohibiting NCTA from beginning construction until it had “given private enterprise at least 6 months to submit offers to build, own and/or operate a transit system.” Similarly, once the system is built, NCTA must give private enterprise the opportunity to operate it.

Representative Gross wanted to know if the amendment meant that private enterprise would pay for the system. Representative Multer replied, “This is the intent of my amendment,” adding:

I have in mind we have a mass transportation bill pending in the Rules Committee which calls for money for the entire country, grants and loans, including the District of Columbia. If private industry comes forward after that bill is enacted into law, and is law, we should not exclude private enterprise from coming in and qualifying if they can.

Chairman Whitener asked if Representative Multer was referring to D.C. Transit System, which the chairman indicated “is now receiving substantial subsidies from the Federal and District taxpayers.” Representative Multer denied he was referring to the company, but said the company did not receive a subsidy. “They get a certain tax exemption if their net income does not give them a 6-percent return. They have never yet earned that 6 percent. They get no subsidy from the Government.” He urged adoption of his amendment.

The chairman admitted that a certain aspect of the amendment appealed to him since “I am a strong advocate of private enterprise and an opponent of excessive Government intervention.” He continued:

But the hard, cold fact is that no private enterprise in the 7 or 8 days of the hearings we had appeared to talk on this situation here in the District of Columbia.

They knew, he said, “it is not feasible.” A private operator would have trouble with financing and acquiring right-of-way. He added that Representative Multer is fully familiar with the New York City subway and, therefore, “knows that no private operator could operate that system nor could they have built it originally.” He recommended the House defeat the amendment.

The House agreed to the amendment, 82 to 37.

Representative Multer offered his lengthy amendment containing labor provisions. He stated that the AFL-CIO prepared the amendment, but it had been rejected by the subcommittee and the committee:

Mr. Chairman, this amendment will preserve for the workers of the District of Columbia the right to bargain but not to strike. It will preserve for them the right to bargain as to wages, fringe benefits, and all of the other things that a worker should be entitled to bargain for. It contains this further provision that in any dispute—and I emphasize “any dispute”—the matter must be submitted to arbitration and the determination of the arbitrators is final and binding on all concerned.

The amendment, if adopted, would affect what would happen after the system is built, but to those who suggested waiting until then to consider the amendment as provided for in the 1960 Act, he said, “it also goes to what will happen the day after this bill is enacted into law. It will apply to anybody and everybody who is working in connection with the construction of this system.” True, the Davis-Bacon Act guarantees construction workers will be paid the prevailing wage. But beyond the prevailing wage, the amendment would “guarantee to them the fringe benefits and also the right to go in and bargain and present their grievances and obtain whatever remedy they may be entitled to.”

Representative Charles A. Halleck (R-In.) asked if the amendment provided for compulsory arbitration. Representative Multer replied that he did not “want to quibble about words.” If after negotiating in good faith, the sides could not agree, “they must submit to arbitration.” Arbitrators appointed by both sides would listen to their arguments and make a determination that would be “binding on both sides.” That, he added, is what the unions recommended for this bill.

Mr. Halleck. If the gentleman will yield further, is not that compulsory arbitration?  
Mr. Multer. I suppose it is.

After some further questions and discussion of the amendment, the House rejected it, with 61 votes for and 91 opposed.

Representative Barratt O’Hara (D-Ill.), a journalist, editor, and commentator in Chicago, introduced an amendment that would prohibit the acquisition of any occupied home until the residents had been relocated. The House rejected the amendment.

With debate and consideration of amendments concluded, Chairman Whitener called for a vote on the bill. Before that vote could take place, Representative O’Konski offered a motion to

recommit the bill to committee. The House voted in favor of the amendment to recommit the bill, 278 to 76. [pages 23872-23873]

After 4 hours of debate, the House, in this way, rejected the bobtail plan and the bill to implement it.

### **In the Aftermath**

After the House overwhelmingly defeated the bobtail plan, Commissioner Tobriner was bitter:

I say a pox on both their houses. One thing is certain, unless the transportation problem is solved and effectuated shortly, the city and its environs face a dismal future.

He added:

I am not biased in favor of subways or highways but I am definitely biased in favor of the people of the District and surrounding area having adequate transportation to and from their homes and places of employment in vehicles of their choice at costs commensurate with their means and with minimal dislocation of homes and businesses.

The highway work currently authorized or shortly to be, must continue.

He was particularly angry at NCTA:

The arrogant, unilateral approach of NCTA to this problem has done much to create the impasse which, if no solution is found, will doom the city's economic future.

What was needed, he said, was a presidential commission consisting of Members of Congress, representatives of the District and surrounding jurisdictions, citizens, governmental, business and labor groups. With support from a technical advisory group, the commission would be directed to reach decisions by a firm deadline.

Horsky, the White House aide who had strongly supported the bobtail plan, discussed options with Chairman Whitener, who was "not at all optimistic." If the \$400 million plan was too expensive for the House, he doubted a less costly plan could be developed that would be economically feasible.

Stolzenbach, who had watched the debate from the House gallery, told reporters he was "quite disappointed," but the "basic idea is sound. We've got to keep going." He remained determined:

I didn't become administrator of the National Capital Transportation Agency to preside over its dissolution. I presume this is not the last word of Congress."

