

D.C. Freeway Revolt and the Coming of Metro
Part 4
Battling the Revolt

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Part 4

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Unfinished Business

In 1965, officials made progress in addressing the area's transportation problems. They secured funding to begin the rail rapid transit system the area needed. However, they would have to go back to Congress in 1966 for more money for the system and approval of the interstate compact authority to take over the program from NCTA. Moreover, the freeway network was stymied by citizen opposition, official obstacles, and the lack of District matching funds to complete the Interstate routes before the 90-10 construction program ended in 1972.

As for the rail rapid transit system, it had enjoyed some success in 1965, but as 1966 began, its future had many question marks. George Lardner, in his final month writing the Potomac Watch column, had this to say:

If the city and the suburbs can't unite on a program for a metropolitan rapid transit system, it's doubtful they can ever get together on anything.

In 1965, "everybody on the civic mailing lists and his brother were cited in support of Washington's subway bill."

Now comes "the tedious question of who's going to be in charge of the show." The District Democratic Central Committee had come out "with a blast against 'the current proposal for an interstate compact.'" The committee was demanding that the District have majority control of the 25-mile system, which was to be built mainly in the District of Columbia. As constituted in the draft, the interstate authority would include two members each from the Northern Virginia Transit Commission, Maryland's new Suburban Transit Commission, and the District Commissioners. The committee argued that the city could "be outvoted on every significant issue affecting the future of the system, including such essential matters as the location of routes and the setting of fares and schedules."

The Joint Transportation Commission, key activists for the system, was working to "help keep it from rolling onto the wrong track." It was working to secure the compact and extend the system into the suburbs:

But the fussing over how to do it is just getting started. Unless the Joint Commission can head it off long enough to get the interstate authority into business, development of a regional system could suffer a serious setback.

Jerome Alper, the commission's counsel, addressed the Democratic Central Committee's objection by pointing out that on issues such as fares and service, the interstate authority would have to approve decisions by a majority vote that includes at least one member from each jurisdiction:

A financing plan and a development plan, which would include the “service expected” and “probable fares,” could be put through by unanimous vote of all members from only two jurisdictions, but this was done, Alper says, simply “to assure that no single jurisdiction, seeking preferential treatment, could use its veto in such a manner as to paralyze the Authority.”

Even in that case, the decision would not impose “any obligation or commitment upon the dissenting jurisdiction” or the Federal Government. Congress would still have to approve the decision:

If anything, the compact seems to bend over backward to preserve local autonomy.

But none of this seems to satisfy the Central Committee. It apparently wants the city to run the whole show simply because the city is going to get rapid transit first. The suburbs are going to have to pay for what they get and probably for some of what the city gets, too.

Polly Shackleton, speaking for the committee, said the compact, which the General Assembly of Maryland had approved, should be changed to give the city “more protection”:

“It’s really suburban versus center city interests that I think are at stake here,” she says.

The interests of both are at stake. They won’t be served by pitting them against each other. [Lardner, George, Jr., “Democratic Group Throwing Rocks,” Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 5, 1966]

In the city, Director Airis and Planning Director Grant were trying to face reality, including efforts to discourage people from using the new freeways during peak periods. Lardner talked with highway officials about operational issues, including a new technique called ramp metering:

“We’re building a minimum system,” says city Highway Planning Director Albert A. Grant. “It’ll have a certain capacity and we might say that’s all the capacity we’re going to provide, that’s all the cars that are going to come in on the freeway system”

The key to the setup, the highway director says, would be a traffic control headquarters, “including some computerization of the street lights on the main arteries of the city and feeders to the freeways.”

Red lights would stop traffic moving along on-ramps until traffic would allow merging onto the freeway. The problem was ensuring motorists would obey the stop:

“Of course,” Airis says, “we might have trouble with people who wouldn’t pay any attention to the lights. If a light lasts too long now, drivers will wait just so long and then go ahead anyway. They’ll figure the light is broken or that they’ve just been sitting too long whether it’s broken down or not.”

But, says Grant, there could be signs telling drivers the lights are intentionally long—and automatic cameras to snap the photos of cars that insist on breaking the rules.

“We’re checking the other cities to see what they’re doing along this line,” Airis said. “And we’re checking with the hardware manufacturers of signal equipment to see what they expect to come up with over the next 20 years.”

Drivers blocked from the freeway would be channeled by the same lights onto alternate routes and regular streets taking them in the same general direction.

One concern was that freeway opponents would interpret these techniques as a way to “prove” the city needed more freeways. Airis and Grant discounted that possibility:

The result, they say, will be to promote more subway construction, provision of exclusive bus lanes and other methods of avoiding an endless program of highway construction.

At the same time, the highway officials feel that such controls would only produce “chaos” if they were attempted now without building the basic freeway system. To dump all “essential movements” over the next 20 years, including tourists, onto city streets, Grant feels, would foul up the economy.

Lardner thought that seeing highway officials thinking of ways to operate the freeways more efficiently was “a good sign”:

But the controls will have to be esoteric stuff.

It could prove difficult to figure out whether to block off traffic in suburbia from getting onto the freeways because they’ve started to get crowded along the downtown stretches. And if highway officials don’t do that, they will, instead, have to block off city drivers at interchanges closer in? Even a computer might have trouble deciding. [Lardner, George, Jr., “Esoteric Highway Controls to Be Needed Here,” *Potomac Watch*, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 3, 1966]

(Although ramp metering had been installed on Chicago’s Eisenhower Expressway in 1963, the concept was still fairly new in the mid-1960s. According to an FHWA study:

The first metered ramp, as we know it today, was installed in Chicago on the Eisenhower Expressway in 1963. This first application, however, was preceded by successful tests of the effectiveness of metering traffic entering New York tunnels and ramp closure studies in Detroit. It is interesting to note that the initial Chicago study featured a police officer, stationed on the entrance ramp, who stopped traffic and released vehicles one at a time at a rate determined from a pilot detection program. [Piotrowicz, Gary, and Robinson, James, *Ramp Metering Status in North America* – 1995 update, DOT-T-95-17, FHWA, June 1995, pages 2-3])

(Although the District of Columbia did not employ ramp metering, motorists today can encounter meters on suburban freeways.)

Even if the opposition to the District's Interstate network could be overcome, the city would make little progress without enactment of a revenue bill providing additional loan authority and a penny increase in the gas tax. The legislation depended on action by Senator Bible's District Committee, but the committee's Senator Tydings had a different priority. Critics, as he knew, had asked why the city was trying to speed motorists into the downtown and government core where parking was limited. On January 6, even before the start of the second session of the 89th Congress, he opened hearings on easing downtown parking problems. He was thinking about asking Senator Bible to hold off on the revenue bill, which might be a good vehicle for any bill resulting from the hearings.

Opening the hearings, Senator Tydings said he wanted to "determine whether the creation of a balanced transportation system in the Washington metropolitan area requires action by the Congress and the District of Columbia to insure that there are an adequate number of properly located parking facilities to meet the requirements of the rapidly growing number of visitors and residents in the Nation's Capital." He also wanted to know how to control parking "so as to insure that parking is a functioning part of a balanced transportation system." [Eastman, Sam, "Parking Needs Spotlights As Tydings Opens Hearings," *The Evening Star*, January 6, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "Senate Group Is Told Of City's Parking Lag," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 7, 1966]

Contemplating the hearings, Lardner referred to a study by Alan M. Voorhees and Associates that "found that the major motive of Washington area drivers who use fringe parking lots was not to avoid downtown congestion but to avoid downtown parking costs." The District, Lardner wrote, had been trying to do something about parking since the early 1940s. In 1942, Congress gave the city a municipal parking agency "but it didn't show much gumption for getting into the downtown garage business." When it tried to do so in the late 1950s, Representative Broyhill ("the friendly suburbanite") and Chairman McMillan "teamed up in 1961 to put a rider on a city revenue bill that emasculated the parking agency."

The District commissioners had been promoting a weak parking bill, but without success. The Tydings hearings "can only be helpful." Lardner added, "The private parking lobby has had its way too long." As for linking a parking measure to the revenue bill, "it's not so easy to get excited about the Senator's strategy":

The idea seems to be to get the highway lobby working for the package since the revenue bill contains roadbuilding provisions needed to keep the city's freeway program going.

Of course, Senator Tydings had "been rather critical" of the District's Interstate plans:

Some suspect he'd just as soon see the roadbuilding sections of the revenue bill scuttled if he can't get the parking authority too.

It was a dangerous strategy because the House District Committee had "shown itself much more interested in protecting private parking interests than in giving the city the money it needs." As a result:

Perhaps a parking rider is worth a try, but tacking it onto the revenue bill seems like hitching a Mack truck onto a Volkswagen going uphill. [Lardner, George, Jr., "Temporary Parking Lots No Solution To One of Our City's Key Problems," Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 10, 1966]

On January 14, Senator Tydings introduced his bill to establish a public parking board that would have the authority to buy and condemn land; operate, lease, or sell parking lots; and coordinate automobile parking in the city with bus, subway, and highway transportation programs throughout the region. Grace Bassett, referring to the District commissioners' bill, said the Tydings bill "was one quarter as long, and far more sweeping in the powers that would be given public officials over parking rates and lot use and expansion."

In doing so, Senator Tydings emphasized that, "The overriding philosophy of my bill is that parking is an integral part of a balanced transportation system." He added that he was "leaning strongly" toward adding his bill as a rider to the revenue bill pending in the committee. He argued that the bill would stand a better chance with his rider attached. However, as Bassett pointed out, Senator Bible was "generally opposed to riders." She added that on the same day as release of the Tydings bill, Senator Bible had "reasserted his interest in moving the loan and tax proposals through Congress soon." [Bassett, Grace, "Tydings Bill Would Put D.C. in Parking Business," *The Evening Star*, January 14, 1966; Carper, Elsie, "Parking Board Given Condemnation, Rate Powers in New Bill," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 15, 1966]

On February 18, Senator Bible was ready to release his revenue bill containing the highway revenue measures to provide the city's matching funds. It also would raise taxes on beer, alcohol, telephone services, and tobacco products. In addition, it addressed the Federal payment to the District in lieu of taxes on Federal property, raising the limit from \$50 million to \$61.7 million for FY 1967. [Bassett, Grace, "5 District Tax Boosts Sought by Sen. Bible," *The Evening Star*, February 18, 1966; "Bill Readied Asking New City Taxes," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 18, 1966]

By then, President Johnson had introduced a new element in the District's freeway battles.

President Johnson Intervenes

With Congress having authorized and appropriated funds for rail rapid transit, President Johnson intervened on January 14, 1966, to jump start the highway component of the area's balanced transportation network.

He wrote to Engineer Commissioner Duke, beginning with the observation that, "Controversy continues to surround the plans for the interstate freeway system within the District of Columbia." Citing objections in Congress and "strong public resistance to some of the plans," he said that full support "requires every reasonable assurance that the plans have met the tests of the most careful and objective scrutiny, made in the light of the most recent data and circumstances."

President Johnson urged the Policy Advisory Committee, which General Duke still chaired, to “consider the desirability of a review of the freeway plans by a disinterested consultant with a high capability in systems analysis and operational research.” The consultant should examine the methodology and assumptions on which the highway network was based, as well as determining “the extent to which present data and other developmental information tend to validate the underlying forecasts.”

The goal was to assure the Federal Government and District residents “that whatever system may finally be built is based not only on the best techniques of highway planning, but also on a full appreciation of all significant needs and values.” He added that if General Duke agreed to initiate the independent review, it should be completed by April 1, 1966. “Review by that date would not delay the highway program”

President Johnson’s letter remained secret until January 25 when his annual message to Congress on the District of Columbia budget discussed “the dimensions and locations of the interstate freeway system within the District.” Concerns “should be promptly resolved”:

The magnitude of these projects, however, makes it important that both the Federal Government and the Washington community have full assurance that there will be no needless expenditures of moneys or dislocations of persons and businesses.

Some steps were already being taken. In an apparent reference to the K Street tunnel, he said “the Policy Advisory Committee was considering relocation of a portion of the Inner Loop Freeway.” He added:

I am requesting the Policy Advisory Committee to consider whether it should secure, in conjunction with the National Capital Planning Commission’s work on the 1985 comprehensive plan, a review of present highway plans. This review would examine not only methodology but also the basic assumptions regarding dislocation of families and businesses, real costs, Federal needs, and other community values on the basis of the most recent data available.

He asked for the study to be completed by April 1, 1966:

The Commissioners have advised me that the status of the most controversial items – the north leg of the inner loop and the northcentral [sic] freeway – is such that in the next few months there would be no major expenditures on these projects in any event except for planning.

He concluded his section on the highway program by saying he was “encouraged by the close cooperation which has been evident among the Federal and District agencies with responsibilities for developing the District’s transportation system.” He added, “Continued cooperation will insure a coordinated and efficient transportation network—one which will best serve the needs of the Nation’s capital.”

In releasing the text of the President’s January 14 letter, General Duke informed reporters that the Policy Advisory Committee had met on January 21 to discuss the full-scale review. Members

decided to employ management experts who had not been involved in freeway studies. To maintain objectivity, NCPC would develop the scope of work and advise the committee on consultant selection. In addition, NCPC and the Bureau of the Budget would assume staff responsibility for the study. General Duke confirmed President Johnson's statement that no major decisions on the highway and bridge controversies were planned before April 1.

The *Post* said the Policy Advisory Committee "has ordered a hard-nosed, McNamara-style analysis of road building plans for the Capital." Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara had brought the concept of "systems analysis" from his work at the Ford Motor Company to the Defense Department. Systems analysis involved breaking a complex problem down to its components, each of which can then be studied and resolved.

General Duke was confident the study would show that planning for the freeway system had been based on correct assumptions about population growth, projected traffic volumes, and potential impacts. "If we find we have overlooked anything," he told reporters, "we will revise our plans accordingly." [Flor, Lee, "D.C. Highway Review To Question Freeways," *The Evening Star*, January 25, 1966; Morgan, Dan, "Road Building Plans Under New Analysis," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 26, 1966]

The Policy Advisory Committee selected Arthur D. Little, Inc., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to conduct the freeway study. The company, in a January 30 advertisement seeking a secretary for its Washington office at 1735 I Street, NW., described itself as "the country's largest and oldest private consulting research firm." (The secretary had to be "an excellent typist" who could take shorthand at a minimum of "120 wpm.") ["D.C. Hires Firm to Study Road Plans," *The Evening Star*, January 27, 1966]

Revisiting Home Rule

In the second session of the 89th Congress, the home rule initiative was pending. Back home in Florence, South Carolina, Chairman McMillan of the House District Committee told a reporter from United Press International (UPI) that home rule didn't have a chance. He debunked one common explanation for his opposition:

He said he opposes home rule not because of a large number of Negroes in Washington but "because the city was created to be governed by Congress."

He also thinks that there is a liberal sprinkling of "communist sympathizers" behind the drive for self-government, UPI said.

"Don't get me wrong," McMillan was quoted as saying. "There's a lot of good people in it, but a lot of people would just like to take the Nation's Capital over. Some of these are known to be communist sympathizers."

Joseph Rauh, chairman of the District Democratic Party and ADA vice chairman, held a press conference on January 4 to unveil the strategy for securing home rule in the District. The preferred option was to attach the Senate-approved home rule bill as a rider to a bill approved by a committee whose chairman was favorable to home rule. He cited possibilities such as

Chairman Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) of the Committee on Education and Labor and Chairman Dawson of the Committee on Government Operations.

The other option was to send the Bible and Sisk bills to a House-Senate conference to reconcile differences. This option would work if Speaker McCormack, instead of Chairman McMillan, picked the House conferees. The House could then vote on a modified Senate bill. Rauh said the difference in the House vote was 24 members, but 4 had already said they would vote for the Senate bill. Pro-home rule forces had to change only 20 votes and, with “an all-out effort” by President Johnson, “we can make it.” [“Red Sympathizers’ Support Home Rule, McMillan Asserts,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 5, 1966; J. P. Leifermann of UPI conducted the McMillan interview]

Still, Senator Bible believed the Sisk charter bill was the “best hope.” He rejected the Rauh option of attaching the Senate bill as rider to a House bill. “Home rule must stand or fall on its own, he said. “I do not favor attaching home rule to any other legislation.” The suggestion for a conference committee with House participants appointed by House leadership would involve breaking tradition. Grace Bassett reported:

There have been some informal indications that McCormack would be willing to do that if he were actively encouraged by President Johnson.

The President has remained aloof from the controversy this year. Last session, the White House engineered a massive lobbying effort to wrest the mayor bill from the House committee by petition. But on the floor, the House voted a substitute charter-board bill sponsored by Rep. B. F. Sisk, D-Cal.

According to Majority Leader Albert, the votes were simply not there for the Senate bill. [Bassett, Grace, “Charter Bill Called D.C.’s Best Hope,” *The Evening Star*, January 11, 1966]

One target for home rule supporters was the Board of Trade. On January 11, the D.C. Coalition of Conscience met for an hour with F. Elwood Davis, the board’s president, and William Press, its executive vice president, regarding the board’s letter to newspapers around the country claiming Washingtonians “are opposed to pending home rule legislation.”

After the meeting, the coalition issued a statement accusing the board of a “stepped up campaign” that involved misrepresenting the city’s attitude toward self rule:

It is now time to say that the most potent opposition to effective Home Rule is not so much ‘up on the hill’ as it is in a relatively small group of men related to the Board of Trade and purporting to speak for the entire business community who do not want to relinquish the inordinate power they have long exercised over the affairs of the city.

The board’s claim was “an unjustifiable and irresponsible defiance of the public interest.”

In a telephone interview, Press denied a stepped up campaign. “It’s a perfectly normal thing if you’re attempting to influence Congress to use all the facilities out in the states.” As for whether

Washingtonians opposed home rule, he said, “This is our opinion.” Although the board opposed President Johnson’s bill, it favored voting representation in Congress for the city.

Press said the board agreed to give the coalition a list of the newspapers that had received its letter. The Reverend Walter E. Fauntroy, chairman of the coalition, said the group would send a rebuttal to all the newspapers. He added, “There’s a distinct possibility of direct action. There is the possibility of demonstrations with a big D.” [Lotito, Ernest A., “Trade Board Is Hit By Rights Group on Home Rule Action,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 12, 1966]

President Johnson, in his State of the Union message on January 12, referred to several pending District issues. He asked the House of Representatives to “complete action on three programs already passed by the Senate – the Teacher Corps, rent assistance and home rule.” He did not elaborate. During a press conference the next day, a reporter asked President Johnson about home rule:

Q. Mr. President, last night in your message you urged the House to act on a number of Senate-passed bills; one was home rule for the District of Columbia. I wonder if you are supporting the Senate version of this home rule bill, or if you would be for a compromise?

THE PRESIDENT. I am supporting the Senate version, as I did when I recommended it to the Congress. It's a matter for the Congress to work out, but my position is abundantly clear. I favor the Senate bill. I did when it was before the Senate. I did when it was defeated in the House.

He did not discuss the issue involving the Bible bill versus the Sisk charter bill. His suggestion that Congress would have to work it out prompted the *Post* headline: “President Won’t Press Home Rule.” [*The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 14, 1966]

Clergy on behalf of the Coalition of Conscience picketed the Board of Trade on January 17 in protest of its letter to newspapers. The Reverend Fauntroy told reporters, “We disbelieve that the majority of Washington civic, professional, and business leaders don’t want home rule.” He said “an overwhelming number” of those organizations supported it. The coalition planned a week of events to dramatize the support for home rule.

The *Post* reported:

Inside the building, Board employees grinned at the pickets through the plate glass front door with its sign: “Member Of The Active Force Behind Our City’s Progress.”

Two well-dressed men left the building, smiled tolerantly at the pickets and then stepped into the warmth of a chauffeur-driven Lincoln, registered to the Riggs National Bank.

Davis issued a statement:

We don't think this activity is constructive, particularly when directed at this organization that has been a leading and effective influence in the development of Washington [Landau, Jack C, "Trade Board Home Rule Views Hit," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 18, 1966]

In the Senate, Chairman Bible appointed Senators Kennedy and Prouty to work with him to confer with the White House and House leadership to secure home rule approval. Senator Bible preferred the Senate bill, but thought it might have to be revised to secure House approval. Perhaps the provision on the Federal payment in lieu of taxes on government property would have to be dropped or elected officials would have to be nonpartisan. He had "a built-in feeling that we may have to use the framework of the Sisk bill, but nothing would make me happier than to see a modified Senate bill. This would be 'Home Rule Now!'"

At the same time, he said, some District Committee members, including Senator Morse, "feel very firmly that we should stay very close to the Senate bill." ["Senate Group Is Named To Push for Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 26, 1966]

By the end of January, the D.C. Democratic Party had distributed pamphlets to constituents of 41 Democratic members of the House of Representatives who had voted for the Sisk bill. The pamphlets asked, "Did you know your Congressman voted 'No' to democracy in the Nation's Capital?"

At least one of the targeted Democrats was, according to Elsie Carper, "plenty mad" at the "blunderbuss campaign." Representative Hugh L. Carey (D-NY), who had a liberal voting record, had supported tactics to pass the home rule bill, even signing the discharge petition. However, when the House voted the home rule bill down, he voted for the Sisk bill. Referring to the "crack-pot pamphlet," he said, "I can't figure out how they think they are going to help home rule by getting me defeated and by electing some conservative Republican who is an enemy of home rule."

Despite his annoyance, Representative Carey still favored home rule. He said, "Home rule, yes, but Rauh rule, no!" [Carper, Elsie, "Democrats Here Irk Rep. Carey," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 31, 1966]

Representative Sisk was not impressed by efforts to promote the Senate home rule bill. Senate District Committee members were "whistling in the dark" if they thought the House would approve local self-government. He said:

I think the House has gone as far as it will go. In fact, enthusiasm is not nearly as good as it was last fall. We hit the high water mark in basic support then. It's substantially less now.

Given the uncertainties of a conference committee on the Bible and Sisk bills, he urged the Senate to accept the Sisk bill. It was the "best and quickest possible way for the District to get a measure of self government – I wish they'd agree to go ahead." [Elder, Shirley, "Pass My Bill or Give Up, Sisk Says of Home Rule," *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1966]

Rauh and other home rule supporters opposed the Sisk bill because of the uncertainties involved in securing approval of the charter. If the District charter made it through the District Committee, headed by opponent Chairman McMillan, and the Rules Committee, headed by opponent Chairman Smith of Virginia, its fate on the House floor was uncertain.

Therefore, Rauh sent a memorandum to Speaker McCormack and House and Senate home rule supporters to explain how the Senate bill could be given a second chance in the House. First, the Senate would amend the bill to meet objections raised in the House. The problem was getting the new bill to the House floor in view of the fact that the House had already rejected the Senate bill in its original form. Bringing the new bill to the floor would be unprecedented unless the chairman of the committee with jurisdiction brought it up. Because that chairman was Representative McMillan, such a scenario was unlikely. Elsie Carper summarized Rauh's recommendation:

Rauh said that McCormack can call on any House member who signed the discharge petition to offer the motion. Or, Rauh said, the motion could be made by House Majority Leader, Carl Albert (D-Okla.).

“When the House goes to the trouble to discharge a bill, it should be easier – not harder – for that bill to wind its way through the legislative process,” the memorandum argued.

“The House always has prided itself on having enough flexibility in its rules so that any new situation can be dealt with effectively,” it continued.

“The present Speaker has never been at a loss to meet fairly and adequately the exigencies that arise. He, like many of his predecessors, has fashioned rules to meet realities and has never allowed the machinery of the House to stop because a situation was unprecedented.

This memorandum goes on to declare “what a tragedy it would be if home rule fails because of tortured application of parliamentary procedure.”

Supporters envisioned dropping the Federal payment provision, which had raised objections on the House floor. They would substitute a provision calling on the Federal Government to assume a percentage of the city budget or to make a payment equal to a specified percentage of the city's income from taxpayers. [Carper, Elsie, “Rauh Asks House Speaker to Give Home Rule a Parliamentary Break,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 3, 1966]

On March 5, the Free D.C. Movement called for a boycott of businesses in northeast Washington unless they displayed “Free D.C.” stickers in their windows. To obtain an orange-and-black sticker, a business had to pledge to support home rule by picketing and sending telegrams. In prior canvassing, about 175 of 300 businesses had signed the pledge. On a loudspeaker on a car driving along H Street, NE., spokesman Marion Barry told shoppers:

Shop only where you see the “Free D.C.” sticker. Anyone with no sticker is your enemy.

