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PRESENTATION BY WAYNE H. OLSON, PRESIDENT, CITIZENS LEAGUE, TO THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL/METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION SEMINAR ON TRANSPORTATION, OCTOBER 15, 1971

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I would like to highlight seven major ideas, which emerged from our year-long study of this problem.

1. Action by the Legislature in 1973 depends on the completion of a proposal by the Metropolitan Council by July 1972. What is needed is a "guideline" report -- specific, if not fully detailed -- that can serve as a basis for discussion for discussion and consensus, now, on highway and transit facilities, much in the way the report of July 1968 served as a basis for a decision on sewers in 1969. It must, however, go beyond "concepts" and deal with specific issues. Decisions, and action, are unlikely for 1973 if the Council simply waits for such a plan to be presented to it by the TPP structure. The Council must -- as it can, legally -- move out its own proposal. This will not, and should not, be a plan that other agencies are compelled to follow. It will be a proposal, which will must then be discussed. Nor need, nor should, these discussions wait until the Council's proposal is completed: The TPP, the MTC and other parties should (and, certainly, will) react at each stage, as the proposal develops. The critical thing, if decisions are to be reached on schedule, is that the initiative now be taken by the Council. The need now is for policy decisions, and this process will come alive only as the issues are activated in the area's general policy-making board, which alone is structured to reach early and politically meaningful decisions. The agencies that will be developing plans for particular parts of the transportation system need, and deserve, this early policy direction from the Council.
2. This area will have to move aggressively to push up the percentage of total trips carried in multi-passenger vehicles. Critical transportation problems are coming, particularly at the peak hours. Many of these trips are cross-area trips, which -- because of the location of major employment centers near the middle of the metropolitan area -- also jam up access to these employment centers. A strategy of making better use of facilities must, increasingly, be substituted for the present policy of building additional facilities, which are inefficiently used.
3. A large part of the decision will, however, necessarily, be a decision about roads. People cannot be left to believe that a transit system . . . any transit system . . . will eliminate the need for the location and construction of additional freeway-type facilities. Decisions are required, also by July 1972, whether routes are or are not to be developed in the corridors marked out in the System 14 plan.
4. Fundamentally, what must be built for transit is usage. A vastly upgraded physical system, of one kind or another, is essential. And the particular type of system chosen will affect the future usage. But simply the construction of a

transit system will not be enough. There must be, in addition, a major program aimed at building patronage and demand for the system. The substantial investments that will be required must be accompanied by the assurance that the system will, in fact, be heavily used. This will involve the transportation agencies in a whole range of efforts to affect the cost/service relationship both for transit and the highway/auto mode.

5. The whole issue of vehicle systems needs a fuller, and broader, discussion than it has had to date. Many of the issues about "existing technology" and "new technology" need clarification. Where, for example, does the bus-in-reserved-right-of-way fit in present thinking, particularly in relation to the "fast-link" concept . . . and to the "no-transfer" concept?
6. The roles and missions of the agencies involved should be clarified and re-defined in such a way that the system can truly operate as an integrated transportation system. The two modes -- transit and auto/highway -- must not be organized in separate administrative and policy-making structures. Our report suggested that the Legislature build on its 1967 law, and continue to develop the Highway Department -- as the state's large and competent public work agency -- as the builder of capital facilities for transit, as well as roads. The MTC should then be developed as an enterprise-oriented agency, with a primary mission of building usage, particularly at peak hours.
7. A major decision needs to be made on financing strategy. The area could pursue the policy initiated by the Legislature in 1971 . . . of gradually withdrawing the general-revenue subsidy still remaining in, and no longer required by, the auto/highway mode, and transferring these funds over to transit. A substantially larger cash flow for the bonds required for a transit system probably can be provided in this way. Or -- as an alternative or as a supplement -- financial support might be opened up out of road user revenues, as is frequently proposed. Realistic determinations about the availability of funds need to be made, and need to be related to federal policies on financial aid.