NCTA's staff was determined to find out why the House vote as it did:

Part of the opposition, they found, resulted from complaints by the AFL-CIO that federal operation of transit would deny labor unions either binding arbitration or a right to strike, leaving them in an even worse position than under the Wolfsons [Chalk's predecessors in

operating the District's bus service]. But the real reason for recommitment [sic, to the District Committee] was that the House as a whole had paid little attention, and many members had no idea what the vote was about. When Deputy Administrator Quenstedt talked to some congressmen and their staffs, they assured him that the vote for recommitment had been made out of caution, confusion, and a reluctance to make a big decision near the end of a session. Try again, they said.

That was fine as a legislative strategy, but what was the NCTA staff to do? The agency was humbled by its initial defeat. Stolzenbach morosely canceled his earlier request for tens of millions of dollars for land acquisition and construction. More seriously, the agency's staff was cut in half. [Thomas] Deen left for a consulting job, leaving transportation planning in the hands of William Herman, who was trained in finance, not engineering. [Schrag, pages 58-59]

By contrast, Chalk was delighted. "The House acted wisely," he said. "The vote indicated that Congress felt the Stolzenbach-Horsky plan is not the right plan." In addition, he said, the House had "reasserted the right of private enterprise. Stolzenbach was discredited—or, at least, his plan is discredited."

Engineer Commissioner Duke was "very disappointed. I was hopeful . . . . That short version seemed to fit in with the balanced system we have all been trying to arrive at." He was not sure what the next step was. "The District really needed it," he said, but "we'll have to withdraw and regroup."

Walter Bierwagen, the local union chief, had been disappointed when the House rejected the labor policy. Although defeat of the bill would cost union jobs in the area, he said, "Without the labor guarantees, I'd rather the bill was rejected."

Jack Eisen in the *Post* and Grace Bassett in the *Star* analyzed the debate to determine how the vote ended up so lopsided. Eisen wrote:

There was no clear pattern in the House debate. Opponents attacked the cost, expressed doubt that its financing plan was workable and said Government decentralization would be preferable to paying for rapid transit.

One thing surprised him. "Washington's noisy freeways-transit dispute was hardly mentioned."

Bassett said of the "stunning" defeat:

Administration planners could calculate in adverse votes the cost of failing to compromise their differences with business, labor and some suburban jurisdictions. The most perfect plans could not have convinced the House yesterday to accept a \$400 million network opposed by three such politically potent factions.

Opposition to the bill teamed such unlikely allies as pro-labor Representative Roosevelt, Democrat of California, with anti-spending Republican Gross of Iowa, and Democrat

Multer of New York, a spokesman for small business, with Judge Smith of Virginia, guardian of suburban independence.

They discussed turning points. One such event was a quorum call requested by Representative Harsha just before Representative Roudebush spoke. With only 69 Representatives responding, the Speaker briefly resumed the chair to summon the other members, 345 of whom responded. Bassett wrote, "They had not expected to be summoned for the local debate and began mumbling about the cost of the unfamiliar project," the very point Representative Roudebush made when debate resumed.

Eisen and Bassett singled out Representative O'Konski's comments as helping to focus the opposition on cost issues, and Bassett cited Representative Roudebush for the same reason. "House Members," Eisen wrote, "obviously were wary of the legislation as soon as they realized its magnitude."

Defeat of the Multer amendment on labor was a turning point as well. Bassett thought the labor provisions were "doomed after Minority Leader Halleck of Indiana drew from their author, Mr. Multer, an acknowledgement that they included compulsory arbitration." After that, "Republicans voted in a bloc against guaranteeing rights [that] workers now have under private contracts should union members be shifted to a public operation." She concluded:

More than any other single factor, the labor argument probably defeated the bill. Once it was rejected, labor champions, who otherwise were for the administration program, voted to bury it.

As for the future, Eisen wrote:

Recommittal could be a death sentence. But the District Committee is free to rewrite the measure and send it back to the floor for a second try. Or a rescue attempt could be made in the Senate, which generally is regarded as friendlier to the District.

However, Bassett wrote, "Chances are slim that the Senate can reshape a transit bill to suit the House next year." She added that "this is almost sure to be tested." [Bassett, Grace, "Bitter Tobriner Asks Solution In Rail Defeat," *The Evening Star*, December 10, 1963; Eisen, Jack, "Bobtailed Subway Plan Overwhelmed by House," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 10, 1963]

On December 11, Representative O'Okonski explained his motion to recommit the bill to committee:

If the bill had been defeated, which it would have been, it would have been dead for at least 10 years. By referring it back to committee, there is time for a real hardcore look at another proposal.

He did not believe that highway supporters or Chalk were factors in the recommittal vote. The \$400 million price tag was a key factor in the defeat, a fate that would meet any similar high-cost proposal. He was sure that Congress would give a transit bill for the District another look if

NCTA could address the financing and private enterprise issues. He also thought that a subway-rail transit network with an underground system was “a thing of the past.” Officials should consider innovative transit technology.

Representative Broyhill agreed that recommitment, which he voted against, offered some hope. He added, however, that, “Unless something is done pretty quickly, the justification for the agency’s existence will terminate.” Some alternative such as express bus service might be considered, but prospects for an alternative subway plan “look dim.”