By the end of the campaign, most businesses displayed the sticker. The Free D.C. Movement staged a 1-hour “victory march” along H Street. Barry told reporters that fewer than 25 businesses refused to post the sticker. The *Post* reported:

But a survey by The Washington Post yesterday indicated merchants who did put up the signs gained no business and those who did not suffered little or no retaliation from shoppers.

When Barry targeted an 11-block section of 14th Street, NW., for the next boycott, the NAACP declined to go along in an area the *Post* described as “areas of predominantly Negro population with some degree of racial tension” where businesses were “heavily dependent on Negro patronage.” A spokesman said the NAACP did not realize the tactic would become movement policy. Barry dismissed the NAACP’s decision because the organization contributed neither money nor people to support the movement.

As far as Representative Sisk was concerned, the boycott strategy jeopardized passage even of his charter bill. At this point, he said, the home rule bill was “as dead as a dodo bird” in the 89th Congress. [Clopton, Willard, and Aarons, Leroy F. “Home Rulers Start Boycott At 100 Stores,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 6, 1966; Clopton, Willard, and Carmody, John, “Free D.C.’ers End Drive In Northeast,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 13, 1966]

Revenue Bill

How the Little study would affect consideration of the revenue bill was an unknown. In early January, the Senate District Committee released the hearing record on the revenue bill. It contained a letter from General Duke addressing Representative Dawson’s objections. Replying to the Congressman’s statement that “virtually all elements” opposed the Interstate network. General Duke said that one man, whom he did not name, prepared virtually all the “factual” arguments for those fighting the freeways. The man was “a Washington lawyer working for the Southern Railway, who has been actively opposing the Department of Highways and Traffic of the District for at least five years as a ‘hobby’” He was referring to Peter S. Craig.

General Duke argued that an “objective evaluation” of anti-highway testimony led to the single, unnamed source. His report involved “selected statistics” to take advantage of short-term changes in traffic patterns to disprove the need for the freeways in years to come. He ignored professional planning and long-range needs. Moreover, the individual never had “presented credentials indicating any educational background, formal training or experience in traffic forecasting.”

The Engineer Commissioner also responded to Representative Dawson’s other points. The legislative authority for the District’s Interstate plan was in the Federal-Aid Highway Acts. Highways took up only 21.5 percent of city land, but if the city abandoned freeways, it would experience harmful congestion. The plan, far from lacking planning justification, was an “orderly, logical” development. As for the burden on taxpayers from the \$2 million in debt

service, the penny increase in the gas tax would pay for the debt. [“Commissioner Scores Gadfly on Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, January 5, 1966]

By February, Senator Bible was trying to decide on the best way to secure a revenue bill and home rule. President Johnson’s message on the District budget had addressed the Federal payment:

The Federal payment, which is now authorized at \$50 million, should be authorized at a substantially higher level by approval of the formula contained in H.R. 6889, and appropriations should be increased accordingly. That formula provides a fair, equitable, and flexible measure of the amount of Federal support that should be provided the District government.

Senator Bible said, “I’ve decided that the federal payment [provision] has got to come out of the home rule bill.” He was leaning toward including the payment provision in the revenue bill, but that controversial tax provision would delay the bill. The President’s call for a study of the District’s whole Interstate program was another problem. The House of Representatives might act on the city’s budget before the report was completed. “I recognize the problem,” Senator Bible said. “Without the revenue authorization, there may be no money in the House budget to build freeways.” He added, “We’ll move as quickly as we can. But it is just too early to gauge how quickly that can be.” [Bassett, Grace, “President’s Fiscal Plan Perils D.C. Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1966]

Interstate Compact

On February 4, Governor Miles E. Godwin, Jr., of Virginia signed legislation approving the interstate compact to create an authority to plan, develop, and finance the area’s rail rapid transit system. At the ceremony, State Senator Fenwick, who had steered the legislation through the General Assembly, said, “This probably is the most important piece of legislation for Northern Virginia ever to be enacted.”

With Maryland and Virginia having approved the compact, District approval was the final step. That, however, would have to come from Congress, and that could be affected by objections within the Washington area.

On January 18, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City had heard from Peter Craig, who opposed the compact as presently drawn. The compact was “totally unworkable and would be disastrous” for the system because it called for overrepresentation of the suburbs on the board of the transit authority. Craig also objected to inclusion of two District commissioners on the board. They were “not qualified by their method of selection, by their legal planning responsibilities or by their day-to-day duties to serve as adequate substitutes for the National Capital Planning Commission and the NCTA.”

At the next meeting of the Committee of 100, Craig planned to ask the members to approve a resolution he had drafted opposing the compact. It stated that the compact was not “feasible for area cooperation and sound planning.” Representatives of the District and the Federal

Government should constitute a majority of the board because 80 percent of mass-transit revenue would be generated in the District, where most of the usage would take place.

(Craig also spoke in support of the Georgetown Planning Council's proposal to demolish the Whitehurst Freeway, although he doubted the council's plan to build a replacement tunnel in the bed of the Potomac River was necessary:

He said opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge downstream from Georgetown had reduced Key Bridge and Memorial Bridge traffic and the existence of the Whitehurst Freeway "tended to perpetuate" the [proposed] span between Georgetown and Rosslyn.

(The Committee of 100 voted in support of demolition of the freeway, but said the committee would support replacing it with a tunnel in the river only "if necessary.") ["Committee of 100 to Join Foes of Transit Compact," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 19, 1966; Lewis, Robert J., "Fight to Raze Freeway Gains Added Impetus," *The Evening Star*, January 19, 1966]

Other opponents, such as the Democratic Central Committee in the District, appeared to complicate passage. The Joint Transportation Commission had reached out to the committee to discuss its objections. ["Godwin Signs Area Transit Compact Act," *The Evening Star*, February 4, 1966; "Transit Compact Clears Final Hurdle in Virginia," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 5, 1966; "Transit Pact Being Readied For Congress," *The Sunday Star*, February 6, 1966]

Star editors agreed with Senator Fenwick. They said he "did not exaggerate" because "in terms of the physical, economic and social development of Northern Virginia, not to mention the cohesion of the metropolitan community as a whole, surely no other single element of regional progress ranks in importance with this project." They hoped Congress would give its "consent" without delay. ["Virginia for Transit," *The Evening Star*, February 12, 1966]

On February 14, President Johnson sent a letter to Congress transmitting NCTA's first annual report. In 1965, rail rapid transit made "significant advances" toward addressing the area's transportation problems. After Congress authorized funding, NCTA "began the necessary work still remaining before actual construction can begin."

Much work, he said, remained to be done. In particular, the system will not achieve "maximum usefulness" until it is extended into Maryland and Virginia:

The interstate compact among Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia will be promptly presented to Congress for its consent, in order that the interstate authority may develop plans for a full regional system and a financial plan for its construction. Arrangements must be perfected to transfer the responsibility for the system in an orderly and proper way from the Agency to the interstate authority. These tasks are not easy, and it will require diligent effort on the part of many people and agencies to master the problems that remain.

The White House was giving “the fullest and most diligent consideration” to the problems. He concluded that “none of them will be allowed to stand in the way of an uninterrupted schedule of construction.”

The following day, the District commissioners voted their “vigorous support” for the compact. They did so informally because in the absence of home rule, their concurrence was “legally superfluous,” as the *Post* put it. General Duke said the compact “clearly is of the utmost importance.” He added that rail rapid transit and “the planned highway network [were] essential to the total well-being of this region.”

According to Polly Shackleton, however, the District Democratic Central Committee “still views the compact as unacceptable.” She and Chairman Rauh denied that efforts to change the committee’s views were underway. [“D.C. Commissioners Back Transit Compact,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 16, 1966;]

Post and *Star* editors were happy about the progress on the compact, but puzzled by the Democratic Central Committee’s opposition. According to the *Post*, the committee had been “playing an elaborate spoiling game with the compact” that reflected “such deep distrust of the suburbs that it would prefer to sacrifice years of other people’s work, rather than enter into mutual agreements.” The editors were not astonished by this wrongheaded position: “the Democratic Central Committee has regularly been wrong on transportation policy over the past five years.”

The *Star* referred to the committee’s “absurd antagonism toward the compact proposal.” The argument, “reduced to its simplest and silliest terms,” was that the committee would oppose any compact agreement if it gave the District, Maryland, and Virginia equal voices. “The fact is, of course, that anything short of equal participation would result in no compact at all – and no regional system.” The committee, in battling the District’s freeways, “at least paid lip service to the concept of regional rail transit.” In view of their “weird posture” on the compact, the editors wondered if the committee had “become so accustomed to a distorted view of the freeway program that no other element of the transportation picture comes through in clear focus, either.” [“Subway Logic,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 16, 1966; “One Sour Note,” *The Evening Star*, February 18, 1966]

The committee took strong exception to both editorials, resulting in letters to the editors. To the *Post*’s statement that the committee had “been wrong on transportation policy” for years, the letter signed by Rauh, Shackleton, and Dr. Jackson said the committee “vigorously opposed several highway projects because they involved wholesale destruction of homes, schools, playgrounds, churches and other community facilities.” They had been particularly concerned about uprooted families in view “of a critical shortage of low and middle-income housing here.” They also were concerned about spending millions of dollars for highways “in light of cut backs, because of lack of funds, for much needed schools and health and recreational facilities.”

In 1962, the letter stated, the committee had testified in opposition to the accelerated Interstate program, pointing out that the proposed East Leg and Northeast Freeways “would displace 10,000 people from their homes without any provision whatsoever for their relocation.” In part

because of these efforts, the East Leg Freeway was rerouted, interchange “C” was reduced in size, and other projects “have undergone complete restudy to minimize their damage.” They had testified in support of building freeways underground:

We were gratified when President Kennedy in 1963 ordered a restudy of the social, economic and esthetic impact of the North Leg, Potomac Freeway, Three Sisters Interstate route, and more recently by President Johnson’s request for another look at the traffic assumptions on which the Highway Department has based its program.

And we are particularly pleased to note that serious consideration is now being given Mrs. Rowe’s proposal to completely reroute the North Leg along K Street, thus saving thousands of homes that were doomed under the original plan.

The committee was in the lead on blocking the bus fare increase requested by Chalk, but disappointed that the decision implied the next fare increase request would be approved. “Therefore we are making an appeal to WMATC and, if necessary, to the court.”

The committee was one of the strongest supporters of rail rapid transit and believes in the need for an interstate compact authority:

In our view the presently proposed compact can lead only to delays in getting the subway built. Because of the urgency to get it under way we have suggested that an interim corporation be set up which can act until a suitable compact can be negotiated.

The letter concluded:

The Central Committee is proud of this record. We believe that the people of the District whom we represent will continue to support our efforts. [“Democrats on Transportation,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 24, 1966]

The committee’s letter to the *Star* addressed the editors’ reference to the committee’s “distorted view of the freeway program.” The letter, again jointly signed, repeated the objections cited in the *Post* letter. [“Transportation Policy,” *The Evening Star*, March 7, 1966]

Chairman Whitener introduced another concern in early March when he said he would not necessarily back the interstate compact that Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia had approved. “I want to study the alternatives. My interest is in getting holes dug and the trains running as quickly as possible.” Extending NCTA’s life might be the fastest way to get construction underway. “Also, I want to guarantee that the costs of expansion are paid by the suburbs.” [Elder, Shirley, “Whitener Won’t Back Area Transit Compact,” *The Sunday Star*, March 6, 1966]

As NCTA moved forward, it was attempting to comply with conditions the House Appropriations Committee had placed in its report on the District Appropriations Act before the committee would appropriate construction funds:

1. Results of an independent traffic survey be in;
2. Plans for issuance of bonds to finance the system be specific;
3. Stations in Maryland and Virginia be specifically located; and
4. Joint fares be arranged with local bus companies.

When McCarter appeared before the Senate appropriations subcommittee in March, he sought \$25 million for construction items, but not actual construction that was, at least in the House Appropriations Committee's view, contingent on satisfying the four conditions. He explained that \$12 million would allow NCTA to buy slabs of concrete and metal for tunnel liners. NCTA would use the rest of the funds to pay for materials.

As for the four conditions, McCarter said NCTA had contracted with Alan Voorhees and Associates to conduct and analyze the traffic survey. The interstate compact authority, if approved by Congress, would issue the bonds. If Congress did not approve the compact, the President would propose a public corporation to issue the bonds. McCarter would have to work with Maryland and Virginia officials on station locations because they, not NCTA, were planning stations. He was optimistic, saying, "Our working relations are excellent." NCTA could not arrange joint fares with the private bus companies until the traffic study was completed in July. Regarding the four points, McCarter said "we are alert to the problems and will be bending effort to produce sound, workable solutions."

Grace Bassett's account of McCarter's request concluded:

The House Appropriations Committee, in closed hearings earlier this year on the same budget, reportedly was dubious that the NCTA could spend in one year nearly so much money as McCarter was asking. [Bassett, Grace, "Millions Asked for Subway," *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1966]

North-Central Freeway

The freeway network was in doubt, as well. Supporters were trying to reduce the widespread criticism that was hampering their efforts. On January 1, 1966, Chairman-Director Funk said Maryland was considering reducing the North-Central Freeway to eight lanes. According to the *Star*:

Funk also said in a report on progress of the District-Maryland study of the freeway that a 107-foot high "tunnel-in-the-sky" proposal for the freeway was never intended seriously.

. . . . Two months ago a freeway restudy ordered on the double-decking proposal flamed into public view again because of reports that the state roads commission was considering building a 107-foot high "tunnel-in-the-sky." However, Funk said yesterday that there was never "any question of a 107-foot-high structure."

"That was a figment of somebody's imagination," Funk said.

The North-Central Freeway, as planned, was to have four lanes in each direction plus two reversible lanes for peak period traffic. The "third route to Baltimore," I-95, was to be built west

of U.S. 1 and connect with the North-Central Freeway around Fort Totten Park. Maryland had decided to build the route with eight lanes, instead of six as previously planned. “This means that the traffic coming to the beltway and trying to go downtown will be heavier than expected.”

The District and Maryland were awaiting the results of the study being conducted by Alan Voorhees and Associates on traffic volumes in the corridor:

Funk said the traffic survey was made because so many citizens’ groups claimed that the count of commuters showed that fewer people used the North-Central Freeway corridor. The building of a large freeway would “induce” traffic which otherwise might avoid the freeway, Funk said.

Funk said the restudy and enlargement of the third route to Baltimore “raised questions about whether we should induce traffic to it.”

He planned to meet with District officials to discuss double-decking a smaller North-Central Freeway over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. [“Cut to 8 Lanes Considered For North-Central Freeway,” *The Sunday Star*, January 2, 1966]

On January 15, the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association, based in northeast Washington, picketed the District Building in opposition to the North-Central Freeway and called for the resignation of Director Airis and Planning Chief Grant as well as the transfer of General Duke. In a petition handed out during the protest, the association charged that Airis and Grant “are motivated only by [a] desire to squander Federal highway funds in D.C. regardless of need, and to falsify facts and figures to deceive and confuse members of Congress and other interested parties as to the need for such freeways.” As for General Duke, he had “indicated repeatedly that he is in complete sympathy with and dominated by the highway lobby and the D.C. Highway Department.”

Thomas K. Chamberlain, the association’s president, told the protesters that the freeway controversy “should have been a closed issue years ago.”

Picketers, including 10 children, held signs declaring:

- Stop the Concrete Octopus
- We want Shady Streets, Not Shady Deals
- People Yes, Freeways No!
- D.C. Needs Homes, Not Roads
- Freeway Air Could Gag a Maggot

[“Oust Duke, 2 Road Aides, Freeway Foes Demand,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 16, 1966; “District Building Pickets Rap ‘Concrete Octopus,’” *The Sunday Star*, 1966]

In February, the Maryland State Roads Commission issued its revised 6-year program. It included a 10-lane, 4-mile North-Central Freeway from the District line to the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County. The estimated cost was \$16.4 million, including \$2.6 million for right-of-way.

The delay in routing the freeway prompted the *Post* to ask, “What ever happened to the North Central Freeway?” The location was, Bart Barnes reported, still under study. “There is no firm indication when a final decision on a proposed route for the expressway will be reached.” Airis told Barnes the decision should be “reasonably soon.” District and Maryland officials had the studies, but they were working on a plan that combined minimum displacement with maximum beauty. Funk said the railroad tracks remained the leading contender, but engineers had not committed to any route as yet. “He said engineers are still studying the possibility of elevating the freeway in some areas, stacking it in layers in others, and depressing it in still other areas.” [Rowland, James B., “Maryland Planning Beltway-D.C. Link,” *The Evening Star*, February 10, 1964; Barnes, Bart, “Northern Freeway Still Hazy,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 20, 1966]

The Arthur D. Little Report

On March 22, 1966, Arthur D. Little, Inc., released its \$60,000 report, *Transportation Planning in the District of Columbia 1955 to 1965: A Review and Critique*. As Professor Schrag explained, the report was “a blistering critique of highway planning.” [Schrag, page 122]

The blistering began in the preface:

The history of transportation planning in the Washington Metropolitan Area has not been salutary. It is marred by inter-agency conflict and a lack of coordinated effort and direction. Also, careful study of the planning work of the past ten years discloses only the most superficial attempt at area-wide comprehensive planning for long-range goals; and only a perfunctory reference, in one policy statement, to the possible use of the transportation plan – an instrument of salient effectiveness – to achieve those goals. Nowhere in our examination of the plans and reports prepared during the period from 1955 to 1965 were we able to find clear, definitive statements relating the role of transportation planning to programs for area development.

Transportation planning “had been carried out in a fragmented manner.” Planners were concerned about movement of people and goods into and out of the District, but the Little team could not find “sufficiently demonstrable proof of their concern with transportation planning as a device for directing area development to conformance with a plan or statement of policy objectives.” The planners were right to consider ways to accommodate the automobile, “but it need not destroy the essential fabric of the city in doing so.”

The report called for a moratorium on freeway construction, saying the program was based on inadequate data. The city should stop planning a system and instead plan one link at a time consistent with a master plan that could be revised as needed:

If the incremental approach is adopted in place of entire systems, the community will gain the time necessary to reevaluate its transportation needs in light of technical and methodological criticism raised herein and mesh those needs with over-all regional planning goals.

The report explained how it reached its conclusions:

Practitioners in the field of urban design are finding – on a world-wide basis – that the gravitational pull of cities is creating, in a very real sense, physical problems of a dimension that places in jeopardy the essential elements in the concept of a designed environment. Most of the major problems – pollution, transportation, housing, water, etc. – result from a past failure to recognize that all land cannot be considered suitable for urban development. Urban land is now a scarce resource and becoming increasingly so. Americans must allocate that resource over the future with greater wisdom than ever before.

Pressure from automobile traffic in many cities “resulted in building expressways and freeways that experience has proved to be palliative devices at best.” More than any construction, highway and rail lines contribute “to land-use relationships and to social and economic interaction within the urban region. The singularity of their impact as spatial determinants cannot be overstated.”

The Little firm was not contracted to study alternatives, in a few short months, or to present plans. However, the contract implied some attempt to recommend how to resolve the present impasse. The recommendations rested on several major concerns, beginning with:

- (1) Washington’s transportation planning has had the very valuable feature of considering both transit and freeways together.

NCTA was to be applauded for its foresight, but “an unclear definition of community goals and the role transportation is to play in arriving at those goals, made the choice of analytical methods extremely difficult and, at times, faulty.” Studies were based on present behavior, “but, even more disastrously, by behavior in 1955.” Forecasts of traffic based on experience were not qualified “in any reasonable way”:

Important changes in the economy and social composition of the Washington area which would influence transportation were not investigated. For example, gross studies were done of locational changes by economic establishments without attempting to understand the basis for those changes.

Recommendations “seemed to have little to do with the analytical methods employed, regardless of whether those methods were found to be adequate.” The Interstate network was “largely fixed in its present form by studies which often followed, rather than preceded, decisions made on particular facilities.” Given the advances in transportation planning for urban areas over the past 5-7 years, road segments could be tested with transit segments to provide “a reasonable degree of certainty that major errors will not be made. Such tests were not conducted.”

Little found it hard to conclude that data and information in published and unpublished reports would have resulted in the overall pattern of the proposed freeway system. “Therefore, our conclusion is that the present freeway plan has not been proved to be the most appropriate for the area.” The fact that very few alternative plans, if any, had been seriously evaluated underscored this conclusion.

- (2) What is said here of the inadequacies of the studies and the resulting recommendations for freeway proposals applies, in general, to the transit proposals which have been adopted.

As a result, Little considered the transit proposal, too, but in less detail.

- (3) We seriously doubt that any but the most current and on-going transportation planning program could successfully meet the explicit concerns contained in the list of criteria supplied by the Steering Committee of the Policy Advisory Committee.

Little emphasized that while its report was critical, similar criticisms could be made “of transportation planning efforts in many other large urban areas of the United States.” However, in view of President Johnson’s desire that Washington should be a model for the country, “we doubt that there are sufficient and reasonable bases for many of the transportation proposals that have been made for the Washington Metropolitan Area.

- (4) Of major concern in the current Washington situation is the role of the Bureau of Public Roads.

Little commended BPR for its contribution to American transportation and its success in implementing the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The problems BPR was experiencing in urban areas around the country illustrated a need to reevaluate its standards and substitute “a new approach to costs and benefits that allows for non-quantifiable costs such as aesthetics.” The Washington region could be a demonstration area for this new approach for high density communities.

The 90-10 matching share of the Interstate program was “contributing to acceptance, on the part of local communities, of unbalanced transportation systems: the imbalance being in favor of the automobile.” Resistance to BPR’s standards (“viewed by many as a ukase”) was increasing sharply in urban areas, as illustrated by the impasse in the District of Columbia.

BPR’s “cost/benefit formula is inconsistent and incompatible with urban transportation needs; that by limiting alternatives it places undue constraints on the community’s choice of options.” Further, “There is evidence also that a rising level of aesthetic awareness, together with a rising demand that urban amenities be preserved, make the Bureau’s present schedule for completing the Interstate System unrealistic.”

- (5) Although our investigation indicates serious methodological and technical deficiencies in the system as planned, it does not necessarily follow that each link in the proposed system be considered a weak investment.

Little recommended a “link-by-link evaluation on a ‘low risk-high risk’ comparative basis and that priorities be established in accordance with criteria designed to assure ‘least risk’ commitment.” In short, such an approach was preferable to “making the massive, irrevocable commitments called for in accepting the proposed ‘system’ in toto.” Using an incremental approach, “the community will gain the time necessary to reevaluate its transportation needs in light of technical and methodological criticism raised herein and mesh those needs with over-all regional planning goals.”

The Policy Advisory Committee should keep in mind “the inherent diseconomies in the incremental approach to transportation system planning.” The incremental approach was not necessarily the only or best way to create a balanced transportation system, but “the special and unique role of Washington” meant that the incremental approach was necessary. In weighing cost-benefit aspects of the transportation network, the advisory committee should consider “the non-quantifiable variables that go into the transportation equation.” The resulting statistical uncertainties were less important than policy and goal uncertainties. “Therefore, the appreciation of non-quantifiable variables such as aesthetics, image, style and character must be reflected in policies rather than numbers.”

The Little report contained recommendations for several parties involved in the impasse, beginning with the Policy Advisory Committee. It should urge its member organizations to develop policy guidelines for all agencies concerned with transportation. The criteria should be based on projected space needs and employment patterns of the Federal Government in the area; housing needs and inventory; transportation plans related to the city’s ability to relocate displaced, low-income families; coordination with community renewal programs, land-use plans, and urban renewal; interagency cooperation and policy guidance; and aesthetic values.

The report urged BPR to request authorization for a “Special District for Transportation Planning Purposes” spanning the National Capital Region; revise its cost-benefit formula for the Interstate System to accommodate non-quantifiable variables such as aesthetics; revise its standards for urban areas; and request authorization to revise its compliance dates and requirements as they apply to metropolitan areas. In addition, BPR and the District should “delay action on all proposals for extending the District’s freeway network until the highway plan has been re-examined.”

The report urged the District commissioners to accept the incremental approach to transportation planning in place of the “total system” concept. They also should join with State and Federal agencies to establish a Regional Transportation Planning Agency that would have veto power over all transportation proposals affecting the National Capital Region. [*Transportation Planning in the District of Columbia 1955 to 1965: A Review and Critique*, Arthur D. Little, Inc., March 22, 1966, pages iii-xv/xvi, underlining in original]

H. C. Broley, Little’s project director for the report, summed it up. “The present situation strikes me as six traffic solutions in search of a plan.”