Chairman Whitener was not planning any immediate action. “We’ll take a good serious look” at what to do, but he saw little support for Commissioner Tobriner’s suggested presidential commission. [Flor, Lee, “Transit Bill Vote Cited As Keeping Issue Alive,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1963]

In editorials, the *Post* and *Star* made clear who was at the heart of the defeat. No one, the *Post* editors wrote, thought it would be easy. The “shocking vote” was a setback, “but not a final disaster.” The need had not changed. All the conditions leading to the bill, such as a transportation crisis and support for a rapid transit system, were still in place. However, “Congress never supports major improvements for Washington unless they enjoy very nearly unanimous local support.” The House vote was “a sharp and explicit personal repudiation of Mr. Stolzenbach”:

Mr. Stolzenbach committed three errors of political judgment. He believed that he could build the subway only by vehemently attacking the Inner Loop. He believed that he could build the subway only if revenue estimates promised to pay its whole cost; the figures were demonstrably incredible. He believed that he could build the subway only by refusing to answer questions, however legitimate. He offered no reassurance whatever to the bus companies that he proposed to displace, or to their employes [sic]. They worked hard, and successfully, to beat the bill. It is now time to replace Mr. Stolzenbach.

In view of the House rejection, Stolzenbach could “serve the city best by promptly resigning.” If he stays, the *Post* doubted that in view of the wide distrust he had engendered, “any bill can succeed while he retains office.”

His successor would not have it easy:

A new administrator will have to work out, in detail, the relationship between the bus companies and the transit system, protecting the interests of the companies and of their employes [sic]. He will have to meet and dispose of the absurd proposal for private ownership; one might as well talk of private ownership of the post office, or of the sewers.

With all that accomplished, the President should send a rewritten bill back to Congress. “The need for action is urgent” because Congress “cannot hold back the steady waves of citizens coming to live and work in Washington.” [“The Next Step,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 11, 1963]

In “The Transit Fiasco,” *Star* editors understood Commissioner Tobriner’s “bitterness about the highway-transit controversy,” but that “silly feud” was not responsible for the defeat in the House. The editors attributed the House defeat of the bobtail bill to several factors, including labor opposition, Chalk, the “inadequacy of the arguments” by NCTA and other supporters, the lack of defense by House leaders for Federal expenditures, and the Washington community’s failure “to exert itself as strongly in behalf of the bill as the spokesmen for special interests exerted themselves in the fight to kill it.” But make no mistake:

It was derailed by the pipsqueak arrogance of C. Darwin Stolzenbach, the NCTA director, who, over a long period of time, has managed to generate nothing but ill will toward the agency. Drawing himself up to his best Churchillian stance after the vote on Monday, Mr. Stolzenbach typically announced that he had not become the NCTA head “to preside over its dissolution,” and that he presumed “this is not the last word of Congress.”

It must not be the last word, not because Stolzenbach said so, but because “a rail-transit system is absolutely essential to the health and well-being of the Washington area and of the Nation’s Capital itself.” To achieve that goal, NCTA and “others within the administration are going to have to correct a number of faults before the next effort is made.”

Those faults were correctable. Freeway construction should proceed. Except where a freeway should provide right-of-way for a rapid transit line, NCTA “should keep its nose out of highway business.” NCTA also must reach accord with labor, private enterprise, and area jurisdictions outside the District. “Most of all the vital importance of an effective rail-transit system to the Nation’s Capital must be made apparent to everyone.”

The editors thought Chairman Whitener summed it up best. “The cost to the Federal Government of not building a rapid-transit system will be far greater than the cost of building one.” That was “the essential truth” that Congress must come to accept. [“The Transit Fiasco,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1963]

### **Locating the Three Sisters Bridge**

By late 1963, the Three Sisters Bridge was the most controversial of several controversial Interstate projects. As *Post* editors had put it in the July 9 editorial cited by Representative Cramer:

Bridges seem to bring out the worst in Washington’s government. Nothing could illustrate more sadly its constitutional state of indecision than the announcement that we are now to have still another study of the future Three Sisters Bridge, at a cost of another half million dollars. The city wasted seven years wrangling over the designs for the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, and the questions raised by Three Sisters are far broader.

As for the “economic, social and aesthetic considerations” the reexamination was to explore, they were “precisely the kind of value judgments that most Americans consider to be political issues.” [“In Lieu of a Decision,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 9, 1963]

Virginia highway officials supported the bridge. As Deputy Commissioner F. A. Davis of the Virginia Highway Department had told Chairman Fallon in a letter, failure to build the bridge would result in “an almost intolerable situation.” He added, “It is our feeling that all of the highways now planned will be needed, particularly those on the Interstate system, regardless of any mass transit system as now proposed.”

Meanwhile, Virginia had halted design of I-66 approaching the river “because we have no way of knowing the number of lanes that will be required.” The current plan was for I-66 to have six lanes north of the Capital Beltway to the Dulles access road. Between the Capital Beltway and the Potomac River, I-66 would have eight lanes to the junction with I-266 to the Three Sisters Bridge. Beyond the I-266 interchange, I-66 would continue with six lanes to the six-lane Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. If the bridge were not built, I-66 would have to be rethought to find a way to carry eight lanes of traffic instead of six lanes. [Flor, Lee, “Virginia Will Press For Sisters Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1963; “State Halts Planning on River Route,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 3, 1963]

On November 7, 1963, the White House released Commissioner Tobriner’s letter stating that the seven-member Policy Advisory Committee had agreed on a compromise location for the bridge. “The committee recommends against the proposed location at the Three Sisters Island site.” Instead, the bridge would be built between Roosevelt Island and Key Bridge.

This new location meant that the bridge would touch down in the District near the foot of Wisconsin Avenue, NW., on the Georgetown waterfront. It would connect with the Potomac River Freeway parallel to the Whitehurst Freeway. This location had “distinct aesthetic advantages” and, with “appropriate design will insure essential service to highway users.”