Reaction to the Little Report

The report had been kept secret until it was delivered to the Policy Advisory Committee on March 23. Newspapers reported initial reactions:

- General Duke: “I’m in a state of shock.” The consultants “reached very damaging conclusions without recourse to facts.”
- NCPC Chairman Rowe: “I think it’s just fine. It’s looking at the city in toto, not just transportation.”
- Director Airis: It is a “cursory and superficial report, which betrays a prejudice on the part of its authors which is decidedly anti-freeway The American people have a love affair going on with the automobile and that’s the reality we must deal with.”
- Senator Case: The Little report was “heartening news to those who are concerned, as I am, with preserving and enhancing the livability of our Nation’s Capital.” He urged the Policy Advisory Committee to “heed this warning of its consultants, the city and its people” Arthur D. Little, Inc., apparently shared with him “the growing belief that the freeway program is working at cross purposes with other vital programs for the improvement of the quality of life in Washington.”
- William Walton, chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts: The report was “amateurish, in a strained way” and “very naïve.”

Professor Schrag discussed General Duke’s shocked reaction to the report. He had chosen Arthur D. Little, Inc., “seemingly confident that the consultant would ratify the highway program. But the report exploded in his hands.” Little had read not only official reports “but Craig’s studies as well.” Duke “apparently destroyed most copies, but the damage had already been done.” [Schrag, page 122]

Jack Eisen reported that Horsky, who had written President Johnson’s January 14 letter to General Duke, was one of the select Washingtonians interviewed for the report:

Following his interview, reports began circulating that Horsky had recommended against building any radial freeways within the Capital Beltway, a position close to that later advocated by the consultants.

Horsky told a newsman this report was “a damnable lie” and was based on a fragment of what he actually said. What he told Little’s people, Horsky said, was that many Washingtonians hold such a view while others hold a contrary view.

Broley confirmed Horsky’s account, but Eisen added:

Although one of Horsky’s original assignments when he was appointed by President Kennedy was resolution of the freeway issue, highway officials came to regard him as anti-highway and became reluctant to work with him.

General Duke, Eisen wrote, was perhaps “the man most frustrated by the rekindled controversy”:

Duke, a flexible man usually willing to seek compromise solutions, inherited a freeway restudy ordered by Mr. Kennedy and now faces a new crisis because of another restudy ordered by Mr. Johnson.

Friends say he is understandably concerned over the effect of the unresolved dispute on his future Army career.

General Duke's 3-year tour as Engineer Commissioner was likely to end in 1966. "Highway officials also foresee that the new Engineer Commissioner's arrival is sure to bring a period of hesitancy and lost momentum."

Officials feared the Little report would further stall congressional action on the revenue bill. If so, Chairman Natcher might refuse to appropriate funds beyond those legally accounted for. Pro-transit observers were afraid the report would reopen the freeway versus subway dispute that NCTA, and especially its new Administrator, had done so much to put behind them. An anonymous official who was not a member of the Policy Advisory Committee said. "It's my guess that if PAC adopts the Little recommendations, there won't be one damn nickel appropriated for the subway."

The Policy Advisory Committee planned to meet on March 28 to discuss the report with staff of Arthur D. Little, Inc., before preparing a response to the White House by April 1.

After the initial shock, District highway officials began picking the report apart. For example, the report said the District had not considered open space and park possibilities in designing the Center Leg Freeway between D Street, SW., and New York Avenue, NW. General Duke pointed out that the freeway would be built beneath ground level and that his staff had negotiated extensively with other agencies and received congressional approval for the freeway. After the Commission of Fine Arts considered but recommended against parks along the freeway, the District changed its plans. Chairman Walton said he could have corrected the error, and had offered to be interviewed, but Broley never called:

"If he had, he would have learned that the Commission of Fine Arts held perhaps 15 meetings with the Highway Department. We corrected their designs down to the last stone facings.

"Broley claimed they didn't know that. It's no wonder. They didn't come to see us."

Another inaccuracy was the report's recommendation that the District continue its plan to demolish the Whitehurst Freeway. The District had no such plans.

[Eisen, Jack, "Halt All D.C. Freeway Programs, Build on Small Scale, Study Asks," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 24, 1966; Flor, Lee, "Consultants Blast D.C. Freeway Plan," *The Evening Star*, March 24, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "Road Dispute Imperils City Revenue Bill," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 25, 1966; Flor, Lee, "D.C. Officials Fire Back At Attack on Freeways," *The Evening Star*, March 25, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "Highway-Subway Plans Imperiled By Consultant's Anti-Freeway Report," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 27, 1966]

As might be expected, highway critics were pleased by the Little report. The Metropolitan Citizens Council for Rapid Transit, a coalition of seven citizen groups, hailed the report:

A path has potentially been opened to development of a rational, truly balanced transportation system adequate for the needs of Washington and its environs without engulfing the city, driving out its people, or smothering its beauty and national character with costly and irrevocable concrete.

The council hoped the Little report would halt explosive freeway growth, but recognized that “freeway-oriented special interests” were “already threatening civic blackmail, with more or less open threats to wreck the rapid transit program if denied unlimited freeway sprawl.”

The Save Takoma Park Committee saw the report in the context of citizen testimony advocating deferral of freeway expansion until the rail rapid transit system was in operation. Transit was, the committee said, the indispensable factor in a balanced transportation system. [“7-Group Citizens Unit Hails Report Rapping Freeway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, March 28, 1966]

The only positive thing the *Star* could say about the report was that the consultant had only 7 weeks to perform a complex review. Otherwise, a *Star* editorial said the report “surely deserves to rest in a niche of its own—preferably one marked ‘Filed and Forgotten.’” The “murky and superficial document” had not “resolved anything, but instead has added to the dissension.”

After a brief study, Little had “concluded that virtually all of the engineering, social and economic premises of Washington’s freeway planning during the past 10 years have been either fallacious or inadequate—and in the process made the same sort of blanket indictment against the planning basis for Washington’s urgently needed rail transit system.” No further construction should be started, according to Little, “until new, more effective techniques of planning, design and social adjustment are developed.”

The editors criticized the crux of the report, namely its suggestion to stop freeway construction as part of a total system and instead build one link at a time to reduce the chance of error. The problem with this thinking was that freeways “operate as a system or not at all.”

Further, the editorial observed that the report’s “basic philosophy seems to be that freeways are bad because they bring cars into cities—and that if it weren’t for the freeways the cars would go away.” Given the sprawling nature of modern urban areas, the *Star* said that if the region is to function “in any true sense as metropolitan communities, freeways are an essential part of the skeletal system”:

The second point is simply that automobiles, no matter how hard the pill is for some people to swallow, are here to stay. Transit, if it is attractive enough, will bear its share of the burden. But increasing numbers of others will drive, and if they don’t drive on freeways they will drive on congested business and residential streets, destroying the very values that the anti-freeway people are trying to protect.

If President Johnson abandoned his long support of the District's freeway program and endorsed the Little report, "the consequences for Washington would be severe." The timing could not have been worse, since Federal and District officials "were at last on the verge of resolving their differences on the basic elements of a freeway system for the city." Understandably, the Policy Advisory Committee would discuss the study. "After that discussion, however, the most sensible disposition of the report is for the PAC to file it—for good." ["Make No Little Plans for Washington," *The Evening Star*, March 27, 1966]

Gib Crockett, the *Star's* longtime editorial cartoonist (1933-1975), illustrated the report by depicting an elevated freeway coming to an abrupt end as a motorist drives through barriers and plunges to the ground. The caption: "Arthur D. Little, Inc., solves the freeway problem."

The Washington Post called the report a "broadside" in the "curious local tradition" of issuing reports every 2 or 3 years, "each of them roundly attacking its predecessors." The report did not point to any "specific mistakes" in the planning of the freeways or rail network, but "merely observes that all of these decisions are based on questionable data." True, those reports were based on "an imperfect view of the future," but that was "a defect that cannot be eliminated." The suggested moratorium while further study is undertaken was "a formula for delay." With area officials hammering out resolutions of their disputes, the Little report would "serve only those who want to stop the freeways altogether, and those who do not want to start building the subway." The *Post* editorial concluded:

Large transportation plans need to be constantly questioned and constantly reviewed; but to pause now for years of bickering over planning theory would be undiluted irresponsibility. ["Still Another Report," *The Washington Post*, March 26, 1966]

The *Post's* local columnist, Bill Gold, said the idea of halting the freeway program to "take a fresh look at the whole problem" might be called "a Capital idea." He extrapolated the Little idea by suggesting:

What we ought to do now, obviously, is suspend all activity until we can hold a plebiscite to select a panel that will appoint a commission authorized to hire a new team of experts to restudy the feasibility of compiling an index of all the committees that have in the past inventoried and catalogued the various studies aimed at finding out what happened to all the policies that were scrapped when new policies were decided on by somebody else. Once that's out of the way, I think we could go full steam ahead with preliminary plans for a new study of why nothing can be done right now. [Gold, Bill, "This Is Washington," *The District Line, The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 25, 1966]

The Policy Advisory Committee met in General Duke's office on March 28 with the 12-member team from Arthur D. Little, Inc., that prepared the report. In this public session, Broley read a statement about press coverage of the report and individual criticism of it:

Much of it seems to imply that ADL may be biased against highways This is not true In the past . . . we recommended highway construction in support of area development, having given full attention to economic and social impact

Most of the press interpretation of the report have failed to make clear the terms of reference for our study [We] were asked to review past and current transportation studies. The criteria – economic, social and technical – on which reasonableness were to be evaluated were specified for us by the District of Columbia. There were 14 such criteria described in precise terms, and these were not dreamed up by us as seems to be implied [by the press].

The company's goal was to review the freeway program based on transportation planning over the past 10 years. The firm concluded that the program was based on outdated and inadequate data and methods, Broley said. He also said he regretted not interviewing William Walton.

Professor Leon Moses of Northwestern University, a member of the team, said that one area where data was entirely absent was the location of Federal employment centers. BPR Administrator Whitton replied that he favored good planning. At some point, though, an operating highway agency must tell planners "to stop planning and let us start building."

Lee Flor described General Duke's questioning of the Little representatives as a "cross-examination." They admitted they knew about plans to build the Center Leg Freeway in a tunnel across the National Mall at the foot of Capitol Hill when they criticized the plan for not considering aesthetics. General Duke also wondered why the report indicated that plans to tunnel the South Leg Freeway had been approved when they had not been. The District had agreed to tunnel only two segments of it. He asked why the consultants ignored what was approved for the two freeways. Flor reported:

The consultant's reply was vague. During the intense dispute, one of the consultants freely admitted there was a large semantics gap between the consultants and the critics. In other words, language used to describe freeways and language in the consultant's report had different meaning, depending on the previous opinions and conclusions of the members of the advisory committee.

General Duke also criticized the report's finding that only two possible transportation systems had been checked via computer. He said that more than 100 systems had been analyzed by computer since 1959.

After the public meeting, the Policy Advisory Committee decided in a closed session to defer action on the report for a couple days before deciding what to tell President Johnson. General Duke announced that the proposed moratorium was "impractical." Committee members were trying to "blend" some of the report's other recommendations into plans for the Interstate freeway network. He acknowledged that "quite a gray area" exists.

Some members were trying to find a way to keep the freeway program going, which implied they had already rejected the idea of a moratorium. Flor's assessment was that Chairman Rowe of

NCPC and Director Hartzog of NPS approved the report. “Three members are outspokenly critical of the report Two members are obviously trying to make some sort of compromise.” [Flor, Lee, “Policy Unit Rejects Freeway Halt Plea,” *The Evening Star*, March 29, 1966; Eisen, Jack, “City Rejects Moratorium On Freeway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 29, 1966]

The Doxiadis Plan for the Georgetown Waterfront

Long before creation of the Nation’s capital, Georgetown was a thriving port community. Writing in 2014, historian Camden Schwantes summarized the early history:

There was already a tobacco trade and warehouses along the river in what became the town of George [King George II]. Founded in 1751, the small port town’s original boundaries only extended north from the river a few blocks to Gay Street, now S Street NW. In fact, one of the original boundary stones [of the District of Columbia] can still be found in the backyard of the Laird-Dunlop House, on N Street NW. The western and eastern boundaries have remained static. The heights, where the university stands, marks the western edge, and in the east, Georgetown is bounded by Rock Creek

When the government was looking for a new place to settle after the Revolutionary War, Georgetown was an ideal place to begin. It had an established community, complete with taverns and boardinghouses for the commissioners to stay in as the district plans were laid out.

As the Potomac River silted over in the 19th century, trade that depended on navigation gradually disappeared. During the early years of the Nation’s capital, Georgetown was a separate town within the city unit. In 1871, as discussed earlier, Congress converted the capital consisting of three separate units (Washington County, Georgetown, and Washington City, which contained the government buildings) into a territory similar to the territories of the West with a presidentially appointed Governor and a nonvoting delegate to Congress, only to change it in 1874 to governance by a three-man board of commissioners that was still in effect in the mid-1960s:

Since 1871, the city of Georgetown has been, politically speaking, nothing more than a neighborhood. [Today], Georgetown remains seemingly a separate town from Washington. [Schwantes, Camden, *Georgetown*, Images of America, Arcadia Publishing, 2014, pages 7-8]

In March 1965, the *Post*’s architecture critic, Wolf Von Eckardt, described the historic Georgetown waterfront, which he defined as “the area south of M Street and between Rock Creek Park and Key Bridge, an area no larger than the grounds of Georgetown University or Fort McNair”:

At precisely the point where the Potomac River bends southward and broadens to afford a majestic view of the National Capital, we have managed to dump an ugly industrial mess, elevated freeway and sewage plans.

The area was being rebuilt by urban renewal and private initiative:

In these three years, private initiative has, to be sure, tastefully remodeled some of the dilapidated structures in this area. But most of the remnants of Georgetown's port day – some lovely old row houses and, of course, the picturesque Chesapeake & Ohio Canal towpath – are still overwhelmed by a medley of industrial plants, vacant lots and junk yards. Uncertainty about bridges and highways and a temporary slackening of the market for office space has inhibited drastic change.

The critical question involved the Potomac River Freeway paired with Whitehurst Freeway to provide an Interstate corridor for Maryland-Washington traffic. Whatever its value to the transportation system (a point in dispute), whether the freeway was built and the Whitehurst Freeway retained would be keys to the future of the historic Georgetown waterfront:

But change is bound to come, and come fast. The question is only whether it will be planned or unplanned. Unplanned change is easy to foresee. The Whitehurst Freeway is about to be doubled [if the Potomac River Freeway were to be elevated] and so will the blight beneath it. Some of the industry is still healthy but none is really happy. There is no place to expand and prosper. It is increasingly inaccessible and the markets are moving further and further away. Yet only the power of eminent domain and Federal relocation funds are likely to move it for decades.

Von Eckardt thought it “unlikely that the existing residential and other worthy buildings below M Street can long survive economic pressure. [Von Eckardt, Wolf, “Georgetown's View of the Potomac Is an Industrial Mess,” *Cityscape*, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 28, 1965]

To address the controversy surrounding freeway plans for the Georgetown waterfront, the District Highway Department had contracted with Constantine Doxiadis for \$10,000 in December 1965 to recommend a solution. The plan was to include park areas, residential and commercial buildings, pedestrian access, and recreation facilities for the area from K Street to the Potomac River between Key Bridge and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The plans were to be blended with the planned Potomac River Freeway to be built adjacent to the elevated Whitehurst Freeway.

As mentioned earlier, Doxiadis was one an internationally renowned city planner, but not a freeway admirer. He gave a hint of his ideas in a *Post* article published on October 3, 1965. Given the inevitable increase in the population of the Washington metropolitan area, he saw two options for accommodating this growth:

We can turn downtown Washington, which was conceived by L'Enfant for 200,000 inhabitants, into the center of this new 15 million metropolis. But that would kill it.

Or, with proper action, we can remodel Washington to serve 2½ million people efficiently and create new nearby centers for 2½ million each until we accommodate the total population we need.

The restructuring of the first option would take 10 to 20 years, during which millions more would arrive to live in the area:

That means more pressures, more economic investment, more cars. So we will have to have another urban renewal scheme to demolish what we did during the first 10 years and again change the structure of the inner city. This would mean we move in a vicious circle. This should not continue.

Around the world, city problems were compounded by the networks built to service them:

The networks are the newest element in the city. The modern city is out of control because a haphazard pattern of highway, railway, airfield, water supply, sewerage and drainage, electric, gas and telecommunication networks preceded city expansion out into the countryside.

In the absence of a unified plan for this expansion, “the essential networks commit us to a confused pattern”:

We start building houses only when there is a road, and we follow the road. Since there is no money to build another road which would be better for the houses, we build along an existing one which was conceived not to serve the new houses but to supply an industrial plant. And because there is a water main, we find it cheaper to connect a new housing project to it instead of going another way which would be better from every point of view.

In short, “We build first and think later.” In planning the new centers of his second option, planners must “determine what functions the new centers should have.” Each new center must have the same facilities as the old city center – “movies, shops, repairmen,” but must be linked with speed in mind:

The interconnections between the centers should be one-way, high-speed tunnels. I believe modern technology would easily allow us 200 mph. But even with present-day cars, we could have 100 mph speeds. If the centers were 20 miles apart, it would take only 12 minutes to get from one to another.

Later, with progressing technology, we will drive our vehicles to the tunnel entrance where a radar system will take over and speed them along on strips while the driver reads his newspaper. Such devices are already in the experimental stage. We also know that railroad systems are experimenting with speeds of hundreds of mph

Such fast interconnections would be essential because if the travel time – not necessarily the distance – between centers were too great, Washington could not function properly as the central city. My concern would be to serve the traditional function of the Federal City first. But the peripheral centers should be strong enough to thrive, or people would crowd back into Washington again.

In planning the peripheral centers “we can learn from our past mistakes.” We should touch nature as little as possible. We don’t want to change the city features that have served people well. We do not want to create “isolated or segregated groups”:

The only new element, then, is the transportation network, which is breaking down and must be radically changed. Up to the 18th century, it was meant only for man: streets and cross streets defined every block in the city. Then came the automobile – and chaos. Cars have to stop at every corner for traffic lights. You cross the city 9 mph, the speed of buggies of 100 years ago.

The fact is that the faster our means of transportation the longer it takes man to move from the outskirts of the city to the center. It took ten minutes in the 18th century, 20 minutes in the 19th century, and now it takes more than 40 minutes.

Thus, faster vehicles provide less service than the slower vehicles of the past:

We must conceive of a technological system that makes use of the faster vehicles. First, let’s take all traffic from the surface of the earth and put it under the skin, as nature does with our veins and arteries. The machine that moves fast cannot be in the same space as the man who walks.

We are beginning to understand this and separate freeways, permitting no access to them. But we have to develop a whole new system for motor traffic, and that system has gradually to go underground. This may seem expensive, but in the long run it would be economical. We now lose more than 50 per cent of the surface of cities to transportation and other networks. If they went underground, our cities could be much more compact. Furthermore, we would get rid of traffic noises and much air pollution.

On the surface, people could walk and children could run amid improved landscaping.

The new centers could determine many aspects of their lives, but the government “must create the big framework within which committees can make their own decisions”:

This will take planning, and what we do now is not planning. What we do is 10 per cent planning and 90 per cent solving existing problems and adjudicating conflicts between various interests.

Thus, the framework would be carefully planned, “but first we should be sure that highways go between communities and not within communities.” [Doxiadis, Constantine A., “How a City Can Grow Without Growing Pains,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 3, 1965]

On March 16, 1966, Doxiadis Associates unveiled its plan for the Georgetown waterfront. Doxiadis called the mile-long waterfront “a little treasure” that he would preserve in layers. The surface layer would include terraces, small buildings, restaurants and shops, exhibitions, art galleries, recreation, and parks. What he called an urban park would attract tourists and area residents without burdening the remainder of Georgetown. The existing waterfront – including the smelly Milton Hopfenmaier Rendering Company at 330 K Street and a vacant power plant

used by Capital Transit during the streetcar era – generated little economic benefit, but the urban park would yield high returns. Further, as Von Eckardt put it, “In addition it would attract some of the taverns and other Georgetown attractions which now often bother the town’s residents.”

He did not propose housing, which he said would be inconsistent with the history of the waterfront. He preferred the “small town” idea. If housing were included, he predicted that a few families would be able to live there, while pressure would grow for high-rise buildings that would, in his view, be disastrous.

Below the top level would be a second layer of parking for “thousands of cars.” The lowest level would serve transportation systems, including freeways. The Doxiadis plan suggested that the four-lane, two-way Whitehurst Freeway should remain in service “for many years,” but would be demolished when it had completed its economic life. The four-lane Pacific River Freeway would be on that lower level where room would be available to add lanes when the Whitehurst Freeway was finally demolished.

(Almost immediately, discussions of the Doxiadis plan indicated it included the demolition of the elevated freeway as part of the waterfront layers, leaving out the detail that the plan proposed to tear the freeway down only after “many years” when it had used up its economic value.)

In sum, Doxiadis said, “My study shows where we can go from where we are today to this ideal gradually, in phases.”

General Duke said the plan was a “bold, practical and imaginative long-range solution.” He added that “Doxiadis has offered superb reasons for his proposal,” but General Duke stressed that it was a long-range proposal because it “would obviously cost a lot of money.” As for the result, “It remains to be seen what we do with it.” [Hornig, Roberta, “Doxiadis Plan Unveiled for Georgetown,” *The Evening Star*, March 16, 1966; Von Eckardt, Wolf, “Park Urged for Georgetown Shore,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 17, 1966]

The Georgetown Planning Council, consisting of architects, city planners, and landscape architects residing in Georgetown, liked the part of the Doxiadis plan that called for tearing down the Whitehurst Freeway. However, with the backing of citizens’ groups, the council disagreed with his vision of the future waterfront as an urban park. The council advocated replacing the elevated freeway with a six-lane freeway in a tube under the river, an option the District Highway Department had rejected, and designation of the area as a National Historic Site. It also favored “a pleasant hilltown” of squares, plazas, and a waterfront promenade. [“Georgetowners Propose Residential Waterfront,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 19, 1966]

For Von Eckardt, the Doxiadis plan added to the expert voices whose “accumulative weight should now sink the Whitehurst Freeway out of sight.” Removal of “this blight” would be a significant first step in fulfilling “President Johnson’s promise of 14 months ago ‘to make the Potomac a model of beauty and recreation for the entire country.’”

The industry in the waterfront area, according to a 6-year old study, could survive relocation:

But there is no esthetic or economic gain in redeveloping the area if one-tenth of its 97 acres is covered by an elevated structure which, inevitably, turns all the rest into the kind of dismal slum New York's Third Avenue used to be before the El was torn down some decades ago.

In a May 1962 waterfront proposal, architect Chloethiel Smith had proposed to depress the freeway, but "nothing came of it." Now three expert groups were in agreement that the waterfront "must be freed of the ugly, elevated freeway." First, the Little report urged consideration of removing the Whitehurst Freeway. Second, the Georgetown Planning Council had proposed putting all freeway traffic through the area in an underground tube in the river off the waterfront. Third, Doxiades proposed a four-lane Potomac River Freeway in a tunnel under the waterfront "and then putting the present elevated freeway underground":

If expertise has meaning, this ought to clinch it at last. There is certain to be a good deal more hassling and argument over the freeway program. The fight has, in fact, already begun.

But tearing down the freeway had to be "an essential part" of the President's plan to provide "the city with efficient transportation without threatening its beauty, livability and orderly development." [Von Eckardt, Wolf, "Freeway Must Go, 3 Experts Agree," *Potomac Watch*, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 27, 1966]

Star editors were encouraged by the Doxiadis plan. "Most important of all, perhaps, Mr. Doxiadis accepts the fact that the Potomac freeway is necessary, and nowhere does he suggest that its completion now, in whatever form, need preclude the sort of waterfront he envisions for the distant future." Whether his views would resolve the controversy over the freeways remained to be seen. "But it is just possible that they might." If a tunnel freeway were economically feasible, "that might at least be considered":

The more pressing need now, however, is that the inter-agency freeway committee created by the President should arrive at a firm conclusion once and for all on the basic form of the entire central-city freeway system – of which the Potomac section is only a part – as a single package. Mr. Johnson said early this year that he expected such a decision within a few months. He is still waiting for it, along with everybody else. ["River Freeway," *The Evening Star*, March 19, 1966]

The *Post's* editorial board also liked the Doxiadis plan, including its concept of a waterfront area "alive" with activities and large-scale parking off K Street:

The central concept is, of course, the tunnel. The Doxiadis study was commissioned by the Highway Department. Highway men, citing construction costs, have traditionally advocated surface or elevated roads. But additional monetary cost can be balanced by the demands of an urban society for parks and open space, for a city increasingly congenial to the needs of those who live in it. There is a great deal of flexibility in the Doxiadis tunnel: it could begin at several different points, it is designed for eight lanes but could be expanded at some later date, it could be built without disrupting traffic along the

present freeway. Those pushing frantically for completion of the Federal Highway System by the 1972 deadline will undoubtedly see in this concept a Pandora's box.