One result of this new location was that it might affect the number of lanes on I-66 through Rosslyn. Instead of a six-lane freeway leading to the six-lane Roosevelt Bridge, Virginia would have to plan for additional lanes through a community that was expanding with new apartment and office buildings. That development would make locating the freeway even more challenging than it already was. The interim report stated that, “The committee trusts that this agreement will have the concurrence of the Commonwealth of Virginia.” (Horsky told reporters that this reference to Virginia’s position was “stronger than hope but weaker than a no.”)

The committee also endorsed construction of the North Leg, but said that in its design, “maximum consideration should be given to the concept of tunneling within the bounds of engineering feasibility to assure minimum disturbance during construction and to minimize displacement and esthetic impact.” The bridge and North Leg were to be built to Interstate standards with six or eight lanes.

Precise locations were yet to be determined, but Lee Flor summarized the general location of the North Leg:

[The] north leg would connect to the inner loop freeway around Pennsylvania avenue near Rock Creek park and then would curve north and eastward, running a few blocks south of



Florida avenue. The route most usually mentioned is along R and S streets N.W. until the freeway connects to a center leg freeway around Third street and New York avenue N.W.

The decisions described in Tobriner's letter were general and tentative. The Policy Advisory Committee would not make final decisions until a public hearing was held after the members reviewed additional design and alignment alternatives. [Flor, Lee, "Three Sisters Out, Span Downstream," *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1963; Eisen, Jack, "Modification Of Highway Links Urged," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 8, 1963]

One thing the committee had not done was consult with the Arlington County Board or Virginia highway officials. As Roye Lowry, a member of the board who would become its chairman in 1964, pointed out, "A bridge has two ends." Virginia and county officials were analyzing the decision, with the most difficult issue being the impact on Rosslyn. Board Chairman Thomas Richards thought the problem might be manageable, but "such lack of cooperation when the planning is under way is no way to handle a metropolitan-wide-area problem."

Representative Broyhill, by contrast, called the Policy Advisory Committee's decision "a perfect solution." He thought homeowners in the Arlington Palisades would agree with the decision. [Eisen, Jack, "Bridge Project Action Angers Arlingtonians," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 9, 1963]

Rosslyn, cited earlier as the site of an oil terminal, was a 100-acre unincorporated village in the northeast corner of Arlington County across the Potomac River from Georgetown. The opening of the Aqueduct Bridge had spurred development of a lawless community at its base. The coming of the electric trolley in the 1890s spurred a civic cleanup, but Schrag described the area's evolution:

Though named for a farm, the area had been home to breweries, slaughterhouses, and saloons since the late nineteenth century. As the New Deal and World War II inflated Washington's construction industry, Rosslyn became the city's staging area, with storage yards and firms dealing in lumber, millwork, and asphalt. Then in April 1957, the Marriott company took a 99-year lease on a former brewery to use as a hotel, and in November county planner Dorothy Muncy suggested redeveloping Rosslyn with office buildings and tourist hotels. With the expansion of federal government employment in the early 1960s, investors thought this a fine idea, and by 1963 four office buildings were under construction, with plans approved for ten more. [Schrag, page 222]

The coming of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge spurred the development.

*Post* editors praised the decision, not for "the genius of its engineering or the brilliance of its planning [but] by the unanimity of its support." Everyone—highway people, transit people, park people, city-beautiful people—had signed "the terse little statement." The committee should be renamed the Road and Rail Truce Commission" because it had "restored the balance of the city's intricate transportation politics."

By shifting the bridge downstream, the “Truce Commission” had reassured several Senators that the bridge would not harm Glover-Archbold Park. The new location had its drawbacks, particularly the need to shift I-66 through Rosslyn, possibly in a tunnel. “But the political values here clearly outweigh the planning considerations.” [“Declaration of Truce,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 9, 1963]

Engineer Commissioner Duke, who headed the advisory committee, said officials would coordinate with Arlington County and Virginia officials after they received President Kennedy’s response to Tobriner’s letter. Appearing on WWDC’s “Report to the People,” Duke conceded that the reaction in Virginia and particularly Arlington County had not been “extremely enthusiastic.” Nevertheless, he thought that solutions, particularly for the routing of I-66 through Rosslyn, would be reached jointly. He also thought that once the precise location of the bridge was set, “the Potomac River Freeway I don’t think will pose any particular problem” for Georgetown residents. [“Duke to Seek Arlington Views on New Bridge,” *The Sunday Star*, November 10, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “Decision Awaited on Next Bridge Site,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 10, 1963]

President Kennedy replied to Tobriner on November 12, 1963. The President was pleased to have the letter informing him that the District Board of Commissioners concurred in the Policy Advisory Committee’s decisions. “The recommendations are likewise acceptable to me, and will be included in my budget recommendations to the Congress in January.” He added:

The Policy Advisory Committee is an example of the possibilities for cooperative action among Federal and District agencies in resolving difficult problems, and the fact that its recommendations are unanimous is particularly gratifying. The concurrence of the Board of Commissioners in those recommendations should assure that the entire District Highway Program can now move forward.

He added, “the fact that its recommendations are unanimous is particularly gratifying.”