The editors did not want to argue about rival plans for the surface of the renewed Georgetown waterfront. They recognized that the questions about the freeway-in-a-tunnel remained to be decided, but "if the tunnel concept should be accepted, it would be a great victory for those who would revitalize the city. The skirmish over what exactly should be built above the tunnel is a separate question." ["A Tunnel for Georgetown?" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 27, 1966]

(Doxiadis Associates' *A Georgetown Waterfront Study* was one of Doxiadis's last major consulting jobs in the Washington area. On June 28, 1975, he died in Athens after a long illness. He was 62 years old.)

Policy Advisory Committee Acts

On March 31, the Policy Advisory Committee unanimously approved a statement on the District's freeway plans. Based on the Little report, the committee had carefully reviewed the city's freeway program "and is of the opinion that certain projects which have been approved and on which construction is either underway or imminent should proceed." The projects included the Center Leg under the Mall and north to New York Avenue; the Southeast Freeway and interchange "C" to Barney Circle; and the South Leg, which should include the maximum amount of tunneling permitted by traffic needs "to preserve the parks and monumental area through which this freeway must pass."

Consideration should continue for other projects. Extension of the Center Leg from Massachusetts Avenue to New York Avenue "should be reviewed to insure compatibility with the proposed K Street alternate and to permit flexibility in subsequent decisions pertaining to the North Central Freeway." The statement said, "final design of additional freeways in the eastern portion of the District must depend on further study, including consideration of connecting with Kenilworth Avenue [Expressway]" instead of building other connections to serve traffic from the north and east.

In November 1963, the committee had recommended maximum use of tunneling for the North Leg Freeway. Now it said the recommendation "has resulted in an attractive plan to construct this segment of freeway entirely in a tunnel under K Street, N.W.," as an alternative for the North Leg. The tunnel would run between Rock Creek Park and the Center Leg Freeway near Second Street, NW. The committee intended to study this proposal before making further recommendations.

The committee's statement continued:

It now appears that the Potomac River Freeway from Rock Creek Park along the Georgetown Waterfront should be tunneled to the maximum extent permitted by traffic service requirements and fund availability; however, the final design of this freeway will depend upon further study of the most practical way to connect Route 66 and the

Palisades Parkway to downtown Washington. This study will include the possibility of utilizing Jefferson Davis Highway in this connection.

The I-266 Three Sisters Bridge could be dropped if another way emerged as the most practical way to carry traffic between I-66 and downtown Washington. The study would consider using Jefferson Davis Highway as a link to the 14th Street Bridge complex. Another variable in design of the Potomac River Freeway was its connection with the Palisades Parkway, which was planned to link with the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River in Montgomery County.

The committee rejected Little's idea of discarding the freeway system in favor of link-by-link action, but argued that the freeway system can remain flexible as the system is built. Flexibility "will permit the utilization of more current statistical data, future modifications in freeway design criteria and the National Capital Planning Commission's latest land-use plan for the District." The report added that, "In these plans, even greater emphasis must be placed on the protection of the homes and businesses of the District's residents."

The Policy Advisory Committee remained committed to a balanced transportation plan for the area that included a rapid transit plan and to the idea that "future transportation planning be thoroughly integrated with land-use planning on a metropolitan basis." The committee was confident that the freeway system "can be developed and constructed to meet transportation requirements with proper consideration of neighborhood values" as well as community values and proper aesthetic qualities:

The Committee feels that adherence to principles enunciated above will result in a freeway system which, when integrated with other components of the transportation network, will provide essential transportation services and also protect neighborhood values that are so important to the community.

Commissioner Tobriner transmitted the Policy Advisory Committee's statement to President Johnson on March 31. The District's Board of Commissioners, Tobriner wrote, "endorses the statement of the Policy Advisory Committee":

As you will note, the Committee advises that certain freeway projects, for which construction is either underway or imminent, should proceed without delay, and that future project plans be reviewed with increased emphasis on the reduction of the impact of such construction on our communities. The Commissioners strongly support actions to reduce such community impact in the District of Columbia, even though the obvious measures that are contemplated by the Committee will undoubtedly result in increased construction costs. [Major Highway Problems in D.C., Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1st Session, December 5 and 6, 1967, Report 90-19, pages 109-110; Flor, Lee, "Advisory Group Compromises on Freeways for D.C.," *The Evening Star*, April 1, 1966]

President Johnson replied on April 1. After acknowledging Tobriner's letter, the President said:

The Committee's decision to seek the aid of a consultant, and its unanimous statement following the consultant's report, are reassuring to me and will be reassuring to the Congress and the citizens of the District of Columbia. This review demonstrates that freeways, which the District must have, can and will be located and constructed in ways that reflect all significant community needs and values. I hope that the necessary funds will speedily be made available.

The *Post's* Jack Eisen pointed out that the committee's statement, Tobriner's letter, and the President's reply "ignored a consultant's controversial call for a moratorium on Washington construction together with changes in national urban freeway regulations." Eisen also translated the committee's statement for readers:

[The President] accepted an advisory panel's report, which disclosed that some parts of the network – notably the Three Sisters Bridge and two sections of the Inner Loop Freeway – may be scuttled if other ways can be found to handle the traffic

Among alternatives still under study is a crosstown tunnel beneath K Street nw. as a partial substitute for the North Leg of the Inner Loop. The North Leg itself would become a surface boulevard.

Three Sisters could be dropped, PAC said, if a way were found to bring surplus Interstate 66 traffic from Arlington into downtown Washington. PAC has revived the idea, first proposed by the National Capital Transportation Agency in 1962, of carrying the traffic along Jefferson Davis Highway, past the Pentagon, and feeding it into the 14th Street bridges.

NCPC Chairman Rowe issued a statement praising the Little report as "a notable contribution to the beauty of Washington and the rights of its people. It makes clear that past highway planning has not given sufficient attention to social and esthetic values." She observed that the committee had endorsed mainly projects that were under construction or nearly underway while not endorsing the two most controversial links, the North Central Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge. She added:

I am pleased by the PAC report of the planning commission's solution of tunneling K Street for the north leg; the new study of the Jefferson Davis Highway and the Kenilworth Expressway; and the tunneling of the south leg of the Georgetown waterfront section.

The committee's findings "make evident the impact of the Little report on highway thinking." She favored "a new look at the total highway plan," adding, "We must fit transportation into our city – not our city into a freeway plan." [Eisen, Jack, "President Approves Proposals for Network of Freeways Here," *The Washington Post*, April 2, 1966; Flor, Lee, "Advisory Group Compromises on Freeways for D.C.," *The Evening Star*, April 1, 1966]

After learning of the President's letter, about 70 protesters picketed the District Building in support of the Little report and to ask President Johnson to accept its recommendations. Mrs.

Robert H. Bruton of the Save Takoma Park Committee, speaking on behalf of several citizen committees, said the Policy Advisory Committee's report was "a study in ambiguity":

We respectfully urge that the White House, reconsidering the excellent and comprehensive report from the Little company, take a vigorous position to implement its recommendations, in the interest of conserving and enhancing our National Capital and our great cities throughout the nation.

She added that General Duke's reaction to the study was "clearly an attempt to force supporters of the long-awaited rail transit system to accept an unwanted and destructive freeway complex at great expense to the city and its real needs for better housing and better schools." ["Pickets Urge Adoption of 'Little' Road Report," *The Evening Star*, April 2, 1966]

In an interpretive piece, Lee Flor wrote of the Little report, "All in all, the result adds up to a severe setback to the freeway program previously planned for the District." Critics will find support for whatever their concern may be. NCPC will go over "every freeway project in every little detail." The Commission of Fine Arts and park agencies will use the recommendations "to design what it feels are more esthetically-pleasing freeways and to save parklands." The recommendations on housing "will add support to citizens' groups fighting freeways." Moreover, the report "also wiped out the previous status of several freeways and bridges."

Flor offered Whitehurst Freeway as an example of the consequences. The elevated four-lane freeway was supposed to be part of the Potomac River Freeway, carrying four westbound lanes paired with four new eastbound lanes along the river. However, now that the Policy Advisory Committee was recommending building the freeway at least partly in a tunnel, Chairman Rowe may use the plan to bargain for tunneling the freeway in exchange for tearing down the Whitehurst Freeway:

For project after project, the language of the final recommendations by the seven members of the policy advisory committee have either vague statements or critical terms which mean a setback for the freeway program.

President Johnson's language was subject to interpretation, too. He did refer to the freeways "the District must have," which the city took as support, but added that the freeways "can and will be located and constructed in ways that reflect all significant community needs and values." Flor explained:

This [is] being interpreted by freeway opponents as a slap at previous freeway planning, and as a sort of "hunting license" to bag more freeways.

Flor added:

The next immediate round in the continuing battle over freeways will be with the Bureau of Public Roads, which already has said it will not finance extensive tunneling for roads. [Flor, Lee, "Freeway Study Adds New Fuel to Disputes," *The Sunday Star*, April 3, 1966]

On April 10, *The Sunday Star* carried an editorial titled “Mr. Johnson and the Freeway Impasse” that began:

It is hard to believe that President Johnson really understands what is being done, in his name, to Washington’s chances of dealing with its future traffic problems. The President loves this city, and wants to do right by it. But someone has sold him an awful bill of goods as to the real meaning of the current freeway controversy, and the threat that has been posed to the District’s last chance of acquiring the sort of freeway system the city desperately needs.

The net effect of the Little report, which the President had requested, “was to delay, rather than to expedite” the program. The reason the District was unable to continue work on the freeway network was “perfectly plain:

The decisionmaking machinery in Washington planning does not rest solely with city authorities, as elsewhere. And freeway opponents within this group—led by Elizabeth Rowe of the Planning Commission—have used this unwieldy machinery to delay decisions.

Even when Congress authorizes and appropriates funds to match Interstate construction funds on a 90-10 basis, the District cannot use the funds and was in danger of losing them after 1972:

The opponents of the program are of course completely aware of this dilemma. They know full well that it is impractical to build the major portions of the freeway system until a firm decision is reached on the system as a whole. In stalling that decision, they have been fighting a highly successful war of attrition. And if they are permitted to keep the issues at a point of impasse much longer, they will surely win the war.

The editorial added that only one person can cause the stalling to stop, and that is President Johnson. He should direct the District commissioner to build the system “and direct Federal agencies in language they can understand to cooperate fully in getting the job done.”

About Tunnels

A week later, the tunnel issue was in the news again. On April 11, Senator Case wrote to urge General Duke to put the entire South Leg Freeway underground “so that the entire open-space setting for the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials will be preserved without further erosion of our precious and limited parkland.” He dismissed the cost issue:

Whatever additional cost is involved in building a fully tunneled highway must be accepted as the necessary price to be paid for insuring that this park is preserved for future generations.

The *Post* observed that as the ranking Republican on the Senate District Appropriations subcommittee, Senator Case “has long maintained that no further funds should be appropriated for highway construction until Congress reviews and authorizes individual projects,” a view that city officials disputed. The dispute was a “major factor in holding up the Senate District

Committee's consideration of legislation allowing the city to borrow \$35 million for the highway fund and to increase gasoline taxes one cent a gallon." [Carper, Elsie, "Sen. Case Urges Tunnel For Leg of Inner Loop," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 13, 1966]

In an unusual move, Joseph Barnett, BPR's chief of the Office of Engineering and Operations, disagreed with the Senator, in public, the day newspapers reported on his letter. Barnett, an alternate member of NCPC, said in a speech to the National Highway Users Conference:

I sometimes wonder for whom parks, parkways and highways are provided. Parks are not developed for landscape architects or for the exclusive use of a few people living near them, or even for the heads of park departments—and after reading this morning's paper, perhaps I should say "Not for U.S. Senators, either."

Tunnels, he pointed out, are more expensive than ground-level highways, and should be used "only where it is extremely difficult or physically impossible to do otherwise." As examples, he cited under rivers, through mountains, and other special situations. Eisen reported:

Barnett said he recognizes the problem of family and business displacement caused by urban freeway projects, and said this can be overcome by buildings constructed on "air rights" over surface freeways and enclosed beneath elevated roads.

"The locations of many arterial highways are through blighted areas where it is . . . a community benefit to clear out existing buildings," Barnett said.

"A desirable solution is to plan the highway with sufficient right of way to replace the substandard buildings with more desirable living quarters . . . [and] by reserving some of the new units for tenants" who are displaced. With careful planning, Barnett said, there can be a direct transfer from one dwelling to another.

In addition to depriving motorists of the sights along the highway, tunnel fumes were dangerous for their health. [Eisen, Jack, "Avoid City Tunnels, Advises Road Chief," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 14, 1966]

On April 18, Senator Case went to the Senate floor to criticize Barnett, saying that "a Federal roads official publicly attacked the tunneling concept." Senator Case speculated:

Apparently he believes that parks are for one thing only – providing more space for highways. The whole range of needs of the urban human being are of no account; the only thing that matters is that the motorist's view be unobstructed. But what sort of a view of anything does the motorist get while traveling the superhighway at 60 or 70 miles an hour?

The official's statement brought to mind the old saying that war is too important to be left to the generals. "Equally," he said, "highway building is too important to be left totally to the highway builders." He did not question their expertise in building roads. "But I do challenge any assumption that they should have the final say as to where a highway ought to be placed, or how it should be designed":

I believe the final determination is a matter for those officials in each community who carry overall responsibility for maintaining its viability and livability. The best highway does not always run from point to point by the shortest distance.

Highway officials were “ignoring the chorus of protest” in cities around the country “over the destructive impact of superhighways on their communities, on their parks, and on historical sites.” Highways were a necessity, but they should be located and designed “so that they do not destroy the livability and individuality of our cities.”

These concerns were especially important in Washington. To retain historical resources and maintain the livability and charm of the city, “extra pains must be taken to make certain in our highway building—and in all other public projects—we give attention to the full range of community needs, both tangible and intangible.” Highway tunnels “should be viewed as an opportunity—not as an obstacle.”

Administrator Whitton, Senator Case said, understood what his associate perhaps did not. Whitton had approved tunneling of the South Leg, and had recently signed a joint statement that found a plan to construct another highway in a tunnel along K Street, NW., to be “attractive.”

Parks were for everyone, as the Federal official had stated. “But they will not exist for anyone if we permit them to be overrun by modern, multilane superhighways.”

He planned to introduce a bill that would require that parkland taken for highways or other non-park purposes, be replaced “acre for acre, or, if you will, foot by foot” in equivalent park land elsewhere.

He concluded by pointing out that the First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson, was pressing a beautification plan. At this time, “it is clear from the statement that spurred my remarks and from the threat of highway construction in the midst of the world-famous cherry blossoms, that some Federal officials still have not gotten the message.” [Protection of Parkland, *Congressional Record-Senate*, April 18, 1966, pages 8222-8223; “Case Bill Would Ensure Parkland Replacement,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 19, 1966]

Locating the North-Central Freeway

On April 14, the Maryland State Roads Commission formally rejected plans for an elevated North-Central Freeway above the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks in Maryland. In a letter to Director Airis, Chairman Funk said that rejection of the elevated freeway did not mean the State had settled on a route for the freeway.

The State rejected the elevated freeway based on “esthetics and socio-economic” factors. The *Post* explained:

Esthetically, Funk said, the Roads Commission had been thinking of a raised freeway that would offer motorists panoramic views on approaching the Capital and possible views of many “historic and distinctive structures.”

Aerial photographs, however, proved there wouldn't be any such views, the Commission's aide said.

In addition, Funk wrote, "Costs favor a low level concept."

Funk expected to decide on the route around July 1 after State officials had a chance to review the consultant report expected in about a week.

Sources told the *Post* that highway planners appeared to favor a route as close to the railroad tracks as possible:

This would avoid the "ten-lane swath of concrete" through residential Takoma Park that drew so much fire in the first freeway proposal and could keep displacement to a minimum." [Barnes, Bart, "Md. Rejects El Freeway Above B&O," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 15, 1966]

As an alternative, the Land Committee of the Metropolitan Washington COG and the National Capital Regional Highway Planning Council suggested on April 14 that COG consider routing the freeway through Rock Creek Park. As Jack Eisen reminded readers, the idea of routing I-70S through the park had been proposed about 13 years earlier:

Despite endorsement by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and others, the Park route ran into stiff opposition, from residents, conservationists and the National Park Service.

It quickly died, and attention turned to routes along the Potomac Palisades and through the so-called "Wisconsin Avenue corridor," both of which also were stifled. Consideration is now centering on a North Central Freeway from Silver Spring.

Revival of the idea began at a hearing of the Montgomery County Planning Board on December 6, 1965. Thomas Wilson, representing 18 citizen associations in Bethesda, suggested running a four-lane road from the Capital Beltway near Kensington Parkway and paralleling Jones Mill Road to the west edge of the park:

As he proposed it, the route would stay to the west until Tilden Street, where it would jump to the east and join the existing Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway south of the Zoo.

Everett Jones, who was on the planning board and the regional council, thought the idea promising. He proposed it in a February letter to the council. According to Eisen, the idea was "incorporated in a joint statement that now goes to NCPC. There the reaction is likely to be frigid." While agreeing to send the statement to NCPC, the COG "pointedly disavowed the whole idea." [Eisen, Jack, "Rock Creek Freeway Proposal Is Revived," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 15, 1966]

Federal City Council Report

On April 20, Stephen Ailes, president of the Federal City Council, sent a report to President Johnson on *Freeways in the National Capital Region*, covering the period from 1946 to 1966:

It is our hope that this material will be useful to you in your efforts to improve the quality of life for the residents of the nation's capital and to provide a federal city worthy of national pride and international admiration.

The preface stated that the council “has been unswerving in its support of a balanced transportation system incorporating to full advantage both fixed-wheel and free-wheel modes of transportation.” It also supported comprehensive planning of transportation throughout the Washington region.

Population, tourism, Federal employment in the city, and automobile and truck registration were all going to increase, regardless of what happens with transportation:

Regional growth is a fact. The variable is the shape and character of that growth. Whether it takes the form of orderly regional development or unruly urban sprawl depends in large measure on conditions at the heart of the region

The Nation's Capital presently is laboring with inadequate facilities for transportation. This inadequacy is reflected in a general reduction of the importance of the city's core area as the major concentration of commercial enterprise.

The key was a balanced transportation system serving the core:

It is the Federal City Council's position that the health and vitality of the city and the stability of the region can best be served by implementing at the earliest practicable date a system of transportation that affords the widest possible freedom of movement for people and goods. Such a system must include modern rail rapid transit and efficient freeways and parkways

After careful examination of the facts, the Federal City Council is convinced that a freeway system with an inner loop and connecting radials must be built. It must be built with continued proper regard to considerations of aesthetics, relocation, optimum land use, and service – but it must be built. The inevitable result of a failure to do so would be further diminution of the accessibility and viability of the center city and the flight of job-producing, tax-generating enterprises from the heart of Washington. [*Freeways in the National Capital Region*, Federal City Council, April 1966, page iv; the report is reproduced in *Major Highway Problems in D.C.*, pages 49-111]

The report described the history of freeway decisionmaking in the District of Columbia, including “25 major studies during the past 20 years involving freeway system planning . . . and numerous other studies corollary to the major studies.” Eight studies were underway at the time of the report:

Consequently, planning for the freeway system in the District of Columbia has become fragmented and uncertain. Individuals and groups – both official and unofficial – have been able to inject confusion into the freeway planning picture. That confusion has increased the difficulty of securing firm planning decisions. The absence of such firm planning decisions has created a condition under which not a single freeway project can now be advanced to the final design stage. [page 1]

The history of the District's freeway and parkway program was "a record of deteriorated decision-making with regard to the planning of transportation in the Nation's Capital." That history was "an indictment of the city's planning process which has allowed confusion, frustration and indecision to prevail where order, reason and vision are required." What was clear was that "extraneous considerations" had been substituted for "sound planning principles."

The Little report had "made a difficult situation worse," while the Policy Advisory Committee's March 31 statement "approved no new projects and failed to produce a firm decision on the fundamental issue of whether a freeway system involving an inner loop with radials to the beltway should be built within the time frame of the federal interstate highway program":

There are certain individuals – some of them in key positions – who apparently believe the correct approach is to build no roads at all – to disregard Washington's transportation needs in the forlorn, nostalgic hope that doing so will somehow reincarnate the Washington of 50 years ago. Unfortunately, their solution is being foisted upon the Nation's Capital by default.

The council rejected "the apparent policy of answering questions with more questions and of substituting delay for decision-making." [pages 35, 40]

The council recommended "securing of necessary planning decisions by October 1, 1966." In the absence of final, lasting decisions, "no meaningful progress can be made":

The historical account of freeway planning indecision to date indicates that nothing short of personal intervention by the President of the United States will break the logjam of fixed positions held by his appointees and employees.

Furthermore, history also indicates that Presidential action be clear, concise and direct. The Presidential letter of June 1, 1963, directed the Board of Commissioners to "enlist the cooperation" of other federal agencies, to "conclude as promptly as possible" the proposed re-examination of certain elements of the program, and to "go forward as scheduled" with the remainder of the system. None of these Presidential directions has been accomplished.

The council urged the President to issue a policy directive to all elements of the Executive Branch stating his desire to complete the District's road program and directing members of the Executive Branch to cooperate fully in that effort. "THE DIRECTIVE SHOULD LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT OBSTRUCTION AND DELAY BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WILL NOT BE TOLERATED." [page 48]

The report concluded:

The freeway and parkway network for the District of Columbia has been studied, restudied, planned and replanned but it has not been implemented. Until it is, the concept of balanced transportation cannot become a reality. And it is within the sturdy framework of such a balanced transportation system that the future urban greatness of the federal city must be formed.

If Washington had no other reason to aspire to urban greatness, its federal purpose alone should be enough to arouse the desire for civic fulfillment. But the greatness of this community lies not in a static federal reservation dotted with monuments and isolated from its urban environs. Its greatness lies in its role as a city – livable, beautiful, functional, inspiring – a place where the human purpose as well as the federal purpose may be consummated.

SUCH GREATNESS REQUIRES PLANNING. IT ALSO REQUIRES ACTION.
[page 49, all capitals in original]

(The report was prepared by Lloyd Rivard of the Automotive Safety Foundation, who would become chief of planning for the District highway department and later an engineer-consultant for the House Public Works Committee.

(That same year, the Federal City Council created Citizens for Better Regional Transportation to promote passage of the initial Metro bond issuance.)

At a press conference on release the report, Ailes said, “We presumably have a decision to go ahead [with the freeway program] but it is being taken away” by overlapping planning agencies. “We should not let it be shot down on a lot of individual projects.” Decisions were being made “by default” as planning organizations stall and procrastinate to delay the freeway system until it died.

The report did not identify the individuals or organizations responsible for the delay, but Flor told readers, “it is apparent the study is referring to the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Park Service,” both of which had “virtual veto powers over any freeway program.” Regarding the section of the report referring to “certain individuals” who were nostalgic for Washington of 50 years ago, reporters asked Ailes which individuals the report meant and whether President Johnson was getting good advice. He declined to name them and sidestepped the question on advice. However, Flor told readers:

Presidential advisor Charles Horsky, the principal author of the most recent attempt to arbitrate the freeway controversy, is caught in the crossfire because the report implies that he has been unsuccessful in negotiating any solutions.

Flor explained that NCPC had supported the freeway layout of loops and arterials in the 1950s, but the new appointees by the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations constituted a majority that “basically opposed” freeway construction. As an example, Flor cited NCPC’s 5 to 4 vote to approve the Center Leg Freeway across the National Mall that would have been blocked if one

opponent had not been out sick on the day of the vote. [Flor, Lee, "Johnson Gets Freeway Plea From Federal City Council," *The Sunday Star*, April 24, 1966]

BPR Administrator Whitton praised the report's emphasis on the need for a "basic, long-term commitment to freeway planning." He said, "I do not favor the incremental basis. It's just a stalling method. You end up on a river bank with no way to get across." He favored the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962's call for "a comprehensive, continuing, cooperative planning process, meaning that as conditions change, you adjust accordingly," but always with the long-term commitment in mind.