With release of President Kennedy’s letter, Chairman Whitener’s subcommittee took time from developing the bobtail legislation to approve a resolution drafted by Representative Broyhill calling upon the District commissioners to “proceed forthwith to implement the construction” of the bridge and North Leg. Chairman Whitener, who said the vote was unanimous, was hopeful that the agreement would diminish opposition by highway supporters to his transit bill. [Flor, Lee, “Kennedy backs Georgetown Bridge Plans,” *The Evening Star*, November 12, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “Georgetown-Rosslyn Bridge Gets Kennedy Endorsement,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 13, 1963]

*Star* editors thought that in saying the projects could move forward, President Kennedy had “struck precisely the right note.” Many details needed to be worked out to determine whether the new bridge location was feasible or the disruptive impacts of the North Leg really could be minimized:

The important thing is that the agencies represented on the committee, which previously were fighting over the need for both these projects, now agree they should be built. We

trust that the President will make sure there is no backsliding on that crucial point.  
[“Forward, March!” *The Evening Star*, November 15, 1963]

By November 16, the first sign of a problem with the new location of the bridge was evident. Members of the Arlington County Board were “outraged” that they had not been consulted, criticized the plan unanimously, and urged consideration of alternate sites. The board had received the plan only on November 5, without a chance to comment on it before Commissioner Tobriner’s letter to President Kennedy. The board was concerned that the uncertainty would affect their development decisions. Chairman Richards said, “This Fairfax Drive-Route 66 area can be another real good hot area where we can develop a high yield tax base,” similar to Rosslyn. Board member Leo Urbanske, Jr., denounced the plan, pointing out that, in contrast to the prior upstream location, the bridge in its new location would compound congestion in Rosslyn.

The board advised County Manager Bert W. Johnson to write to the Virginia Highway Department to express the county’s disapproval of the new plan. He also was authorized to send a copy of the letter to the White House. [“Arlington Board Scores Bridge Site,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 17, 1963; Kelly, Brian, “Not Consulted on Bridge, Arlington to Tell Kennedy,” *The Sunday Star*, November 17, 1963]

Reacting to the dispute in Virginia, Engineer Commissioner Duke met with Virginia highway officials and representatives of the Arlington Board for a strategy session. Deputy Federal Highway Administrator D. Grant Mickle represented BPR. “As of this moment,” he said, “there appears to be an impasse between the District and Virginia.” The city wanted the District terminus of the new bridge to be as near as possible to 31<sup>st</sup> Street, NW., because that was the end of the present Potomac River Freeway project, the District’s portion of I-266. The District was open to any Virginia terminus for I-266 as long as it ended at the desired location in the city.

On December 4, General Duke announced the results of the meeting. Officials had agreed on a joint study. Virginia officials were to study a site upstream from Key Bridge and a tunnel-bridge crossing near Three Sisters Islands. As described by Jack Eisen in the *Post*, the two alternatives were:

- Rte. 266 to branch off near N. Kirkwood st., Arlington, tunnel beneath the Palisades near the upper end of Spout Run Parkway, then cross the river on a diagonal bridge about one-quarter mile downstream from Three Sisters.
- The route to cross the river about on line with Arlington Oak st., one-quarter mile upstream from Key Bridge and roughly parallel to it.

At the same time, the District would conduct engineering studies of a site downstream from Key Bridge, the site the Policy Advisory Committee and President Kennedy had endorsed. They all agreed not to study the original Three Sisters Islands location, thus seemingly killing the idea of a bridge named Three Sisters Bridge.

General Duke told reporters he was confident the differences could be resolved. Chairman Richards said he was “quite heartened by the spirit of co-operation and the desire on the part of the District to undertake a joint study.”

In short, as Eisen put it, “Virginia and Arlington County officials yesterday torpedoed the Rosslyn-Georgetown bridge plan that was supposed to end Washington’s freeway warfare.”

Unaware of the strategy session, Representative Broyhill decided to intervene. At his request, the House District Committee named him a special peacemaker. Having previously called the location approved by the Policy Advisory Committee “a perfect solution,” he now called it “bad and costly” in view of the Virginia opposition. He wanted to set up an emergency committee to identify a location for the bridge that all parties could accept. The committee would include the District, Virginia, Arlington County, NPS, and BPR, as well as citizens from both sides of the river. He also intended to invite Horsky to participate. They would, he said, “sit down and thresh out all objections.”

Reaction to Representative Broyhill’s initiative was mixed. Chairman Richards, saying that officials in the strategy session had developed “a fine working rapport,” said of this additional initiative:

Further expansion of the decision-making process by Mr. Broyhill’s intrusion is going to further complicate the situation and muddy the water. We would reach a reasonable decision without his entry.

General Duke, by contrast, said he would “cooperate with the Congressman and look forward to helping in any way we can.” [“Eisen, Jack, “Rosslyn Bridge Plan Is Scuttled By Virginians,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 5, 1963; “Broyhill Proposed New Bridge Group,” *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1963; “Broyhill Named Peacemaker in Bridge Wrangle,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 6, 1963]

Despite the mixed reaction, officials met in the House District hearing room at 2 p.m. on December 11, 1963, just 2 days after the House rejected Chairman Whitener’s bobtail plan. Participants included Jett of the NPS, Lowry of the Arlington County Board, Acting District Highway Director Thomas F. Airis, and Engineer Commissioner Duke. Representatives of Arlington County and Georgetown civic associations were present in the hearing room.

Participants agreed to hire a consultant to conduct a 4-6 month study of the options as soon as Congress granted the funds. If the conference committee on the District’s appropriations act, 1964, included \$330,000 for the Three Sisters Bridge, the funds would be used for the study. The study, to be financed by the District and Virginia, would cover two layouts, one upstream and one downstream of Key Bridge. Participants explicitly excluded the original Three Sisters Bridge location from the study. Jett was very pleased by that decision, but was neutral on the remaining options. [“Outside Consultant Called to Referee Battle Over Three Sisters No-Bridge,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 12, 1963; Flor, Lee, “D.C., Virginia In Accord on Bridge Study,” *The Evening Star*, December 12, 1963]

With approval from the House and Senate appropriations committees, the District committed \$5,000 for the study of two alternative sites for the bridge, with Virginia committing an equal amount. BPR provided the 90-percent match of \$90,000. The New York firm of Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff received the contract to conduct the study. [“Consultants to Study Two Sites for Bridge,” *The Sunday Star*, January 12, 1964]

### **The North Central Corridor**

Following the assassination of President Kennedy, the Kennedy family remained in the White House for several days before moving out. On December 7, President Johnson and his family were ready to move in.