Director Airis also praised the report. "Exhaustive planning," he said, led him to the conclusion that "failure to build the freeway portion of the balanced transportation system would lead to eventual disintegration of the inner city." He added that "the Council, better than any other group, is qualified to speak on these economic aspects."

Chairman Walton of the Commission of Fine Arts called the report "very fine" because:

They have put their finger on the basic problem – we have the automobile and we have to make arrangements for it I am happy they are pressing for a White House decision.

NCPC Chairman Rowe restated her opposition to freeway expansion even before reading the report:

The freeway plans have been questioned by every citizens group, including the Democratic Central Committee, and have been supported by no citizens organization. I question whether freeways can build more houses.

She added that the people of Washington almost unanimously agreed with her position on freeways. She pointed out that when NCPC included the basic freeway plan in its draft Year 1985 Plan, citizen groups fiercely criticized the plan. "There isn't a single citizen's association or civic association which supports it."

Mrs. Shackleton agreed that most city residents opposed the plan. She added, "Our position has always been clear – we've been very concerned over relocation."

Whitton urged that freeway construction in the city should be "immediately resumed." He told Lee Flor that he was "opposed to simply driving a highway through a city without looking to right or left." He said, "A lot of things have to be considered, but some day you have to stop planning and start building – you can't go on planning forever." ["Resumption of Freeway Plan Urged," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 25, 1966; Flor, Lee, "Head Planner Sees Freeways Opposed," *The Evening Star*, April 25, 1966]

Home Rule Strategy

Roy Wilkins, NAACP's national director, thought that Washingtonians were too apathetic to secure home rule. To do so, he said, people would "have to do some hard work and study . . . to devise plans and stick to them."

For that reason, he agreed with the decision of the District's NAACP chapter to reject Free D.C. Movement's strategy of staging boycotts of businesses that did not display one of its stickers. He did not agree with the idea that "if you make a corner merchant sign up, it will bring about home rule. Home rule is made in Congress, which is made up of people from Iowa, Michigan, Oklahoma, Texas and Mississippi." Getting home rule meant that people "will have to do some hard work and study . . . to devise plans and stick to them." He said that local NAACP chapters from around the country had written to their congressional representatives in support of home rule. ["Wilkins Calls District Citizens Too Apathetic About Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 14, 1966]

William Raspberry, a black reporter who was one of several *Post* staff writers continuing the Potomac Watch column, explained on March 22 that the goal of the boycott strategy was to show that the Washington Board of Trade, which claimed a lack of interest in home rule, did not represent most businesses in the District:

Based on these premises, the Movement was conceived as a means for bringing pressure on the Board of Trade both to force it to reverse its stand in opposition to home rule and to provide a means by which individual merchants could show their independence of the Board.

Movement leaders had planned to do this by circulating petitions supporting home rule, asking downtown merchants to use their influence with key Congressmen to urge passage of meaningful home rule legislation and requesting financial contributions from the merchants.

Debate over the contributions (Was it blackmail or wasn't it?) quickly obscured discussion of whether the Movement's tactics were in keeping with its goal.

With downtown businesses accusing the organization of extortion, Free D.C. Movement revised its policy to make it "ridiculously easy for a merchant to obtain a 'good buy' sticker. All he has to do is say he favors the right to vote." Raspberry observed that the easier the Movement made it for merchants to get the stickers, "the more meaningless the stickers will be." Further, the organization shifted its focus on influential downtown business leaders to focus on "the city's most vulnerable merchants – those in predominantly Negro areas." They had little, if any, influence on Board of Trade policy, or Members of Congress whose primary loyalty was to the people back home who voted for them.

Free D.C. Movement was planning to generate support around the country, but to date, "little has been done to organize such a nationwide campaign." Movement leaders were "too busy fighting the charges of 'extortion' and refurbishing their image." [Raspberry, William, "Tactics Meant Failure For Free DC Movement," Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 22, 1966]

On April 5, the Senate voted to ask the House to go to conference on the Bible-Sisk bills. Despite the significant differences between the two bills, Senator Bible told his colleagues that "reasonable and responsible men with conscientious differences of opinion have traditionally

worked out legislative differences by the conference route.” He admitted he was “an eternal optimist,” but hoped the conferees could “sit down around the conference table at an early date.”

The Senate appointed all seven members of the Senate District Committee as conferees, including Senator Morse. In committee, he had been the lone vote against going to conference. He saw no chance of reaching agreement. [“Senate Requests House to Discuss Home Rule,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 6, 1966]

At the same time, the Washington Home Rule Committee split on strategy. Rauh and J. C. Turner, president of the Greater Washington Central Labor Council, favored continuing to fight for the Senate-passed Administration bill supported by President Johnson. However, as the *Post* reported in a News Analysis:

The majority of the Committee’s board yesterday reluctantly disagreed, citing a host of legislative pitfalls in the House for the Senate-passed concept, and backing the House charter-commission approach as a way of getting something on the books before Congress adjourns.

Rauh opposed “defeatism,” saying:

The most important thing is to keep the home rule movement in tune with the President’s leadership. He has said he wants the Senate bill. We need his leadership to get anything. A charter bill that he doesn’t support would be hopeless. . . .

The House voted to discharge its District Committee from responsibility for a bill and that petition clearly states that the discharge covers the bill all the way to enactment.

By contrast, the president of the committee, Richard K. Lyons, agreed that President Johnson supports the Senate bill. However, “if the Senate approach faces trouble, I feel confident that he will throw his support behind any workable legislation. He is a practical, legislative strategist.” It was not a question of “defeatism.” He said, “We have to face the legislative facts of life. It is imperative that a step be taken before this Congress adjourns.”

Like many committee members, Lyons said he thought the House had acted in good faith in approving the Sisk charter bill. “If we accept this good faith, then we should hope the House would feel obligated to approve a workable, acceptable charter for self-government.”

The News Analysis concluded:

In Congress, both the opponents and supporters of home rule have grown weary of the whole business.

In the long run, Congress won’t listen to the local groups anyway, and both sides know it. Like the legislators, Washington’s residents will be watching the White House. [Asher, Robert L, “Strategy Splits Home Rule Forces,” News Analysis, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 17 1966]

During a session with reporters on April 21, Speaker McCormack pledged to “do everything I can to get a conference.” The question of who would pick the conferees to represent the House remained unanswered. [“McCormack Vows Home Rule Help,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 24, 1966]

With the Speaker of the House undecided, the House District Committee voted 13-10 on May 11 against going to conference. Chairman McMillan told reporters after the vote that the House would have to clear other District legislation, including the crime bill, “before we’ll act on home rule.” He explained, “I think we should wait and see if the Senate agrees with us on other bills.” As for whether a potential conference could come together on home rule, he said it was “difficult for me to be hopeful under those circumstances.” He added that he had not been pressured on the issue. “Not one person has come to me,” he said.

Rauh called the vote “a prime example of the arrogance of power.” [“House Group Votes Against Conference On Home Rule, 13-10,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 12, 1966]

Chairman McMillan’s repeated claim that District residents never visited him to talk about home rule irritated its supporters. The Reverend Channing Phillips, acting co-chairman of the D.C. Coalition of Conscience, said that Chairman McMillan’s claim “is more indicative of the fact that D.C. residents don’t like his particular brand of southern plantation hospitality, than it is a register of any lack of interest for home rule”:

Not having any horses, such as a crime bill, to trade with Mr. McMillan in return for the right to vote, we feel the least we can do is accept [his] invitation to visit him. And the Coalition will begin next week to furnish such visitors

To begin, he intended to visit the chairman’s House office to “give him clues as to community support for home rule.”

A spokesman said Chairman McMillan would agree to a meeting, but with only one person, not a delegation. “We have a small office, you know,” the spokesman explained. [“Home Rule Group to Visit McMillan at His Office,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 14, 1966; “McMillan To See Agent Of Coalition,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 17, 1966]

The Reverend Phillips met with Chairman McMillan for over an hour on May 19. According to The Reverend Phillips, the chairman made it clear that he was “unalterably opposed” to home rule. He saw no point in a conference committee, at least until bills “more dear to his heart” had gone to conference. The only alternative was to convince Speaker McCormack to appoint conferees.

As it turned out, The Reverend Phillips was not the only visitor to speak with the chairman about home rule that day. Before he arrived, a group of Trinity University students arrived and threatened to stage a sit-in. They had decided to lobby for home rule after Free D.C. Movement staged a week of agitation on area college campuses. Finally, the chairman agreed to meet with one member of the group, and they chose Marion Barry.

The two met for about 15 minutes. Although the chairman did not talk to reporters about the discussion, Barry said the chairman was “just what I expected,” adding “I shared his gracious Southern hospitality and I came out with the same impression I had when I went in – that we live on a plantation. All the citizens of the District.” In short, “We both agreed neither of us would change the other’s mind,” Barry said. He had offered the chairman a Free D.C. home rule button, but the chairman declined. [Carrigan, Richard, “Home Rule Backers Enter McMillan’s Den,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 20, 1966; “‘Free D.C.’ Plans To Picket House Home Rule Foes,” *The Evening Star*, May 20, 1966]

A day later, on Saturday, Free D.C. Movement picketed the homes of Chairman McMillan in North Arlington, Representative Springer in Chevy Chase, and Representative Roudebush in a Capitol Hill apartment. None were home at the time. At Chairman McMillan’s home just off North Glebe Road, 14 pickets sang and shouted “Freedom Now” at the few passersby. Ten people picketed Representative Roudebush’s apartment at 200 C Street, SE., for about 2 hours. Supporters marched for about 15 minutes in front of Representative Springer’s home.

Barry told reporters that picketing Chairman McMillan’s home was purely symbolic since there was no chance of changing his mind. The movement was hoping for better results with the other two Congressmen. Picketing would continue every evening “until we get satisfactory results,” Barry said. [“Pickets March at Homes of 3 Congressmen,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 22, 1966; “Representatives’ Homes Picketed by ‘Free D.C.’” *The Sunday Star*, May 22, 1966]

By the end of May, Senator Morse was ready to tackle District issues. The *Post* listed the activities that had occupied him for several months:

The press of national concerns – the war in Vietnam, the Oregon primary, and his appointment by President Johnson to head a mediation panel in the machinist-airline dispute – forced Morse to neglect the city recently and gave rise to speculation that he had lost interest in city affairs.

Now, he was ready to act to break the logjam of city legislation, including home rule. He was ready to fight for the home rule bill, “and will consider attaching the Senate-passed measure on other legislation to get it back before the House.” A long-time advocate of home rule, Senator Morse agreed with Rauh that the best way to proceed was to attach the bill as a “non-germane amendment” on a minor bill. He preferred one from the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare:

Several such bills are now pending before the Committee and as its second-ranking Democrat, Morse is in a good position to follow through.

“I want to hit home rule pretty strong,” Morse declared. If we can force it out we ought to do it.” [Carper, Elsie, “Morse to Cut Logjam On Legislation for City,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 29, 1966]

The groups supporting home rule were rearranging relations, with Marion Barry seemingly the agitator on the outside. In early June, the Washington Young Republican and Young Democratic Clubs joined with young people from ADA and NACCP to form Youth Organizations United (YOU) for Home Rule. They planned meetings throughout the city and a July 10 rally on the grounds of the Washington Monument. Barry, who had tried to get the groups into Free D.C. Movement, denounced them. The rival organizations “will only confuse people in the community.” The president of the Young Democratic Clubs of D.C., Lonnie C. King, Jr., said, “We are not saying the Free D.C. Movement is irresponsible, but we feel we are a responsible group.” [“4 Local Groups Form A Home Rule Coalition,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 7, 1966]

Barry scheduled a press conference at 2 p.m. on June 20 outside the Fleming Building at 800 17th Street, NW., where Davis, president of the Board of Trade, had a law office. Barry intended to announce “educational picketing” against Davis, the Woodward and Lothrop department store, and three utility companies. Barry was, however, 20 minutes late – an occurrence that reporters would learn to expect throughout his long political career in the District of Columbia.

While reporters waited for Barry, Davis arrived at 2 p.m. for a meeting in his office. He told the reporters he had a meeting with Barry the next day, but was surprised to see Free D.C. Movement pickets in front of the building. “Fortunately,” Davis said of Barry, “he’s not representative of the people of the District of Columbia.” He told reporters that the Board of Trade favored home rule. “The definition of that is that we’ve got to have a vote in Congress – an elected Senator and Representative . . . that’s your true legislative body.” Asked if he supported an elected city government, he paused, then said, “We are governed by a city government.” In apparent reference to Barry, the picketing, and press conference, he added, “This is typical of his flamboyant, publicity-seeking ways,” before going into the building.

Barry arrived a few minutes later “dressed in a \$3 straw Panama planter’s hat and seersucker suit,” according to the *Post*, to call the Board of Trade “public enemy No. 1.” He said that most business leaders disagreed with the board’s position, but added, “A lot of people don’t know the Board’s position,” which was one of the points of the demonstration. [“Barry Is Late, Trade Board Has First Word,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 21, 1966]

NCTA’s Executive Committee

On April 21, NCPC’s executive committee, headed by Chairman Rowe, considered a nine-page document that recommended a three-stage approach to the city’s freeway plans. The results of each stage would be evaluated before proceeding with the next stage. The presently approved freeways would be built during the first stage (1966-1970) along with rail rapid transit. For the second stage (1971-1975), the document suggested a freeway in the New York Avenue corridor to connect with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, an Eastern Avenue highway, and the construction of I-95 in Maryland. During the final stage (1976-1985), construction would be undertaken of a North Capital Street freeway and the Center Leg through the Soldiers Home grounds to upper Washington. During this stage, officials would “consider removing of Whitehurst Freeway” during redevelopment of the Georgetown waterfront.

The recommendations suggested delaying the remaining freeways until the rail rapid transit system “is in operation and has an opportunity to build up ridership,” estimated to be the mid-1970s at the earliest. The full NCPC membership would vote on the proposal in May or June to determine if it would be included in the Year 1985 Plan.

Jack Eisen told readers:

If carried out, the executive committee’s recommendations would shelve the Three Sisters Bridge, the North Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, the East Leg north of D.C. Stadium, a third Potomac River bridge at the foot of 15th Street sw., the North Central Freeway to Silver Spring and a branch joining Maryland Interstate 95 to Baltimore.

Between now and 1970, the executive committee proposed to go ahead only with “facilities already decided upon.”

The executive committee listed these as the Center Leg of the Inner Loop beneath and north of the Mall, the South Leg past and beneath the Tidal Basin, an extension of the Southeast Freeway to D.C. Stadium and the East Capitol Street bridge, a crosstown tunnel between K Street nw. and a four-lane Palisades Parkway.

It also endorsed a tunnel under the Georgetown waterfront, subject to solution of the Three Sisters question and related Palisades Parkway design problems.

The executive committee recommended considering removal of Whitehurst Freeway as part of the plan for the Georgetown waterfront.

As an explanation for these proposals, the measure explained that “no one has yet ‘solved’ the transportation problem of the 20th-century urban America for all concerned, even at the physical level”:

No proposals for new physical facilities can be offered with much assurance that they will be regarded as wise 20 years from now.

Also, the transportation system is the subject of a sharp controversy of long duration, between two opposing schools of thought.

The transportation proposals . . . will inevitably generate a new round of debate, which is sure to enter the realm of politics. [Eisen, Jack, “NCPC Board Seeks Delay In Freeways,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 26, 1966]

The April 21 action by the NCPC executive committee was in closed session and not intended for release to the public, but the document had been leaked to reporters. On April 27, Eisen reported that General Duke had written to Chairman Rowe the day before the closed meeting to protest the plan. The committee’s action was “unreasonable” because it had been submitted to him only the day before, allowing “no time . . . to analyze it properly.” He said, “In my opinion, to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this document would serve only to postpone important decisions, the solution of which is essential, if unpleasant to many.” Businesses were

making decisions “which are inimical to the future development of Washington” in the absence of assurances regarding the freeway plan. “I, therefore, consider that the adoption of this document . . . would have exceedingly grave consequences for the welfare of the District and must advise you that I am strongly opposed to its consideration by the executive committee.”

Eisen also reported that at McCarter’s insistence, the executive committee had dropped the reference to delaying freeways until the subway was in operation and ridership could be gauged. He and executive committee member G. Franklin Edwards argued that roads and rails were part of a balanced transportation system, not competing modes. They feared inclusion of the phrase would rekindle the freeways versus rails dispute that had blocked passage of a rapid rail system for the area.

Leak of the document provoked a debate within NCPC that extended even to whether the executive committee had voted on it. Staff director Charles H. Conrad said the document was only “a status paper, a working paper, a discussion paper, not a specific recommendation to the Commission.” However, Edwards and Vice Chairman Louchheim said the executive committee endorsed the document.

Assistant Engineer Commissioner Reynolds, who was at the meeting, said he did not believe the committee had acted at all. However, General Duke referred to the document as “somebody’s bad dream.” He was confident that NCPC would reject the recommendations.

Reaction to the Federal City Council report continued. Representative Broyhill wrote to urge President Johnson to resume the freeway program, including the Three Sisters Bridge and the Inner Loop connections:

As you know, the Policy Advisory Committee created in 1963 to make a recommendation on the bridge, found earlier this month that the only decision it could reach was to unanimously make no decision It is not likely that this committee will ever find a way to present you with firm guidance.

Admiral Phillips of the Committee of 100 wrote to Ailes in defense of Chairman Rowe. “I am deeply interested in learning how the FCC [Federal City Council] refutes the factual and objective study recently published by Arthur D. Little, Inc [that] as you know found no basis for . . . the all-out freeway program.” [Eisen, Jack, “NCPC Board Seeks Delay In Freeways,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 26, 1966; Eisen, Jack, “Rekindled Freeway Dispute Widens, Broyhill Urges Projects Be Resumed,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 27, 1966]

On April 28, General Duke announced that in cooperation with community groups such as the National Urban League, the District would begin a study of whether replacement housing for low-income residents could be built alongside or above planned freeways. The idea was that the District would buy block-wide right-of-way for freeways that could be leased or sold for apartment houses. The initial study would cover only 2 blocks along the Center Leg Freeway (square 560, 3rd and 2nd Street, New Jersey Avenue, K and I Streets, NW., and the next block

south, square 562, between I, H, 3rd, and 2nd Streets, NW.). Whether alongside the freeway or on a platform over it, the housing would require more width than the freeway. Duke said:

We believe we can completely eliminate the problem of relocation housing caused by highway construction. At the same time we can provide for greatly improved aesthetic treatment in integrating urban design by varying residential, commercial, park and recreational development over and alongside the freeway.

BPR, Duke said, had looked at the proposal and agreed with District highway officials that it is “both feasible and highly promising.” The Post quoted Francis C. “Frank” Turner, BPR’s Chief Engineer, as saying the proposed showed “considerable promise here and elsewhere, in cities where we are having problems.” [Flor, Lee, “D.C. Study Seeks New Sites for Low-Income Families,” *The Evening Star*, April 28, 1966; Eisen, Jack, “New Freeway Plan Provides Housing Sites,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 29, 1966]

Chairman Rowe was cautiously optimistic about the study:

This is the kind of thing the Planning Commission would be very interested in. I think the Highway Department is going to do a good job and this is an imaginative approach.

She doubted that high-rise apartments were the best option for displaced families, and she would not speculate on whether the idea might change her mind on freeway proposals. She said, “I want to see the consultant’s report Let’s see how it works.” She agreed to put the plan on the agenda for NCPC’s meeting in the following week.

Eisen reported that during a discussion of highway policies, BPR’s Joseph Barnett raised the subject of Chairman Rowe’s opposition to freeways during the executive committee meeting:

During a discussion of highway policies, Joseph Barnett, an alternate member of NCPC who is an official of the Bureau of Public Roads, reportedly pointed at D.C. Highway Director Thomas F. Airis, who attended as an observer.

“Let’s face it,” Barnett said, “You want to build roads”

Then, pointing at Mrs. Rowe, he continued:

“. . . and you don’t.”

Mrs. Rowe declined comment on the incident. [Eisen, Jack, “Freeway Critic Gives Plan Guarded Praise,” *The Washington Post*, April 30, 1966]

The Evening Star, in an editorial, said the “new and dramatic aspect of the Commissioners’ proposal . . . is their hope that freeway and housing construction can proceed, in these block-wide areas, simultaneously, providing a ready-made supply of attractive relocation housing and other facilities for the residents of blocks into which the freeway will move next.” The most important point was that the proposal should not affect decisions on the freeway system. At this point,

“there is no excuse whatever for avoiding any longer a planning commitment on which freeways should be built.” Reality, however, had to be acknowledged:

No doubt the die-hard opponents of freeways will pooh-pooh the housing-highway plan as merely a means of advancing freeways. The fact is, however, that it constitutes a positive, encouraging response to those critics who have accused highway officials, perhaps rightly in the past, of paying too little attention to the impact of freeways on people and neighborhoods. [“Housing and Highways,” *The Evening Star*, May 2, 1966]

The contract for the \$30,000 feasibility study was awarded to Tippetts, Abbett, McCarthy and Stratten of New York City, the engineering firms that had been retained a year earlier to design the Center Leg Freeway section of the Inner Loop. [Lewis, Robert J., “Freeways-Plus-Housing to be Studied for D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1966]

“Time to Stop This Foolishness”

Beginning in March 1966, Chairman Natcher had held closed hearings on District appropriations for FY 1967. The transcript was not released until early August, but by then, it was clear he was prepared to use every budgetary tactic at his disposal to block rapid transit money if anti-highway forces continued to delay the District’s freeway plans.

On April 20, Commissioner Tobriner, Engineer Commissioner Duke, and Director Airis appeared before the subcommittee. Chairman Natcher began with a statement. In his 12 years on the appropriations subcommittee handling the District’s bills, “I have always been of the opinion that here in our Capital City there is a place for rapid transit and for a full and complete highway program”:

I have always believed that it was a serious mistake to permit any group or faction to stop the highway program in order to build a rapid transit system in the city of Washington. This applies also to the little pressure groups in our Capital City. This matter has been used as a political football and now is the time to stop this foolishness. Regardless of political policy this is a problem that should not be treated as a means of influence or political power.

We have reached an impasse as far as the highway program is concerned in the city of Washington. I want the members of the committee to know that I am unable to continue recommending to this committee that money be appropriated for a rapid transit system if the highway program is to be brought to a complete halt. Well over \$10 million has been invested in plans and designing of roads and parts of the Interstate System that have not been used. They are filed away and this started several years ago We have about \$172 million of Federal and District of Columbia funds now accumulated in the freeway program and we are unable to proceed. We will not meet the 1972 deadline set in the interstate program.

Chairman Natcher referred to President Kennedy’s letter of June 1, 1963, to Commissioner Tobriner calling for a reexamination of the city’s highway program:

Before the President's letter of June 1963 was issued I had an opportunity to discuss this matter with him and I informed him that it was a serious mistake to bring the highway program to a complete halt. This was not the way to build a rapid transit system in the city of Washington, and I explained this to him. He was ill advised and the letter followed.

If President Kennedy had been furnished with all of the facts he would not have signed this letter.

The letter proved to be a serious mistake that set the city's program back. "We have good Commissioners in our Capital City and here again is another example of their judgment being ignored and a serious mistake committed that must now be corrected."

He cited past hearings as far back as 7 or 8 years earlier when he "tried to sound the alarm":

For some three years now, I have believed that any program that attempted to stop the freeway program would fail. I do not intend to stand by and be a party to this pressure and bad judgment.

He described some of his efforts to keep the freeway program alive. Then came President Johnson's letter in January 1966 calling for another study:

A study was ordered which has recently been released. This study is a complete farce and is another obstacle carefully placed in the road Now, I say to you this is a serious mistake.

He introduced several editorials for the record, including "Mr. Johnson and the Freeways" and "Make No Little Plans for Washington," both from the *Star*. He especially liked the line from the latter suggesting that the Little report "surely deserves to rest in a niche of its own—preferably one marked 'Filed and Forgotten.'" That was, he said, exactly how he felt:

The very idea of being forced – and I say forced – to employ this consultant firm to say to us, at a total cost of \$60,000, "Bring this highway program to a complete stop. Bring it to a complete stop." In other words, kill it. That in substance is what this report says. I am against it and intend to do as the editorial says, "filed and forgotten."