During that period, the country did not have a Vice Presidential residence as at present. The new President had come to Washington after winning a special House election in 1937. In 1943, the Johnsons purchased a red-brick colonial at 4921 Thirtieth Place, NW., in the District’s Forest Hills neighborhood. As Vice President, Johnson and his family moved to a three-story mansion named Les Ormes (The Elms) that they purchased in May 1961 at 4040 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW., in the Spring Valley section of the city. Perle Mesta, a fixture on the Washington social scene for years, had been the previous owner. (Her lavish parties for Washington’s social and political leaders had earned her the nickname: “the hostess with the mostest.”)

On moving day, the new President decided to take a walk around his soon-to-be former neighborhood, accompanied only by his friend and adviser, Jack Valenti, the Secret Service, a limousine, and a motorcycle escort. Hatless and in a light raincoat, he walked south on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street to a cul-de-sac where a dog in one of the yards barked at him. “Down, down,” he told the dog. At that moment, Alvin Howard Thompson, a stone mason from Cabin John who had worked on the Johnsons’ home, pulled up. “Good morning, Mr. President,” he said, from his pickup truck. After they shook hands, the President continued his walk. A neighbor rushed out to take a picture of the President. They shook hands.

He continued onto Rockwood Parkway until it intersected Glenbrook Parkway. Part of the way, he could walk in the middle of the street because of light traffic and the Secret Service waving cars to the side. In all, he walked a little over a mile before traveling by limousine to the White House to begin his official day.

One of the events on that day was a ceremony honoring 31 distinguished men and women with a President Medal of Freedom. In a surprise climax, President Johnson added President Kennedy and Pope John XXIII, who had died on June 3, 1963, to the list of recipients. Of the former President, Johnson said, “we are the lesser for his death . . . but each is somehow larger because he lived.” Not visible to the attendees, Mrs. Jacqueline B. Kennedy watched the ceremony before leaving with her children for a Georgetown home made available to her by Undersecretary of State W. Averell Harriman. [“Johnsons Buy Mesta Mansion,” *The Evening Star*, May 20, 1961; “Johnsons Plan To Spend Night In White House,” *The Evening Star*, December 7, 1963]

For years, the new President had been a frantic commuter in the Connecticut Avenue corridor, as biographer Robert A. Caro described based on a 1951 article in the *Saturday Evening Post*:

He was the old Lyndon Johnson driving to work in the morning from his home, a two-story, white-painted brick colonial at 4921 Thirtieth Place in a quiet residential area in northwest Washington—driving down Connecticut Avenue with one hand on the wheel, the other frenziedly twisting the dial on the car’s radio back and forth from one station to another searching for news broadcasts, shouting obscenities at broadcasters who said something with which he didn’t agree. He was constantly sounding his horn to get other drivers out of his way—if they didn’t move aside quickly enough, he would lean out the window and curse them; passing them on their right, he would bang his big left hand down on the outside of his car to startle them. [Caro, Robert A., *Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon B. Johnson*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, page 140. His source was: Healy, Patrick F., “The Frantic Gentleman from Texas,” *Saturday Evening Post*, May 19, 1951]

Now, his commuting years were over. The Secret Service and police would keep his limousine moving.

Still unresolved in December 1963 was how Montgomery County motorists would commute between home and their jobs in the District. The congressional freeze on freeway construction in the District’s northwest quadrant was to be in effect for another 2 years, so time remained to find a solution.

For many motorists, the planned I-70S western leg entrance along the Potomac River was impractical because it involved an indirect route between suburban homes and jobs in the District. Officials were still considering the Wisconsin Avenue corridor for the North Leg of the Inner Loop to carry the eastern leg of I-70S, but the affluent, heavily populated area seemed an unlikely place for an eight-lane freeway. Even so, NCTA had identified the corridor for upgrading with grade separated intersections to speed traffic.

The North Capitol Street corridor east of Rock Creek Park appeared to have fewer negatives. NCTA endorsed the corridor for a freeway and rail line from Silver Spring because the road could be built along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks to minimize disruption of neighborhoods already separated by the trains. In January 1963, Donald Gingery of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission called this idea “impractical nonsense.” He said, “You simply can’t funnel all traffic down one corridor. If it has to carry traffic from Rte. 70-S, the proposed northern parkway and other main arteries, it will take 28 lanes to get it through Silver Spring.” Moreover, the plan to merge I-95 traffic within the District with the corridor would add to the traffic volumes. [Kendrick, Thomas R., “Planners Critical of NCTA Idea,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 24, 1963]

In April, BPR Deputy Administrator Mickle called for “a work session” among Maryland, District, and BPR officials to resolve location issues. Chairman Funk sent a telegram to Maryland planning officials urging them not to take any action on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor before the meeting:

It is my opinion that these meetings will clear up the questions involved in Route Interstate 95, the north central corridor and the Wisconsin avenue corridor as they affect

Montgomery and Prince Georges' Counties and the District of Columbia. ["Parley Called On Maryland Road Routes," *The Evening Star*, April 4, 1963]

During the meeting, BPR asked Aitken to consider a change in the District's plan to build I-95 to intersect I-70S in the vicinity of Catholic University. From there, the joint freeways would follow the Center Leg. BPR suggested considering an intersection of I-70S and I-95 in the Montgomery County suburbs before entering the District from Silver Spring. According to the *Post*:

Aitken is not receptive to the Bureau's suggestion. He pointed out that it has been almost five years since the city began laying out the Northeast Freeway and that the route has been endorsed by the National Capital Planning Commission and also fits in with the plan of the National Capital Transportation Agency.