He did not blame the District commissioners, adding, "Our President is my friend and with all of his problems he is receiving bad advice as to our freeway program." [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1967, Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee of Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Part 1, 1966, pages 407-416]

Chairman Natcher asked General Duke for comments. The general said that "any explanation of why so much money has been spent on studies on the one hand, and why so much money is still unobligated on the other, is a very difficult question to answer." He thanked Chairman Natcher and the committee for their support of the freeway program, but said "that support isn't generally felt throughout the community."

Prosecution of the freeway program was “the epitome of the problem that is created by the necessity of suffering a short-range inconvenience in order to obtain a long-range benefit to the community.” Planning agencies agree the city needs a freeway network, but where they should be and what they should consist of had “met with a great deal of discussion.” Similarly, people generally want a freeway system, but “over there” somewhere, “and in the District of Columbia we have very little ‘over theres’ where we can place the legs of this system.” Everyone agreed on a balanced transportation system, but when trying to define the blend creating balance, “you run into varying shades of opinion.”

At present the Center Leg Freeway and interchange “C” of the Southeast Freeway were underway. Beyond those two segments, “I must acknowledge quite candidly today that there are many and very grave problems surrounding the resolution of their location.” Planning “is an exceptionally complicated process,” as a result of which “the main difficulty that we . . . have encountered is an inability to settle on any long-range system that reflects the requirements of the community.” The system’s elements “seem to be as pliable and unstable as a balloon. You squeeze it in one place and it pops out in another.”

General Duke added that in the absence of rural areas for Interstate construction, the District found that every segment of its Interstate network resulted in “exceptionally strong feelings that center around the esthetics of freeway construction and the social problems incident to freeway construction here in the Nation’s Capital.”

In seeking “the elusive answer” reflecting the proper balance between transportation and social values, he was hopeful of reaching agreement, but “it is getting more difficult day by day.” He would like to offer reason for optimism, “but I am afraid that I can’t”:

In fact, the latest thinking that I have been exposed to in the past few days indicates that the rate of prosecution should be slowed down even further. [pages 417-419]

(This comment was apparently in reference to the nine-page document NCPC’s executive committee had before it.)

During the question period, Representative Davis asked about NCPC’s role. General Duke summarized the long history of the Three Sisters Bridge, “probably the most thoroughly discussed problem in our whole Interstate System.” Airis added that the Policy Advisory Committee had agreed in late 1965 on an alternative location, “and then, after several attempts to get it before the Planning Commission, we were unable to do so.”

Representative Davis found this hard to believe (“I don’t think I follow you there”). Neither Airis nor General Duke could explain the problem. Airis said, “They wouldn’t hear us. I can’t say exactly why.” General Duke added that he could not recall “how many meetings of the Commission I requested that it be placed on the agenda for hearing At any rate, I was unsuccessful in getting the item placed on the agenda of the Commission for discussion.”

Representative Davis admitted he was “a little ignorant” about NCPC. He asked if there was an appeal from their decisions. General Duke replied, “So far as I know, none.” Representative

Davis concluded, “Then I would gather that this Commission has complete within itself uncontested power to veto any efforts by the Commissioners or by Congress to implement the freeway and parkway system within the District of Columbia.” General Duke could not recall if NCPC had a veto by law or only in practice, but “I think I can say that your statement is correct –

that the Planning Commission, by a failure to approve segments of the Interstate System, could have the effect of modifying the expenditure of funds that have been appropriated.” [pages 464-466]

On April 26, during the hearing day for public witnesses, Peter S. Craig was one of the few witnesses to discuss freeways. Speaking on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, he recommended three steps that were “necessary if we are to avoid casting further mistakes in concrete”:

1. No new appropriations for highway capital outlay;
2. Direct the District Highway Department “to recast its highway program so that the huge backlog in unobligated funds from previous years may be devoted to projects that are (a) consistent with existing legislative authorizations by Congress and (b) in conformity with approvals by the National Capital Planning Commission under both title 7 of the District of Columbia Code and the National Capital Planning Act”; and
3. Direct that funds appropriated for highway “planning, programing and surveys” be disbursed by or under NCPC’s direction.

These steps were necessary “to get the highway builders out of city planning, where they do not belong, and back to their job of building and maintaining highways, which is their job.”

The District highway program was “a complete fraud” and the department’s presentations to the subcommittee “have been complete phonies.” Craig’s assertions were “independently confirmed” by the majority and minority reports of the House District Committee last October and by the report by Arthur D. Little, Inc., and again, by a NCPC executive committee a week earlier.

As for the Federal City Council’s report, it was “replete with errors in its ‘factual’ premises and is not, in any respect, the product of the members of the Federal City Council.” Harold Aitken, Douglas Brinkley, and Lloyd Rivard, all former District Highway Department officials and “all actively working for the highway lobby,” prepared the report:

The report is regrettable, because 5 years ago the Council itself opposed construction of new freeways in areas to be served by rapid transit. The report is understandable, however, since the vice president of project planning for the Federal City Council is Gen. Louis W. Prentiss, executive director of the American Road Builders Association.

By contrast, the Little report “was not only an indictment of District freeway plans of the past decade but also an indictment of the freeway planners.” The needed rethinking of the freeway plans “will be meaningless if it is done by the same highway builders that produced our recent planning chaos.” For that reason, he recommended that NCPC conduct, or at least oversee,

future studies. “By legislation, it and it alone is given the task of final approval of the official highway plan, and of developing proposals for a ‘major thoroughfare plan.’” He added:

Most of the acrimonious “freeway fights” of recent years have their origins in the attempted usurpation of the Planning Commission’s functions by the District of Columbia Highway Department which, with no greater claim to authority than annual appropriations acts, has preempted both the District of Columbia appropriations and Federal matching funds that properly should be within the control of, and used by, the Planning Commission.

It has been said so often that it is now trite, but it is worth repeating: Just as wars are too important to leave to the generals, so also city planning is too important to leave to the highway builders.

As was customary for the subcommittee’s citizen hearings, Chairman Natcher did not engage Craig on his presentation. “Mr. Craig,” the chairman said, “thank you for your statement and for your appearance before our committee tonight.” [pages 913-915, with Craig’s formal statements on pages 915-920]

Jockeying for Position

On April 30, Chairman Funk and Director Airis held a news conference to discuss the results of a study of the North-Central Freeway by Wilbur Smith and Associates and Alan M. Voorhees and Associates. Funk and Airis accepted the recommendation to reduce the number of lanes on the North-Central Freeway. The freeway, still planned along the Baltimore and Ohio railroad tracks, would contain eight lanes from the Inner Loop to just south of Missouri Avenue. From there through Silver Spring, the freeway would be six lanes wide. In addition, the freeway would be built at ground level on in a depressed cut.

One of the consultants’ important conclusions was that “techniques used in projecting travel for the Washington metropolitan area and for the North Central freeway are those which have been widely used and tested in other areas of the country.” (The report was completed before the Little report and did not address its findings.) The consultants concluded that the study by J. E. Greiner 2 years earlier was “basically valid” but “may, in the final design, suggest some over-design.” Greiner had overestimated trip lengths, resulting in predictions of more traffic than the new estimates. Traffic volumes that Greiner predicted for 1977 “appear to be more representative for 1985”:

In long-range terms a ten-lane facility might appear desirable. However, in the light of basic policy considerations, the need to minimize land-use impacts and the availability of parallel rapid transit, an eight-lane facility appears more appropriate.

Funk said he appreciated the correction because he would have been suspicious of a report that said all earlier predictions were correct. “We asked for an objective analysis and we got one.”

Unlike critics who thought rail rapid transit could substitute for the freeway, the consultants found that only 30 percent of vehicles on the freeway during peak hours would be commuters

going to or from downtown. The remaining motorists would be going to or from other neighborhoods or across the city:

If all [downtown] trips assigned to the freeway were diverted to rapid transit (and this is unlikely), freeway capacity requirements would be reduced by only 30 per cent.

The consultants found, in short, that the freeway should be built. [Flor, Lee, "Officials Proposal 8 Lanes For North Central Freeway," *The Sunday Star*, May 1, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "Both D.C., Maryland Accept a Reduction In Freeway lanes," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 1, 1966]

As the Senate District Committee took up the revenue bill, Senators Tydings and Kennedy were considering an amendment that would require the city to submit each freeway segment to the House and Senate District Committees. After a specified period of perhaps 60 or 90 days, the project would be considered approved if it had not been specifically vetoed. Senator Tydings said the freeway deadlock "simply must be broken. The need for adequate highways is far too great to tolerate inaction." At the same time, he favored "reasonable legislative oversight." However, Senator Kennedy, who did not want to jeopardize the revenue bill, had not decided whether to introduce the amendment.

Chairman Whitener was opposed to employing a "negative authorization" for freeways. "There are many reasons – legal and practical." He did, however, favor some restrictions on the District's bridge building. "You can't let District officials string bridges anywhere." He did not want to apply the negative authorization for freeways suggested by Senators Kennedy and Tydings to bridges. "I wouldn't support that. The authorization for bridges, more than for highways, should be positive."

On May 4, Chairman Whitener held a hearing on a bill introduced by Representative Broyhill to build another bridge in the 14th Street Bridge complex. When the issue of authority was raised, General Duke asserted the opinion of city attorneys that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided the authority for additional bridges on the Interstate System.

Chairman Whitener disagreed. "The controller [sic] general of the United States is in flat-footed disagreement with you. And so am I." He argued that the 1956 Act allowed the city to apply for Federal funds, but did not give District officials the ability to build Interstate roads or bridges "unfettered by the control of city activities normally exercised . . . by the Congress." ["Tydings Supports Legislative Role In Road Disputes," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 4, 1966; Bassett, Grace, "Bridge-Builder Role Of District Argued," *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1966]

On May 5, the Senate District Committee approved the revenue bill for consideration in the full Senate. It contained the additional loan authority and penny gas tax increase as well as increased taxes on many other products. that had not been in the House bill. Committee members debated the legal authority over individual Interstate segments, but Senator Bible sided with those who believed the 1956 Act and its successors provided all the congressional authorization needed for the District's freeway network. As a result, the Kennedy amendment was not part of the bill. The bill also dropped the House provision granting a tax break to Jess Larson. [Bassett, Grace,

“8 District Tax Boosts Asked by Senate Unit,” *The Evening Star*, May 5, 1966; Carper, Elsie, “Senate Bill Asks Rise in 8 City Taxes,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 6, 1966]

On May 5, NCPC voted 8 to 3 in closed session on the transportation element of the Year 1985 Plan to support stage construction of the Interstate System. Projects in the first stage for construction through 1972 were:

- Center Leg Freeway;
- South Leg Freeway;
- K Street tunnel from Rock Creek Parkway to North Capitol Street;
- Palisades Parkway;
- Georgetown Waterfront tunnel with improvements to Jefferson Davis Highway.

The post-1972 program would consist of:

- Three Sisters Bridge;
- North Leg Freeway in its former location;
- North-Central Freeway;
- Northeast Expressway linking the North-Central Freeway to I-95 in Maryland.

This breakdown meant that the second stage projects would be built after the Interstate program ended in 1972, but NCPC Staff Director Charles H. Conrad pointed out that Congress could extend the deadline. He emphasized:

Essentially the decision was to favor going ahead with completion of elements of the freeway program now underway or approved, with nothing at all that has been under discussion ruled out for consideration at a later stage.

He told reporters that the decision was not final. It was “a directive to the staff” to follow a “skeleton framework” reflected in the vote. Following another vote by NCPC, the plan would be made public, along with the rest of the Year 1985 Plan, to give government agencies, citizens groups, and others a chance to comment.

The three voting against the measure were BPR’s Joseph Barnett, Assistant Engineer Commissioner Reynolds, and Colonel Paul R. Sheffield of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

NCPC also considered the city’s new plan for housing along freeways, but deferred action until more details were known. Seattle architect Thiry opposed the plan, saying it was doomed to failure by noise, fumes, and other problems. C. McKim Norton, a New York lawyer and planner, thought the idea showed promise and was worth exploring. [Eisen, Jack, “NCPC Suggests Delaying Some Freeway Jobs,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 6, 1966; Lewis, Robert J., “‘Staged Construction’ Of Freeways Is Voted,” *The Evening Star*, May 6, 1966]

The Federal City Council briefed local officials on its report on May 9. Although Director Airis said it was “probably an indictment in some respects” of District highway officials, “it is factual and certainly in the best interests of the whole metropolitan region. TPB Chairman Babson also

attended the briefing. Reading from a prepared statement, Babson endorsed the report, saying it “shows dramatically what happens when one part of this area moves ahead and another fails to make decisions compatible with the overall transportation development of metropolitan Washington.”

He confirmed his support for a balanced transportation system, including freeways. Rail rapid transit was vitally important but would be inadequate to serve all transportation needs. “It is nothing short of essential that we move, and move now, for a totally balanced system including a freeway . . . from the Northeast and a third bridge crossing . . . at 14th street.” He also announced that he had invited Peter S. Craig to appear before the board on May 23 to present the critic’s view. [Ikenberry, Kenneth, “3 Officials Urge Action On District Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, May 10, 1966; “Freeway Foe Will Report On May 23,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 10, 1966]

The Senate District Committee issued its report on the revenue bill on May 12 and it included sharp criticism of the Policy Advisory Committee. A complete freeway program was the only way to unclog residential streets:

Partial completion of the system will frustrate the objectives of an integrated system and only provide limited relief from the present intolerable traffic congestion.

The report said Congress should not decide the future of individual freeway projects. Instead, the Policy Advisory Committee was responsible for these decisions and should get on with it:

One aspect of the . . . interstate highway program that deeply disturbed the committee . . . was the indecisiveness over the last 3 years of the policy advisory committee to reach unequivocal conclusions about exactly what the scope of the interstate highway system should be to meet the needs of the Nation’s Capital.

The Policy Advisory Committee’s decision in March to endorse freeway projects that were underway and study others was an example of the indecisiveness. It was written that way to ensure all members would sign it, but it left an impression that NCPC had used its signature to justify its two-stage proposal. The Senate District Committee offered three recommendations for decisionmaking:

- Make decisions on a majority, rather than unanimous basis.
- Establish procedures to hold hearings on Interstate highways.
- Review each proposal and make “conclusive decisions to permit their immediate implementation.”

As Grace Bassett reported in the *Star*:

Abandoned publicly by the Senate committee were arguments of the President’s consultant Little and two presidential appointees who constantly have questioned interstate freeways here.

Those two appointees are National Capital Planning Commission Chairman Elizabeth Row and Charles A. Horsky, the President's advisor on National Capital affairs.

It was understood, however, that Horsky encouraged Sen. Kennedy to push for language in the committee report indicating a strong pro-highway sentiment. The force of a Senate recommendation could save the President from pressure to settle personally the bitter conflict between freeway and subway proponents. [Bassett, Grace, "Senate Unit Attacks Freeway Advisors," *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1966; Carper, Elsie, "Senate Unit Urges Advisers to Break Freeway Impasse," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 13, 1966]

Star editors agreed with the Senate District Committee's "blast at the fumbling, bumbling mess which the administration has made of the Washington freeway program" – with one important exception. The Policy Advisory Committee had been "manipulated deliberately by some of its public-official members as a vehicle, not to settle freeway issues, but to block the freeway program."

The committee's three recommendations were impractical for resolving the impasse. Chairman Rowe's anti-freeway views made reaching any decision that would permit the freeway program to advance virtually impossible:

The recommendation the Senate committee should have made – and what needs to be done – is that the President must intervene to halt the obstructionist activities of some of his appointees, and see personally that a firm decision is made once and for all, on the total system which is to be built. In its latest action the other day, Mrs. Rowe's commission advocated precisely the opposite – a procedure of continued indecision and delay.

The editors indicated that Horsky had persuaded General Duke and Administrator Whitton to sign the unanimous report of the Policy Advisory Committee that "was viciously destructive to the highway program":

Presumably the PAC will meet again this month. We trust that on this occasion those PAC members who recognize the need for a reasonable freeway system will avoid being similarly entrapped again. ["The Decision Gap," *The Evening Star*, May 16, 1966]

The revenue bill reached the Senate floor on May 16. Senator Bible discussed the many measures in the bill affecting a range of taxation and Federal payment issues. Regarding the highway-related provisions, he expressed the concerns about the indecisiveness of the Policy Advisory Committee and listed the three recommendations in the committee report for improved decisionmaking:

One aspect of the District's interstate highway construction program that deeply disturbed the committee in its consideration of this general highway borrowing authority proposal was the indecisiveness over the last 3 years of the policy advisory committee to reach

unequivocal conclusions about exactly what the scope of the Interstate Highway System should be to meet the needs of the Nation's Capital City.

It was your District Committee's unanimous conclusion that the policy advisory committee should take the following steps at the earliest time:

First. Formalize its procedures to permit hearings on the interstate program, review the various proposals and make conclusive decisions to permit their immediate implementation thereafter;

Second. That the District Highway Department follow the conclusions of the policy advisory committee in its construction program;

Third. That the policy advisory committee be a continuing body to serve as a force for decisive and majority consensus among its members.

For the best interests of the District of Columbia, it was your District Committee's judgment that the guidelines set out above will affirmatively encourage more expeditious decisions by the policy advisory committee membership

He added:

I hope – and I say this with all sincerity and candor – that some finality can be reached in the attempt to balance freeways and rail rapid transit. I believe this is the best means we have designed to date to do that.

With only four Senators on the floor, the Senate approved the bill without debate on the highway-related provisions or a vote. The Senate would return the bill to the House, which was expected to request a conference committee to reconcile differences in the Senate bill and the bill the House had approved in 1965. [District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1966, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 16, 1966, pages 10696-10706; Elder, Shirley, "Senate Approves D.C. Revenue Bill, *The Evening Star*, May 17, 1966]

The Senate bill, while consistent with the White House's proposal, contained many tax increases and changes that were not in the House bill. As a result, the bill's movement in the House District Committee would be delayed by further study and additional hearings.

Breakthrough Agreement on Freeways

Peter S. Craig appeared before the TPB on May 23 to present the Committee of 100 on the Federal City's views on the Federal City Council report. He argued that the city's road builders no longer claimed that new freeways were needed to move traffic. If the entire network were built along with the authorized rail rapid transit system, the area would have more transportation capacity than needed. Construction of the freeway network would be "jeopardizing the economic feasibility of rapid transit" by providing competition within the subway corridors for travelers.

As described in the *Post*:

The meeting was marked by a sharp but polite confrontation between Craig and D.C. Highway Director Thomas F. Airis, whose program was under attack.

Repeatedly, as Craig made his assertions and reeled off statistics, Airis shook his head in dissent. At the end, Airis gave a partial rebuttal – which Craig said proved one of his points.

Craig charged that past projections of 1985 traffic were so high that Airis and one of the department's consultants had abandoned them. He pointed out that the Mass Transportation Survey of 1959 predicted peak hour traffic in the North-Central Freeway corridor would be 15,800 vehicles in 1965; instead, it was 7,673 vehicles while bus use doubled. Craig said the city had excess capacity in existing streets, especially if more commuters would use buses.

In response, Airis said that Craig's statistics contained "a large number of errors" and that the freeways were needed "to get traffic off city streets. For separating local and through traffic, freeways were the answer:

Craig called this "one of the fallacies of highway engineers generally," and said the road builders fell back on this argument when statistics showed no more freeways [were needed]. ["Builders Shift View, Freeway Foe Says," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 24, 1966]

On May 25, 1966, the Policy Advisory Committee announced a 21-point agreement among the District of Columbia, Virginia highway officials, and NPS. The statement of agreement began:

The Policy Advisory Committee's statement of March 31, 1966, reflected unanimous concern that social and aesthetic factors be given full consideration on the design of urban freeways. At the same time, the Policy Advisory Committee recognizes the community's urgent need for all forms of transportation improvements, the desire of the President and the Congress to provide these improvements as soon as possible, and the practical considerations of system planning, financing, programming and scheduling required to insure orderly and logical development and construction of transportation facilities.

Since March 31, 1966, a concept of joint housing and highway projects has been introduced which appears to have great potential in eliminating problems of relocation. This approach, plus the requirement of the Board of Commissioners that satisfactory relocation housing must be available prior to construction of major highway contracts, has greatly reduced the concern of the Policy Advisory Committee on the question of social impact.

The Agreement between the National Park Service, the District of Columbia and the Virginia Department of Highways, dated May 25, 1966, is a great step forward in insuring that aesthetic considerations, particularly as related to parks and open space, are being properly balanced with transportation requirements. With this Agreement and the understanding that the Commission of Fine Arts will play an expanded role in the

architectural development of major highway facilities, the concern of the Policy Advisory Committee on the question of aesthetic impact has also been greatly reduced.

The committee approved the agreement, 5 to 1, with only NCPC Chairman Rowe dissenting.

Key project items endorsed:

- Building Three Sisters Bridge at the original location between Spout Run in Arlington and the foot of Glover-Archbold Park in Washington, with the city giving up any right to build a road through the park.
- Tunneling the entire South Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway between Constitution Avenue and 14th Street, keeping it out of sight of the Lincoln Memorial and Tidal Basin.
- Substituting, subject to more study, a depressed K Street crosstown expressway for the controversial North Leg of the Inner Loop, which would be abandoned.
- Depressing the Potomac River Freeway's westbound lanes beneath the Georgetown waterfront, with the surface from 31st Street west to Key Bridge to be developed as a park.
- Constructing the Palisades Parkway, the East Leg of the Inner Loop past D.C. Stadium, the North-Central Freeway to Silver Spring, and Interstate 95/Northeast Freeway across Fort Drive and Northwest Branch Park in the District of Columbia and Maryland.
- Tunneling E Street behind the White House and under Pennsylvania Avenue, one of several projects endorsed as part of plans for improving the Avenue and the Mall.
- Opening the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to truck traffic.
- The Highway Department will tunnel 4th, 7th and 14th Streets beneath the Mall, eliminating these surface crossings plus 17th Street.
- Endorsing a third crossing for the 14th Street Bridge, with adequate connections to the George Washington Parkway on the Virginia side.

The *Post* reported that “the most sweeping [agreement] of its kind ever adopted by a Washington city planning body [was] a surprise.” The key man had been NPS Director Hartzog, “who gave several concessions and got others in return”:

The immediate effect of his agreement will be to add one pro-highway vote in future deliberations of the Planning Commission, which voted May 5 to push for curtailment and slowdown of the road program. Hartzog's representative voted for the curtailment.

This breakthrough was, as the *Post* noted, “a clear stand contrasted with one [the Policy Advisory Committee] took two months ago following issuance of the Arthur D. Little, Inc. report.” Jack Eisen described the transformation:

The Little firm . . . recommended a virtual moratorium on future projects pending further study. Urged by presidential aide Charles A. Horsky to reach a unanimous position, the committee said then that many elements of the road program needed further study. Mrs. Rowe and others took this to mean that the study could be made from scratch and the 1972 interstate deadline ignored.

Soon afterward, however, the Federal City Council asked the President to intervene to get the program moving. The Senate District Committee then also urged that the program be moved ahead and said the Policy Advisory Committee should “be a continuing body to serve as a force for decisive and majority consensus among its members” – an apparent criticism of Horsky’s call for unanimous action.

Another factor in reaching the agreement was Chairman Natcher’s threat to withhold appropriations for the District’s matching share of subway costs if the city did not move the Interstate freeway system forward. The Senate District Committee’s report on the revenue bill, with its criticism of the Policy Advisory Committee, was another factor.

The statement emphasized that all parties wanted the freeways to be attractive and avoid disruption to the city. Bridge crossings should “achieve an architectural excellence that will make them distinctive contributions to the total conservation program now underway along the Potomac.” District highway officials would consult “extensively” with the Commission of Fine Arts during the design stage.

The Policy Advisory Committee called the agreement “a great step forward in insuring that esthetic considerations, particularly as related to parks and open space, are being properly balanced with transportation requirements.”

The plan was to submit the agreement in time for the NCPC’s June 2 meeting. However, Chairman Rowe said, “I can’t go along with this,” adding that, “the people should be heard.” In a letter to Tobriner on May 26, she pointed out that the agreement differed from the committee’s proposal to the President as well as NCPC’s most recent policy on stage construction. As a result, “no purpose would be served” by bringing the agreement before NCPC until public hearings were held on the agreement, as suggested by the Senate District Committee. [Eisen, Jack, “Agreement Reached on Highways,” *The Washington Post*, May 26, 1966; Flor, Lee, “Freeway Projects Given Park Service Go-Ahead,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1966; “Mrs. Rowe Calls for Hearings On D.C. Freeway Proposals,” *The Evening Star*, May 26, 1966; the complete agreement can be found in: *Major Highway Problems in D.C.*, pages 129-131]

Editorial reaction to the agreement was positive. *The Washington Daily News* said:

At last, it appears, there’s a chance that somebody may be about to do something to complete the half-built expressways in the area.