"It doesn't make much difference to us what they do in Maryland," Aitken said. "But any change here in the District would mean we'd have to throw away five years of planning."

Maryland highway officials were considering whether a shift of I-95 to the west would be advisable. Chief Engineer David H. Fisher said, "we are wondering if we could better serve some of the growth taking place further west." [Clopton, Willard, "Maryland Planners Weigh Relocation of Interstate Route," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 22, 1963]

As will be discussed, Funk negotiated with BPR and NPS to designate the Baltimore-Washington Parkway as I-95. He would reconstruct the NPS portion for truck use and provide a link to New York Avenue in the District. This plan, which had the advantage of limiting the taking of homes and businesses, was abandoned in mid-1963, leaving Maryland and District officials to continue debating how to get I-95 traffic between the Capital Beltway and the Inner Loop.

In November 1963, the Maryland State Roads Commission issued its preliminary 5-year construction program. It omitted the North Central Freeway south from the Silver Spring-Wheaton area, a link between I-70S at Pooks Hill and the District, and the first leg of the planned Outer Belt connecting I-70S to the North Central Freeway. No routes had yet been selected for the expressways, but the Maryland State Roads Commission had included them in August in a list of 48 critically needed projects.

After seeing the omissions, the Montgomery County Council voted unanimously to ask Governor Tawes to intercede with the legislative council, meeting in Baltimore, to defer action until the three "vitally needed" expressways were reconsidered. County Public Works Director Joseph C. Kordella said that Chairman Funk "repeatedly supported the 1959 Transportation Plan," but had "virtually ignored its major elements" by dropping the three expressways from the 5-year plan. [Kendrick, Thomas R., "State Road Plan Omits 3 Major Area Highways," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 17, 1963; Christmas, Anne, "County Urges Tawes to Save Road Projects," *The Evening Star*, November 27, 1963]

During the meeting on November 27, Delegate James R. Miller, Jr., of the county's delegation, told Funk, "If these roads were needed in August, they certainly are needed now." Funk

explained that he dropped the three expressways because District officials had not yet pinpointed where I-70S or the North Central Corridor would enter the city. He offered to include them in the plan as “footnote items” to be revived pending District decisions and the availability of funds for future work. Miller replied, “This seems reasonable and I hope it will speed up action in the District.” [Rowland, James B., “Road Projects Put on ‘Critical’ List,” *The Evening Star*, November 18, 1963]

*Star* editors agreed with “the howls of protest from county officials,” saying they were “entirely justified.” Leaving the projects out of the 5-year plan had “shortchanged the citizens of Montgomery unconscionably.” No project in the State was “more urgently needed than the north-central route.” True, the alignment had not been determined. However, Maryland, the District, and BPR had funded a \$350,000 consultant study on the issue, with the results due in January. If agreement could be reached, construction might begin sooner than 5 years if, that is, Funk was determined to do so. Relegating the items to footnotes raised questions about how hard Funk would fight to secure agreement on an alignment and get construction underway. What was needed was for Maryland, the District, and BPR “to drum up enough courage to face jointly difficult problems involved in locating freeways which cross jurisdictional lines in the Washington area. [“Footnote Items,” *The Sunday Star*, December 1, 1963]

Reacting to the dispute, Senator Beall called a meeting in his office on August 10 to discuss the issue just 2 hours before the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission held a public hearing on the I-70S western leg along the Potomac River Palisades. In addition to Funk, Governor Tawes’ representative, and State legislators, Senator Beall had invited BPR and District representatives to the meeting.

Following defeat of the bobtail plan the day before, Senators Beall and Daniel B. Brewster (D) asked participants what Congress could do to resolve the disputes between Maryland and the District over freeway links. Funk, Engineer Commissioner Duke, and Administrator Whitton suggested repealing the freeze on freeway construction in the northwest quadrant. The two Senators and Representatives in the meeting said they would consider legislation to reverse the freeze.

The highway officials also expressed doubts about the proposed Palisades Freeway, subject to the freeze, that would be presented to a public hearing later in the day. Whitton offered “a personal opinion” that he did not think that building an expressway would be possible parallel to the George Washington Parkway that NPS had under construction. [“Attack Considered On Freeway Freeze,” *The Evening Star*, December 10, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “House Vote Stirs Plans For Roads,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 11, 1963]

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had only recently begun considering the Palisades Freeway. Three weeks after ordering a study, the commission released a report on November 11 explaining that the county needed more than one entrance (North Central Freeway) to the District. The report said the \$11.4 million freeway would run from the Capital Beltway along the Potomac River from Cabin John Creek Valley west of Bannockburn, under MacArthur Boulevard, through and virtually erasing the old community of Glen Echo west



of the Glen Echo Amusement Park. The freeway would connect to the proposed Rosslyn-Georgetown bridge downstream from Key Bridge before linking with the Inner Loop.

Because the freeway would carry trucks, the route would be eligible for Interstate designation and 90-10 Federal-State funding. It also would remove the need for a freeway in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Funk, who had not read the report, said that J. E. Greiner, already studying the routing of the North Central Freeway, would also study the new proposal for a Potomac River entrance. [“Consultants to Review Palisades Freeway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, November 12, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “\$11.3 Million Palisades Freeway Outlined by Maryland Planners,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 12, 1963]

The *Post* summarized the December 10 public hearing by saying, “Montgomery County citizens, who have been building up steam against the proposed Palisades Freeway, gave the plan a tongue lashing yesterday.” The central criticism was that the freeway was not needed because it would parallel the George Washington Parkway. The critics rejected the commissioners’ explanation that the freeway was needed to carry the trucks that were banned from the parkway. The Potomac Valley League representing 14 civic groups pointed out that on the existing I-70S, trucks comprised 11 percent of traffic, but only 3 percent of the trucks would use the Palisades Freeway according to studies by the planning commission’s staff. Further, the freeway, if built, would result in “unthinkable congestion at the intersection where the Potomac Freeway will join the inner loop in the District.” A letter from NPS Director Wirth, introduced into the record, criticized the plan and favored the Wisconsin Avenue corridor.

The result, the *Star* indicated, was that the Palisades Freeway “appears to be scuttled.” Commission Vice Chairman Brewer said after the public hearing that he was “bloody and bowed.” He said he would support a proposal by Commissioner Caroline Freeland to revive plans for a routing along the western fringe of Rock Creek Park. [Tuck, Lon, “Palisades Citizenry In Arms Over Road,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 11, 1963; Segraves, John, “Palisades Interstate Route Appears to Be Scuttled,” *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1963]

On December 18, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the Freeland resolution dropping the Palisades Freeway from its plans. To find an alternative route, the commission planned to work with the Maryland congressional delegation to end the freeze on freeway construction in the northwest quadrant. The resolution also urged President Johnson to ask for Stolzenbach’s resignation as NCTA Administrator. [“Major Planning Shifts Faced in Montgomery,” *The Evening Star*, December 18, 1963; Tuck, Lon, “Planners Drop Palisades Route,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 19, 1963]

The Maryland congressional delegation introduced legislation on December 18 to lift the northwest freeway freeze. It had been put in place in the expectation that construction of rail rapid transit would begin during that period and reduce or eliminate the need for freeways in the area. Citing House rejection of the bobtail plan, Senator Beall said, “Recent events foreshadowed great difficulty for any attempt to construct a rapid rail transit system in the District. We must therefore re-examine the effects of this freeze on highway planning.” With the Palisades Freeway rejected, the focus was on the North Central Freeway to carry I-70S traffic

into the District, but Senator Beall emphasized he was not specifically supporting that alternative, or even the lifting of the freeze. They wanted early hearings on the bill “to reevaluate the results of this highway construction ban, both in the District of Columbia and in our own State of Maryland.”

The Washington area, he said, faced critical transportation problems. As population and traffic increased, “the situation will worsen unless we have imaginative traffic and transit research and planning now.” He continued:

We need rapid mass transit and we need an expanded but sensible highway program. We are not likely to get either by restricting the highway and transit experts and denying them the tools they need to meet present and future transportation needs. [Eisen, Jack, “Bill Would Lift Freeze on D.C. Highway Jobs,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 19, 1963; “Bill Proposed to Lift N.W. Freeway Ban,” *The Evening Star*, December 18, 1963; Amendment of National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, *Congressional Record-Senate*, December 18, 1963, page 24949]

With a Potomac River entrance for the I-70S western leg remaining in doubt, those hoping for an eastern leg along the North Central Freeway faced doubts. BPR’s chief engineer, Francis C. “Frank” Turner, pointed out that BPR had not approved the North Central Freeway for I-70S. The decision on Interstate status depended on a study underway by the J. E. Greiner Company for the District and Maryland highway departments. Eisen wrote of Turner’s statement:

From the standpoint of Federal officials, one big question is whether interstate truck and auto traffic approaching Washington from the northwest [on I-70S in Maryland] ought to be diverted over the Capital Beltway from Pooks Hill, Bethesda, eastward to Silver Spring before heading southward into Washington. [Eisen, Jack, “Long Delay for Freeway Seen in Stalled Approval of 70-S,” *The Washington Post*, December 26, 1963]

As reflected in the Policy Advisory Committee’s report, the District was planning to mitigate freeway impacts by building some segments in tunnels, trenches, or elevated designs with joint use of the air rights above or below them for other desired community assets, such as buildings, playgrounds, plazas, and arcades. By year’s end, the District was working on such a plan for the Center Leg, although the city had not yet decided on the best occupants for the air rights. [Eisen, Jack, “Up in the Air,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 26, 1963]

The District received good news on December 30, 1963, when Representative Carl Vinson (D-Ga.) of the House Office Building Committee, agreed to a plan for building the Center Leg Freeway in the Third Street corridor in a tunnel further west of the Capitol and one block longer than originally planned. Representative Vinson said he would recommend the plan to the other members of the committee: Speaker of the House John W. McCormack (D-Ma.) and Representative James C. Auchincloss (R-NJ). With their support, they would introduce a bill authorizing the tunnel.

According to General Duke, Representative Vinson agreed to the plan the Sunday before Christmas after touring the site. The Engineer Commissioner said the agreement was “very

encouraging,” but several steps, including congressional approval, remained before design and construction could begin. [Flor, Lee, “Mall Freeway Tunnel Gets Vinson Approval,” *The Evening Star*, December 31, 1963; Eisen, Jack, “Inner Loop Mall Tunnel is Approved,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 21, 1963]