We hope so. We hope nothing – nobody – will be permitted to stall or slow down the program, now that it has received this long-needed push.

As for Rowe’s call for public hearings, the editorial asked, “Public hearings for what?” Everyone had already been heard. “What more can possibly be said on the subject?” The call for hearings was “merely a stall, for no useful purpose.” NCPC should approve the agreement without delay. [“Action on the Highways,” *The Washington Daily News*, May 27, 1966]

The Post said the Policy Advisory Committee had “agreed on a reasonable and enlightened program of highway construction that will greatly strengthen the city’s ties to the surrounding

suburbs at a minimal cost in disruption.” As for Rowe’s call for public hearings, the *Post* suggested:

If Mrs. Rowe cannot bring herself to permit a prompt and straightforward vote in the Planning Commission on this urgent issue, then she ought properly to retire from it. If she will not retire voluntarily, then she ought to be asked to leave. Under her management, the Planning Commission has become the point at which essential municipal projects in highways or housing or urban renewal have repeatedly been met with unremitting hostility and destructive delay. Highway construction is an Administration program, and if Mrs. Rowe cannot support it then she ought to leave the Administration.

The President had asked the Policy Advisory Committee to study the highway plans and it had done so “thoughtfully and carefully” and with special attention to “protecting the esthetic qualities and social values of the city.” As far as the *Post* was concerned, “This agreement now deserves the entire city’s support.” [“The Freeway Treaty,” *The Washington Post*, May 27, 1966]

The *Star* called the agreement “a remarkable document,” the crux of which was compromise. “This is a package which no one but an unalterable opponent of freeways, in any form, could reasonably oppose.” Predictably, the editors wrote, Chairman Rowe objected. She already had “served notice that she has no intention of placing the subject on the [June 9] agenda” pending “public hearings” over the summer. (The editorial referred to them in quotes as “public hearings” to show skepticism about their real purpose.) She was “stalling again – more desperately now that she is virtually alone in left field.”

Unfortunately, NCPC’s usefulness was “vitiating by personal whim.” The commissioners should be allowed to vote on the agreement, but whatever the outcome, “it should be remembered, too, that the Planning Commission is after all an advisory body, not some mystical court of ultimate wisdom.” Regardless of what Rowe decided to do, “the President should see to it that the sensible new freeway proposal, on which such a broad degree of official unanimity has developed after all these years, is delayed no longer.” [“The Freeway Solution,” *The Evening Star*, May 27, 1966]

Senator Bible and General Duke exchanged correspondence to improve the decisionmaking ability of the Policy Advisory Committee. Senator Bible informed General Duke that the committee, “composed as it is of the heads of federal agencies and commissions having great authority over planning for the growth and beauty of the nation’s capital city and its environs . . . can serve as an effective sparkplug because of the great prestige and force its decisions can lend to assure a balanced transportation system of both highways and rapid transit facilities.”

General Duke informed the Senator that the committee was an “advisory,” not a “statutory” body, but could influence progress on highway construction by meeting regularly. If progress did not occur, the committee would give “further thought” to redefining its role.

Chairman Rowe revealed her strategy for blocking the agreement, which she refused to put on NCPC’s agenda for June. Because NCPC normally did not meet in July, failure to act in June

would delay action for 2 months, leaving time for a public hearing where she was confident citizens would oppose the agreement. She understood that the NPS Director's vote in support of the agreement would switch NCPC's anti-freeway majority to a minority on the vote.

Moreover, she maintained that the Policy Advisory Committee's March 31 report to President Johnson remained in effect because no further study had taken place before the May 25 agreement. That agreement was inconsistent with NCPC's action on the stage construction proposal. "We took action on it in May. There have been no new reports or planning studies which would make it relevant."

Senator Case commended the agreement on tunneling the entire South Leg Freeway under the Lincoln Memorial and the Tidal Basin. Otherwise, he believed that a public hearing would be helpful. He added that plans should be developed by "competent planners," not be a "deal" among officials.

Despite the disagreements, the city was ready to acquire land along the Georgetown waterfront for the depressed Potomac River Freeway in accordance with the agreement. The plan was to acquire six blocks between 31st Street and Key Bridge. According to reports, BPR had agreed to obligate \$7 million in Federal and local funds for the acquisition, but formal approval had not yet been obtained. [Flor, Lee, "Bible, Duke Back PAC on Freeways," *The Evening Star*, May 27, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "City Moves to Get River Freeway Land," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 27, 1966]

On May 31, despite Chairman Rowe's refusal to put the agreement on the June 9 agenda, the District Board of Commissioners formally asked her to place "Approval of the Interstate System in the District of Columbia" on the agenda and to approve it. The letter, dated June 1, assured Chairman Rowe that the Board of Commissioners shares her "very legitimate concern that these new projects be esthetically pleasing and . . . not be permitted to detract from the dignity of the Nation's Capital."

During the meeting, the District commissioners approved the letter and discussed the plan for a six-lane boulevard in the Florida Avenue corridor. Commission President Tobriner said he was opposed to any type of freeway in the former corridor of the North Leg Freeway. He did not believe such a boulevard should "be any part of any contemplated highway system." It looked, he said, "like an ultimate north leg, under another name."

After the commissioners approved the letter, General Duke told reporters that no consideration had been given to bypassing NCPC. "We'd have quite a can of worms on our hands."

Citizen groups were beginning to react to the agreement. The Federation of Civic Associations adopted a resolution drafted by the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association denouncing "the complete reversal" of the Policy Advisory Committee "from its position that further studies were necessary to ascertain the true facts at this time and afford the citizens an opportunity to be heard." The resolution added:

It would appear that congressional pressures from just a few gave the enormous highway lobby just enough of a boost to overcome justice and a fair hearing. Certain transportation facts used in the past have been found to be false. We do not understand how this complete ignoring of the wishes of the residents can occur, this wrecking of our homes and businesses.

The Metropolitan Citizens Council for Rapid Transit also denounced the agreement. It said two members of the Policy Advisory Committee were part of the highway lobby (General Duke and Administrator Whitton), so the council could understand their position:

But it is plain neglect of their public duties for the head of the National Park Service, the National Capital Transportation Agency, and the Fine Arts Commission to bow to such pressure.

Meanwhile, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City announced it was going to send protest letters to the White House, Department of the Interior, and NCPC. During the committee's meeting, members denounced Director Hartzog for his "sellout" to freeway interests. [Flor, Lee, "Commissioners Ask Okay for Freeways," *The Evening Star*, June 1, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "City Asks NCPC to Act on Freeways," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 1, 1966; Adams, Michael, "The Bitter Taste of Freeways," *Voice of the City, The Evening Star*, May 28, 1966; "Protest Set On Freeway Decision," *The Evening Star*, June 1, 1966]

On June 2, during a panel discussion in Foggy Bottom on the Georgetown freeway situation, Hartzog explained his change of heart. He acknowledged that "a great deal has been made recently of the fact I switched in my position on the freeway proposals for the District," but added that a look at the record would clarify what happened. As Robert J. Lewis summarized Hartzog's comments in the *Star*:

Noting that the agreement in which he participated provides for concessions from the District Highway Department, including tunneling to save parkland, closer aesthetic control, eventual removal of the Whitehurst Freeway, diversion of the north leg of the Inner Loop highway system into a provisional depressed route along K Street and other proposals not originally a part of the District's program, Hartzog said:

"I ask you, who switched?"

One evidence of his view was that the 1964 freeway plan would have displaced 5,860 dwelling units, compared with an estimated 2,590 dwelling units under the new agreement.

Hartzog was speaking at a symposium in the State Department Auditorium on highway proposals for the Georgetown waterfront. Chairman Rowe also was on the panel. She said, "there is real community resistance to the freeway program." As for criticism of NCPC, highway supporters found it "easier to use the planning commission as a whipping boy than to criticize the people as a whole for opposing the program." As for the agreement, many details had not been spelled out for public consideration, she said, adding, "we don't even know how many acres of parkland will be taken" by the new plan.

As the symposium took place, 50 pickets representing the District, Maryland, and Virginia marched in front of the auditorium entrance with freeway protest signs. [Lewis, Robert J., "Support of Freeways Pact Is Defended by Parks Chief," *The Evening Star*, June 3, 1966]

At the *Star*, editors thought Director Hartzog's explanation the "most interesting aspect of the Georgetown freeway discussion." NPS "traditionally has taken a back seat to no one" among highway skeptics. Militant freeway opponents "have counted on the Park Service's support as a matter of course." Therefore, Hartzog's support for the Policy Advisory Committee agreement "was more than a matter of curiosity" among these groups.

The editorial explained that the District's freeway network dated to the 1950s and would have taken about 240 acres of parkland and replaced virtually none. Now, the inclusion of tunnels and underpasses would protect park values. Instead of thrusting truck traffic "like a juggernaut" into the city, the agreement made logical changes for serving traffic between Virginia and the District, reduced displacements, and would be designed under "the watchful eye" of the Fine Arts Commission. With all this, Hartzog had asked, "who switched?" The editorial concluded:

The full detail of Mr. Hartzog's five-page "explanation" is too extensive to go into here. It ought to be required reading, however, for the freewheeling opponents of highways. And for freewheeling highway officials, too. ["Who Switched?" *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1966]

Two days before NCPC's June 9 meeting, Chairman Rowe reversed her position and placed the agreement on the agenda. Why she did so was unclear. She denied speculation that White House pressure had forced the change, although she admitted to having spoken with Horsky. He said, "I talked to her, but she put the highway program on the agenda herself. You overestimate my capacity of persuasion."

She attributed the change to Commissioner Tobriner's June 1 letter asking her to put the item on the agenda. Her reply to Tobriner urged public hearings on the highway agreement. She also emphasized that three freeway projects should be studied further before NCPC decisions: The North-Central Freeway and its connection to the Center Leg Freeway, the East Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway system, and the Three Sisters Bridge and its approaches. ["Mrs. Rowe Puts Roads On Agenda," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 8, 1966; Flor, Lee, "Planners Will Consider Full Freeway System," *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1965]

With pickets marching outside, NCPC approved the District freeway program on June 9, with the six Federal and District officials outvoting, as expected, the five citizen members (Rowe, Norton, Thiry, Edwards, and Louchheim). The precise meaning of the votes was unclear, as Eisen explained:

The road item was near the middle of the day's agenda and was reached 1½ hours after the session began. When Duke sought to gain the planners' approval for the Policy Advisory Committee's recent system, Mrs. Rowe ruled him out of order.

To be considered, she said, Duke's motion had to be a substitute or a proposed alternative for a transportation resolution adopted by the Commission last month during deliberations on the forthcoming 1985 comprehensive plan for the city.

At that time, the Commission endorsed a curtailed interstate system by a vote of 8 to 3.

Since rescinding the prior action would have required eight votes, Duke appealed Mrs. Rowe's ruling and won by the day's first 6-to-5 vote

Duke's motion called upon the Commission to give its "general endorsement of the Policy Advisory Committee statement" – an action that, he said, would help "develop the sense of the Commission" in its work on the 1985 plan.

General Duke added that, "The NCPC by its action is not forfeiting any prerogatives . . . it is merely giving this report a pat on the back."

NCPC then voted on each of the 21 points in the Policy Advisory Committee's statement, beginning by approving, 6 to 5, the North-Central Freeway to Silver Spring and its connecting the I-95/Northeast Freeway link to Baltimore. By the same vote, NCPC approved the East Leg Freeway from Barney Circle to the North-Central Freeway and the North Leg Freeway north of the Ivy City railroad yards. Next, NCPC approved several less controversial projects unanimously, including the South Leg Freeway tunneled under the Lincoln Memorial and the Tidal Basin, the depressed freeway along the Georgetown waterfront, and the crosstown tunnel in the K Street corridor.

The votes returned to 6 to 5 for the Three Sisters Bridge and opening the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to trucks.

According to Eisen, the debate had been sharp but conducted in conversational tones. "Despite her obvious anguish, Mrs. Rowe remained calm and gracious." She admitted she was "disappointed" by the votes, but encouraged by unanimous support for public hearings on the transportation provisions of the Year 1985 Plan. General Duke initially opposed hearings, but voted for them in the end.

After the vote, General Duke told reporters, "Frankly, I am leery about placing too much judgment about what happened today." Hartzog, by contrast, considered the vote an endorsement of the compromise he had approved, while Administrator Whitton said he thought NCPC had approved the complete freeway system covered by the agreement, but left geometric details such as width or design of interchanges to District highway officials and BPR engineers.

Even NCPC's Conrad, who had been with the agency for 16 years, said, "I'm not too sure what 'general approval' means." Lee Flor discussed the uncertainties:

The vote yesterday apparently will produce little result. Individual freeway projects will have to be brought back to the commission piece by piece for approval. If any single member of the six ex officio members is absent, the five private members will block

approval. If two ex-officio members are absent, the five private members could vote some form of disapproval.

The executive committee of the commission also has asked its legal counsel for an opinion whether ex-officio members can send substitute delegates in their place if they have to be absent. If the lawyers rule that ex-officio members cannot send substitute delegates, the balance of power in the commission may shift overnight.

While NCPC was acting, the board of directors of the Metropolitan Washington COG approved a motion asking Federal agencies to “adopt and implement” the Policy Advisory Committee agreement. The motion stated that “it has been recognized that an adequate freeway system in the District of Columbia is an essential element of a balanced transportation system” [Eisen, Jack, “Planners Vote to Complete Freeways,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 10, 1966; Flor, Lee, “Full Program of Freeways Voted for D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, June 10, 1966]

The day after the votes on the freeway program, NCPC clarified what Eisen called “a sticky parliamentary problem.” NCPC had given “general approval” of the freeway agreement but had not rescinded its previous stage construction vote that put the more controversial elements of the Interstate freeway system beyond the 1972 deadline for 90-10 matching funds. On June 10, NCPC voted in closed session to discard its earlier decision and incorporate the freeway agreement as its own policy in the Year 1985 Plan. It would be subject to public hearings after publication later in the summer. [Eisen, Jack, “Plans Board Refuses to Endorse Bundy Site for New Shaw School,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 11, 1966; Lewis, Robert J. “Air Transport ‘Push’ Is Forecast in Area,” *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1966]

Star editors considered NCPC’s action doubly gratifying because it moved the freeway program forward and overcame “the incredible impediments that were placed in the path of this action by the NCPC chairman, Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe.” Whether she liked it or not, “her commission now is firmly on the record in favor of at least the broad principles of a workable, specific freeway system for the entire city.” Was it the end of the fight, the editors asked:

There is no reason to assume that Mrs. Rowe and those who share her blindness on the need for a balanced transportation system in Washington will not continue to harass efforts to implement Thursday’s freeway votes and, if possible, to overturn them.

Regardless, District highway officials should proceed, with “no hesitation whatsoever,” to work with other government agencies, let design contracts, acquire right-of-way, and expedite the program. “Congressional sentiment plainly is in favor of moving ahead with the freeway program.” Except for NCPC, the Johnson Administration is in support. For further reassurance, District highway officials should be encouraged by “the vigorous, unexpected support for the freeway program also voted this week by the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments.” [“Clearance for Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1966]

Despite the action on the Policy Advisory Committee agreement, housing for displaced remained in doubt. In early June, Edward L. Ullman, president of the Washington Center for

Metropolitan Studies, proposed that low income families be moved to new suburban tracts instead of being housed in high-rise units over the new freeways on expanded freeway right-of-way. He said the plan to acquire block-wide rights-of-way for the freeways would be “in the long run a counsel of despair and a drastic backward step.”

On June 13, Thomas Lawrence, chairman of the freeway committee of the Washington Urban League’s Neighborhood Development Center, objected that the only undeveloped land for new suburban tracts was “at the far reaches of the metropolitan area.” Families in the path of the Inner Loop Freeway, he said, preferred to stay in the city near their present homes. Based on Ullman’s statement, “it appears that a proposal is being made to establish new ghettos . . . which are impossible to reach by . . . public transportation.” [“Group Asks Air Rights Housing,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 14, 1966]

The District, on July 12, submitted legislation to Congress covering air rights. The District of Columbia Freeway Airspace Utilization Act set priorities for construction in highway air rights, with the first priority being buildings for municipal purposes. Low-income housing by the National Capital Housing Authority was second. The remaining priorities were buildings for Federal Agencies, public or private low or moderate income housing, construction by non-profit organizations, and construction for businesses. District officials considered the legislation “must-pass” in the current congressional session. [“Congress Gets D.C. Proposal on Air Rights,” *The Evening Star*, July 12, 1966]

On July 21, General Duke presented a revised plan to NCPC for the North-Central Freeway. Under a plan devised by J. E. Greiner and Company and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, the freeway would be built 20 to 30 feet below ground beside the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks in the District and Maryland. It would connect with a large interchange with downtown bypass routes around 10th Street and Rhode Island Avenue, NE. The new route would avoid Takoma Park and prime residential areas north of Silver Spring. It also would reduce residential displacement from 720 families in the District and 570 families in Maryland to 370 families in the District and 175 families in Maryland.

General Duke did not ask for a vote on the new plan. He said he only wanted to give NCPC an early look at it. The consultants, however, said the new route was the best they could come up with. [Flor, Lee, “Freeway Route Shift Proposed,” *The Evening Star*, July 21, 1966]

The Money Problem

Despite efforts by NCPC, District officials, and others to avoid pitting freeways against rail rapid transit, the two were becoming increasingly intertwined, as Jack Eisen explained in the *Post* on May 8. He indicated a “key Capitol source” revealed Chairman Natcher’s intention to eliminate appropriations for the city’s transit matching funds in view of efforts to curtail the freeway program:

Such action would be intended to focus President Johnson’s personal attention on the road controversy in the hope that he would intervene, the source said.

Chairman Natcher's intention became known during the April 20 hearing, but the transcript of the hearing had still not been made public in May. If he followed through in blocking the matching funds, NCTA would not be able to spend the funds authorized for the Federal share of subway in the District, another source told Eisen.

Since then, NCPC had voted, 8 to 3, in support of stage construction to postpone the more controversial freeway segments until after 1972, a move the source told Eisen "will only harden the subcommittee's resolve":

The House subcommittee's determination to deal head-on with the issue began, it was learned, after the Policy Advisory Committee sent the President its report last month urging further studies of Washington freeway proposals.

On the urging of presidential aide Charles A. Horsky, the PAC made its recommendation unanimous although the body was badly split on its basic views.

As a result, freeway advocates on and off the PAC interpreted the report and the President's reply as calling for studies within the framework and timetable of the interstate program, with its 1972 expiration date.

Opponents, including NCPC Chairman Elizabeth Rowe, took the view that the studies could be basic and that the 1972 deadline could go out the window.

Moreover, two recent actions on Capitol Hill added to the "already confused" freeway program. First, Chairman McMillan of the House District Committee and Representative Whitener said they expected to insist that the city get individual congressional authorizations for Potomac River bridge projects on the Interstate System, including the Three Sisters Bridge and additional spans at 14th Street. Second, the Senate District Committee, in approving the revenue bill, had endorsed the Policy Advisory Committee report without spelling out what it meant. The committee also thought the Policy Advisory Committee should pass on pending freeway proposals:

The Senate committee's recommendations were made to head off an amendment to the financing bill which Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) was prepared to offer.

The amendment would have given the PAC a statutory responsibility to pass on freeway projects. It is an open secret on Capitol Hill and downtown that this proposal actually originated on the staff of Sen. Joseph D. Tydings (D-Md.).

Eisen also reported how the 8 to 3 vote came about:

The final NCPC vote was preceded by maneuvering, it was reported, in which District Engineer Commissioner Charles M. Duke sought approval for the full interstate program. This preliminary vote lost, 6 to 5, with Duke backed by representatives of the Army Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, National Capital Transportation Agency and General Services Administration.

After winning compromises in the directive to the staff, NCTA Administrator Walter J. McCarter and GSA Public Buildings Commissioner Caspar F. Hegner agreed to vote with the majority on the full transportation report, which urged construction of the subway.

This, McCarter said later did not reflect an antifreeway position on his part.

The only Federal official on the NCPC who reportedly voted down the line to curtail the roads was T. Sutton Jett, regional director of the National Park Service. [Eisen, Jack, "House Unit May Kill Subway Funds in Bid For LBJ Intercession," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 8, 1966]

When Senator Bible brought the revenue bill to the Senate floor on May 16, he discussed the committee's concern about the effectiveness of decisionmaking on the District's freeways. He also discussed one of the general provisions of title X of the bill. It gave the District the authority to enter into agreements with Maryland and Virginia to develop a 3C planning process. During hearings, the District commissioners made clear they had adequate authority under Title 23, United States Code, to enter into agreements with BPR and the two States "to undertake the construction of Federal aid highway projects." As a result, "the effect of this section will be to provide a restatement of existing authority." [District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1966, *Congressional Record-Senate*, May 16, 1966, pages 10702-10703]

These provisions addressed the concerns Senators Kennedy and Tydings had expressed. As noted earlier, the Senate engaged in limited debate on another aspect of the bill before passing the bill without discussion of these highway measures.

Chairman Natcher was holding the appropriations act pending action on the revenue bill. As in the past, the District budget was based on congressional authorizations for funding that had not yet been approved. He was unwilling to appropriate funds that had not been authorized. As of the end of May, the House District Committee had not scheduled hearings to consider the measures in the Senate bill that had not been in the bill the House approved in 1965.

However, on June 2, Chairman McMillan went to the House floor to request unanimous consent to pull the revenue bill from consideration and ask for a conference with the Senate. There being no objection, Speaker Pro Tempore Albert appointed House members to participate in the conference (Chairmen McMillan and Whitener and Representatives Broyhill, Dowdy, Fuqua, Harsha, and Nelsen). [Revenue For the District of Columbia, *Congressional Record-House*, June 2, 1966, page 12176]

This action was less encouraging than it might have seemed because the House District Committee still intended to hold hearings. Moreover, of the six District of Columbia bills under consideration in Congress, many of them minor and inexpensive, none had survived a conference report as yet. Further, Chairman McMillan said he would not take part in any other conferences until a District anti-crime bill was signed into law. Consideration of that bill was complicated by the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Miranda v. Arizona* on June 13, 1966. This is the decision that required police to inform defendants of their rights to an attorney and against self-incrimination as well as to determine if the defendant understood these rights. House and Senate

members would have to determine if the anti-crime bill was consistent with this decision. [Elder, Shirley, "D.C. Bills facing Death," *The Evening Star*, June 20, 1966]

On June 27, the House held a 1-day hearing on the revenue bill. Grace Bassett described the hearing as "a formality promised by McMillan when the Senate acted." After the hearing, Chairman McMillan said, "Now, I hope we can take the House bill and the Senate bill into conference without further delay." The highway revenue provisions, which were in the House and Senate bills, were not a concern during the hearing.

As the new fiscal year began on July 1, the city did not have a budget. Robert L. Asher, writing in the Potomac Watch column, suggested that the message from Congress was: "Happy Fiscal New Year – Use Your Credit Cards and Pray." The revenue bill, "which will inform us as to how much we can tax ourselves and thus, how much we'll have in the cash register for the next year, is in the legislative limbo known as 'conference':

Both the Senate and House District Committees assure regularly that they're pressing each other for action. So just because it's July is no reason to blame them.

And you can't get mad at the House Appropriations subcommittee on the District, for these guys say they're holding up approval of a budget until they get a reading on the revenues.

The Senate Appropriations fellows get out of it neatly, since the Senate doesn't act on spending bills until the House has. And even then we aren't through, because we have to go through a conference on this one, too. [Asher, Robert L., "D.C. Is in Business—but Only on Paper," Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 7, 1966]

As July ended without a resolution, one District official told a reporter, "This puts us in a scratchy position. We are scratching our heads wondering what to do next." [Elder, Shirley, "D.C. Budget Caught in 3-Ring Show," *The Sunday Star*, July 24, 1966]

The Compact – Extending the Promise

On June 9, President Johnson fulfilled his promise to send legislation to Capitol Hill authorizing the interstate compact for the rail rapid transit system. His letter began:

This is the Congress which promised the citizens of the Nation's Capital a new system of mass transportation. I hope it will also be the Congress which extends that promise to the citizens of the entire Washington metropolitan area.

The economic well-being of this region – and the efficient functioning of the Government itself – depend more and more each year on adequate mass transportation facilities. No system of freeways, no matter how extensive or well planned, can suffice much longer.

He recalled how the Congress approved the 25-mile, \$431 million system, authorized \$150 million for it, and appropriated \$6.2 million to begin engineering. "But that system, even when completed, will only begin to solve our transportation problems."

Population shifts were part of the problem. Three-quarters of the area's population lived in the city in 1950. "By 1970, however," that situation will be almost totally reversed":

At that time, there will be an estimated 1,688,000 citizens living in our Maryland and Virginia suburbs—67 percent of the area's swelling population.

Even today, this shifting population is creating massive traffic problems, with more than a million automobiles entering and leaving our city every 24 hours. Even with a full mass transit system – on a regional basis – that figure is expected to double by 1985. Without such a system, a complete breakdown in area transportation would be only a matter of time.

To achieve that goal, he transmitted legislation to authorize an interstate agency "with the power to plan and finance a regionwide system." The bill would ratify on behalf of the District of Columbia the compact already ratified by Maryland and Virginia to create the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. With the grant of consent required by the Constitution and by Section 301(a) of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, the new agency would assume responsibility from NCTA for the mass transit system on September 30, 1967.

President Johnson emphasized what the bill did and did not do:

This legislation will not create a regional system. It will not build a mile of rail rapid transit. It does not impose on the United States, or on the District of Columbia, any financial obligation. But it is essential if we are to move ahead, for the Transit Authority will become the administrative framework within which further progress can be charted.

Maryland and Virginia had demonstrated their support "by prompt ratification" of the compact. With approval of the enabling legislation, Congress can "echo that determination."

The bill was assigned to the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary, which customarily handle compacts among the States. [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact, A Communication from The President of the United States, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 452, June 9, 1966, pages III-IV]

The next day, the aspiring Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority met in the District Building for its first public meeting, with Representative Sickles presiding. The authority had, as yet, no official function, but the members wanted to assure the public that they would protect the interests of residents of Maryland, Virginia, and the District. The *Post* reported:

The new Authority would spend the next 15 months preparing a route and financing plan for a regional transit system. This would be an expanded version of the 25-mile system, mostly within Washington, authorized by Congress. ["Transit Directors Meet, But Agency Still Unborn," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 11, 1966]

Breaking the Auto Jam

NCPC's approval of the District's planned freeway network resulted in optimism that a headline in the *Post* referred to as "Breaking the Auto Jam." NCPC's action, Bart Barnes wrote, "may uncork – at least on paper – part of the traffic bottleneck suburban commuters go through daily to reach the city."

The North-Central Freeway, Three Sisters Bridge, and Palisades Parkway offered hope of relief of commuter traffic jams. Maryland and District officials were "close to agreement on the proposed route for the controversial and beleaguered North Central Freeway beyond the District line in Silver Spring." Designed to complement the rail rapid transit system, the freeway would be a vital link between Montgomery County and the District core while giving Prince George's County residents similar access via the I-95/Northeast Freeway link to Baltimore. Officials had agreed the freeway would "stick as close to the Baltimore & Ohio right-of-way as possible to keep displacement to a minimum."

The Three Sisters Bridge would connect I-66 to the city for commuters and shoppers. "The bridge, which would utilize Spout Run Parkway as a link between it and Route I-66 is likely to meet stiff opposition from Arlington residents."

Nevertheless, construction of the bridge "would help clear the way for the Palisades Parkway along Washington's Potomac shoreline and would remove the present "dead end" [at] the District line." To be constructed by NPS, the parkway would join with the E Street Expressway for a link to downtown:

It would probably eliminate the present commuter practice of "double crossing" – going from Maryland over the Cabin John Bridge, down the Virginia parkway, then cutting back to the city on the Key, Memorial, Roosevelt or 14th Street bridges. [Barnes, Bart, "Breaking the Auto Jam," *The Washington and Times Herald*, June 12, 1966]

This optimism was aided by new estimates of the number of relocations the freeways would require. NCPC estimated that the number of homes to be destroyed had been cut in half, from 5,860 dwelling units, "many of them occupied by low-income and minority families," to 2,590 units, or about 9,000 individuals. The relocations would be spread over several years, giving the District relocation agency time to find replacement housing. Lee Flor reported:

District Highway Department director Thomas Airis said yesterday that he thought the proposals for building relocation housing over the freeways might solve his relocation problem.

Airis also said that the first direction by the Highway Department, following the National Capital Planning Commission action last week, probably would be purchase of land along the Georgetown Waterfront. [Flor, Lee, "Approved Freeway Plan Eases Impact on Housing," *The Sunday Sun*, June 12, 1966]

In the opinion of *Star* editors, one of the District's "bright, encouraging developments" in the freeway controversy was the District's "decision to study the possibilities of using freeway

condemnation procedures to provide new sites for housing—especially housing to relocate some of the low-income families displaced by the roads.” Use of air rights was one way, but the other was to buy excess land for housing or other public purposes. “In either technique, or combination of the two, the theory is that the project would be carefully designed from the start as a multi-purpose enterprise.”

As for Edward Ullman’s characterization of these proposals as a “counsel of despair and a drastic backward step,” the editors declared them “ridiculous.” His idea of moving low-income families from the path of the freeway in the central city to the suburbs was “equally foolish”:

We agree that a part of the answer to a great many of Washington’s problems, not merely transportation, involves a rational racial dispersion of housing throughout the metropolitan area. But that is a long-range goal which will have to be achieved through a variety of means. To propose it as a short-range solution to imminent freeway relocation problems contributes nothing. [“Counsel of Despair,” *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1966]

To illustrate the point, the editors printed a letter from Thomas Lawrence, Chairman, Center Leg Freeway Committee, and neighborhood workers William Richardson and Henry Alston of the Neighborhood Development Center, Washington Urban League. They called Ullman’s suggestion “unwarranted, ill-timed and poorly considered.” As residents in the path of the Center Leg Freeway, their “overwhelming desire is to maintain ourselves in safe, decent and sanitary housing and to have adequate community facilities within our old neighborhood.” Their homes were convenient to their places of employment and public transportation. Embracing the Ullman plan “would be disruptive for our citizens and a cruel hoax”:

Only 450 solid, middle-class Negro families have found integrated housing in the suburbs over the last three years. With integrated housing largely unavailable within existing suburban communities and with undeveloped land available only at the far reaches of the Metropolitan Area, it appears that a proposal is being made to establish new ghettos in locations which are impossible to reach by the public transportation.

By contrast, the District’s study of air rights and excess condemnation appeared to be “real and workable.” It was the city’s first effort “to respond to the desires of a community to provide housing for persons before they are displaced by public works.” [“Path of Freeway,” Letters to the Editor, *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1966]

At this pivotal moment in the freeway controversy, sources at the White House indicated that General Duke’s tour of duty as Engineer Commissioner would probably be extended beyond the traditional 3 years that otherwise would expire July 8. As the *Post* reported:

Some city officials feel that it would be inadvisable to bring in a new and inexperienced man at the present time, with the highway crisis still in bloom.

After years of wrangling, the city’s highway crisis now seems on [its] way to resolution. Duke played a major role recently when the National Capital Planning Commission voted for the key elements of a multimillion dollar citywide highway plan.

With additional steps before construction can begin, General Duke's experience and expertise were "regarded as valuable in shepherding the plans" to completion. [Richard, Paul, "Duke to Stay on Job, White House Hints," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 28, 1966]

The Home Rule Rider

On June 7, Chairwoman Edith Green (D-Or.) of the Subcommittee on Education and Labor secured approval of a bill granting the District an independent, elected, seven-member school board with the power to tax and finance its own system. The subcommittee added the provision to a vocational rehabilitation bill for the District that Chairman McMillan had introduced in the House District Committee, and sent to the Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Representative Powell.

Supporters of the McMillan bill feared that the school board issue might be challenged on the House floor as not germane to the overall bill. Reportedly, Chairman McMillan and Representatives Nelsen and Broyhill of the District Committee supported the school measure. Representative Green said, "this is the first District bill we've had sent to our committee in some time, and we think it entirely germane to amend it with the school board provisions." [Asher, Robert L., "House Unit Approved Elected School In a Surprise Move," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 8, 1966]

The measure, using the rider method Rauh had proposed for home rule, gained support among Home rule advocates, as Robert L. Asher wrote in the Potomac Watch column:

The shattering thought of Congress actually slamming the door on home rule again is so hard for most local groups to contemplate [that] they may well overlook a chance to stick a foot in, just in case.

They were not "lowering any flags on the never-say-die battle for a mayor and council here . . . but an elected school board and a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives are two steps that Congress seems a little more ready to act on if pressed." These steps would be "crumbs," but the city's home rule advocates were "now working toward these changes" while keeping "the greater goal" in sight.

The financial implications of the school board measure worried home rule advocates, but they preferred an elected board instead of one named by U.S. District Court judges, as at present. They especially liked the idea of a nonvoting member of the House, similar to the arrangement for Puerto Rico. Delegate Santiago Polanco-Abreu could not vote in committees or on the House floor, but he could "take to the floor and sound off." Representatives Mathias and Morris K. Udall (D-Az.) had introduced a bill to give the District a similar position. They considered it a viable alternative if home rule failed in the 89th Congress.

However, "everyone will be watching anxiously to see if Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) tries a last-ditch effort to enact the Senate's home rule measure by attaching it to a non-District bill that also could bypass the House District Committee. More power to him if he does." Just in case he fails, Asher wrote, "it seems only prudent to move ahead with some insurance measures that

might give us a crack at the polls.” [Asher, Robert L, “Backstop Measure A Home Rule Must,” Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 13, 1966]

Even as support grew for Senator Morse’s rider initiative, the underpinnings for Chairwoman Green’s school board fell apart in committee. On June 28, Chairman Powell declared the measure dead, while Representative Green denied it after “a first-class parliamentary fight” between the two, according to the *Post*. “After two stormy sessions that included a morning walkout, an exchange of charges and an afternoon boycott by Mrs. Green’s supporters, Powell announced that his Committee had disposed of the issue for good and that he’d hear no more of it.”

Powell, an African-American, accused Representative Green, who was white, of trying to “scuttle” home rule. “I hate to see her being used as a tool, aligning herself with segregationists . . . Republicans . . . strange bedfellows” who support a proposal “concocted by a group of Southerners.” He wanted nothing to stand in the way of Senator Morse’s rider plan. He said:

We have an excellent chance to get a free D.C. this year. The parliamentary maneuvers are under way. We planned this home rule tactic months ago, and the overwhelming feeling of local groups is that nothing should hinder it.

Chairwoman Green, citing her long support for home rule, denied the school board measure would jeopardize the home rule rider. She doubted that the House in the 89th Congress was any more supportive of home rule in 1966 than it had been in 1965. “If the home rule supporters can produce additional votes in the House, I’ll be one of the ones who will vote for it. But the people of Washington have waited long enough for some participation in the democratic process and they should have an elected school board. [Asher, Robert L, “Bid to Tie School Board Issue To Home Rule Fails in House,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 29, 1966]

In early July, Senator Morse was ready to advance his rider. His target was a \$2.9 billion higher education bill the House had passed. If the Senate approved the rider, the amended bill would be returned to the House where it would be considered by Chairman Powell’s committee, not the District Committee. Chairman Powell said he had killed the Green rider to prepare the way for the Morse rider. He planned to shepherd it through the House.

About 4,000 people attended the YOU home rule rally at the outdoor Sylvan Theater on the southeast corner of the Washington Monument grounds. Bishop Smallwood Williams of the Bible Way Baptist Church told them, “This is the ninth inning. There are two outs. The champ is about ready to bat and the other side is playing dirty. The pitcher is throwing spitballs. We want the big umpire in the White House to tell them to run the game right.”

Rauh said, “As one who has spoken for 20 years at every citywide home rule rally, I hope no one will take it amiss if I say this is the last time. I say to the President, we have done our part, Mr. President, give us now the final push across the goal line.”

The *Post* pointed out that some of the speakers “have not spoken to each other for years,” but they presented a united front in keeping with advice from Sterling Tucker, executive director of

the Washington Urban League. He said, "It's important that we don't begin fighting among ourselves, seeking the headlines, taking the credit. There's a place in this struggle for all of us."

Senator Morse appeared:

The crowd roared approval when Morse described the home rule rider he is tacking on the House-passed higher education bill in an attempt to circumvent the hostile House District Committee.

"It's more or less the same bill that's been passed by the Senate six times." He thought opposition to home rule was based on fear of a Negro-run city, but he said, "if it should be decided in the District of Columbia that the best qualified candidate for mayor is a Negro, then he should be elected."

He acknowledged his disputes with the White House over the Vietnam War had caused some estrangement with President Johnson. However, on home rule, "I want to find myself in agreement with my President." His rider was "the last hope we have for home rule in this session." He added, "I make my plea to my President . . . I plead with you to give us home rule in this session, so we can change the image of America." (Charles Horsky represented the President at the rally, but was not quoted in news accounts.)

YOU's King said, "We need a broadly based coalition movement – not 50 or 60 percent of the people, but 80 or 90 percent." The Reverend Fauntroy told the crowd that with home rule, "we will give the nation and the world a much-needed example of how Negroes and whites can work together." James Farmer, former head of CORE, looked at the crowd and said, "I see black, white, Catholic, Jew, Protestant, labor, young and old – that's the kind of coalition we need." Comedian Dick Gregory "who flew in from riot-torn Chicago," according to the *Star*, "capped the rally with a series of jokes and anecdotes, before reminding the audience that 'you can't laugh your problems away.'"

(In 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had launched the Chicago Freedom Movement in support of the open housing provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Riots and disruption resulted during the summer. In August, Dr. King and Mayor Richard J. Daley signed an open housing agreement that proved ineffective.)

YOU had invited Marion Barry to address the crowd, but he declined. He arrived midway through the rally, but stayed outside the group. He told reporters, "With all the muscle they have, they should have had 20 times as many people here today." He added, "I don't think much of these rallies. I don't see the grass roots. I see the same old people you see at all the rallies." Previously, he had said if the rally attracted 10,000 people, Free D.C. Movement would drop its home rule campaign, but the rally did not reach that number. [Cronk, Sue, and Blumenthal, Richard, "LBJ Exhorted to Act For Home Rule Now," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 18, 1966; Hoge, Warren, and Ikenberry, Kenneth, "Coalition Is Urged At Home Rule Rally," *The Evening Star*, July 18, 1966]

As the weeks passed, Senator Morse awaited his chance to introduce the rider when the House education bill reached the Senate floor. In a News Analysis, Robert Asher stated that the “feverish home-rule campaign of 1965, which saw unprecedented White House lobbying on behalf of the city, is ending with neither a bang nor much of an audible whimper.” Now, “mere mention of the topic draws only weary chuckles from the House members who pushed for it and their colleagues who pushed it aside.”

Unlike in 1965, the White House was quiet on the maneuver. Senator Morse, who had called on President Johnson to support the rider plan, admitted, “I see no signs of action.” Asher reported that a White House spokesman “confirmed last week that it is doing no real lobbying in Congress now, and is waiting to see how Morse fares.” If the maneuver proves promising, “the President then reportedly will decide what to do.” [Asher, Robert L, “Home Rule Struggle Is Quiet Now, But Far From Over,” News Analysis, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 21, 1966]

Home rule advocates from the Greater Washington Chapter of ADA met on August 29 in a Senate Office Building hearing room to receive a briefing from Senator Morse. The big news, however, was that Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey sent a telegram to ADA:

Please be assured that under President Johnson’s leadership I shall continue to work with you so as to enable all the citizens of this great city to enjoy their fullest rights as Americans.

Neither the lateness of the hour nor the repeated setbacks we have sustained will dismay us In times past so many battles for other great objectives have had to be won in the closing weeks and hours of a Congressional session. We can win this battle. It is so very right.

Home rule would receive “the revitalized devotion it so well merits.”

Rauh hailed the telegram as “a great day for all of us. The message from the Vice President is President Johnson’s down payment on his pledge for home rule in the 89th Congress.” Senator Morse agreed that the message left “no room for doubt that the Administration continues to pledge itself for adoption of home rule.”

However, the Vice President’s office told reporters that the telegram supported home rule, not necessarily Senator Morse’s rider plan, and would not comment on whether the Vice President was speaking for the President. Only President Johnson, an aide said, could state whether the Administration supports the rider.

Senator Morse told the group that he planned to introduce the rider after Congress returns from its long Labor Day recess. “I raise no false promises and I raise no false hopes,” he said. He added, “the political climate has never been better.” [“Humphrey Urges ‘Revitalized’ Drive For Home Rule,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 30, 1966; Elder, Shirley, “Humphrey Pledges Renewal of District Home Rule Drive,” *The Evening Star*, August 29, 1966]

By October, the critical moment had not arrived. With Congress ready to adjourn to allow members to continue their reelection campaigns, time was running out. The education bill was

finally scheduled to reach the Senate floor, but it was accompanied by threats of a filibuster to block the rider. Majority Leader Mansfield was considering a motion to table the rider to avoid the filibuster and advance adjournment. Senator Morse was determined to argue his case. "I will be the most surprised man in the Senate if the leadership doesn't give me time to present my case."

The Washington Home Rule Committee sent a telegram to President Johnson urging his help. "A clear statement from you now reaffirming your unqualified support of home rule will ensure that our supporters will stand firm and the Morse rider will pass overwhelmingly." [Carper, Elsie, "Morse Pledges Fight for Rider On Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 4, 1966]

The issue was seen as a major civil rights issue. On October 8, Senator Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.), one of the leading opponents of civil rights legislation, warned that "there might be some opposed to this unusual procedure." That threat prompted Senators Mansfield, Dirksen, and 20 other Senators to file a cloture petition and schedule a Senate vote on Monday, October 10, on whether to cut off debate. Senator Mansfield warned that a filibuster "would most assuredly snuff out the last flicker of hope for an October adjournment, which now remains in the realm of the possible." He added, "There is scarce chance that a filibuster, however prolonged, could change one single vote." Under Senate rules, a two-thirds vote would be required to cut off debate.

Majority Leader Mansfield indicated that if the Senate defeated cloture, allowing a filibuster of the rider, he would offer a motion to table the amendment, thus ending the chances for home rule legislation in the 89th Congress. [Carper, Elsie, "Senators Bar Filibuster on Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 8, 1966]

Again, advocates tried to enlist President Johnson's support. Rauh sent a telegram indicating that if the rider, attached to the education bill, can make it to the House, "we are assured by the House liberal leadership that they . . . can pass the bill." ["LBL Asked To Help on Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 9, 1966]

On October 10, the Senate voted 41 to 37 to cut off the filibuster, 11 votes short of what was needed. Senator Russell led the battle for a filibuster, arguing that Senator Morse's rider maneuver was "shocking," a "legislative lynching," and a "complete travesty of the legislative process." Referring to cloture as a "gag rule," he said, "Never before in the history of the Senate has such short shift been given a parliamentary proposal." Senator Byrd, chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that handled District funding, called the maneuver "a mockery of the legislative process."

Senator Bourke D. Hickenlooper (R-Ia.) said the maneuver to attach the rider was a "most astonishing procedure" because the Senate would not have time to consider the 107-page amendment. Senator Morse responded that the amendment was similar to past home rule bills that passed the Senate. "We've walked up that hill six times," he said, "and this is the seventh."

With cloture defeated, however, Senator Morse asked and received unanimous consent to withdraw the rider. [Carper, Elsie, "Senate Vote Kills Bid for Home Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 11, 1966; Elder, Shirley, "Home Rule Bid Fails in Senate," *The Evening Star*, October 10, 1966; Higher Education Amendment of 1966, *Congressional Record-Senate*, October 10, 1966, pages 25869-25880]

Rauh made clear where the blame should be placed. "Without the help of the President, our efforts were doomed to failure." Richard Lyon, outgoing chairman of the Washington Home Rule Committee, said, "It's back to the old grind again." Still, as Rauh put it, "we'll try again next year and the year after and, like Irish independence, we will one day get it." ["D.C. Home Rule Defeat Laid To Silence of White House," *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1966]

Shifting the North-Central Freeway

On July 21, District and Maryland highway officials unveiled the plan to NCPC for the North-Central Freeway to NCPC as drawn by J. E. Greiner and Company and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. The freeway would be built as close as possible to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad track, but 20 to 30 feet below ground level the entire distance. From the Inner Loop near Glenwood Cemetery at 2219 Lincoln Road, NE., to the I-95 Northeast Freeway interchange near Fort Totten Park, the freeway would have eight lanes. From the I-95 interchange, the freeway would contain six lanes to 16th Street and four lanes the rest of the way to the Capital Beltway.

The proposed route would almost completely bypass Takoma Park, site of so much anti-freeway protest, and Silver Spring's prime residential areas. It also reduced the number of dwellings that would be taken for the project. The previous plan would have displaced 720 families in the District and 570 in Maryland. The new alignment reduced displacements to 350 families in the District and 175 in Maryland.

The presentation to NCPC was for information only and to get the input of members before the plan was finalized in September. Initial reaction from at least two freeway critics was positive. Thiry, the Seattle architect, said District officials "should be encouraged" in the approach they had taken. Edwards, the Howard University sociologist, said the plan was an "improvement" over previous ideas, but added, "the people still need to have their say." [Flor, Lee, "Freeway Route Shift Proposed," *The Evening Star*, July 21, 1966; Clopton, Willard, "B&O Track Route Eyed For N. Central Freeway," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 22, 1966]

In "A Critique," *Post* architecture critic Von Eckardt admitted that the new plan "shows that public criticism of urban freeway design is beginning to produce laudable results." The plan included "a number of improvements," such as not bulldozing a new corridor, "the first such exception since Federally subsidized interstate freeways began to invade our cities."

Of course, the reduced number of displacements, bypass of Takoma Park, and the availability of air rights for new housing were other improvements. Von Eckardt reported that Director Airis believed that multiple use of highway right-of-way "will be inexpensive enough to make possible public and moderate income housing as well as private construction." In addition, "construction

can be so staged that new housing will be ready and waiting for families that must be displaced as the freeway is built.”

The plan contemplated interchanges near rapid rail transit stations:

This would make the stations more accessible and allow their coordination with parking garages. A creative design approach thus could combine housing, shops and parking to turn the stations into new community centers that attract more people to fill the subway fare box.

Von Eckardt also appreciated the fact that architects were involved in the design:

In the past architects have been called in only to embellish the work of the engineers and their ideas have usually been badly compromised or rejected as too expensive Henceforth, says Airis, architects always will be called in at the inception of freeway design studies.

The critic contacted several people who had been involved in the freeway controversies over the years. The Reverend E. Channing Phillips of the Coalition of Conscience and chairman of the Housing Development Corporation, said, “I am ready to help with any scheme that reduces displacements and relocates displaced people within their area.” Sammie Abbott was less positive. “Although Takoma Park has been ‘spared,’ people out here are concerned with the city as a whole. And the city cannot absorb more cars and trucks.” Grosvenor Chapman, the architect serving as vice chairman of the Committee of 100, was hesitant to offer a view, saying, “It all depends on how things are actually done.” [Von Eckardt, Wolf, “New Plan Puts Road in Corridor With B&O, Lessens Disruption,” A Critique, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 23, 1966]

Like Von Eckardt, *Star* editors were impressed by the growth the new plan demonstrated. “Washington seems to be learning, slowly but surely, that the disruptive impact of necessary urban freeways can be dramatically reduced by more painstaking route-selection and architectural design.” Based on the collaboration of engineers and architects, “much of the original dissent to the road appears to be dissipating.” The prospect of using air rights above the depressed freeway for housing “to accommodate all the families displaced along the North Central route [in] a city so severely short of sites for low and medium-income housing” meant that the city’s air-rights bill deserved the highest priority in Congress. [“Matter of Design,” *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1966]

Advancing the Compact – Senate

The White House had included its bill approving the interstate compact among its priorities for the 89th Congress before Labor Day. On August 22, Senator Tydings, chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee, held hearings during which most witnesses were overwhelmingly in support of the bill.

Some witnesses supported the bill conditionally. Lewellyn A. Jennings of the Federal City Council said the council supported the bill, but was concerned that if the expected bonds were to

be floated at this time, they would have to carry a guarantee from the District or Federal government, something not provided for in the bill as drafted.

Peter Craig was one of the few critics, as Jack Eisen summarized:

Craig . . . said Jennings “underscored our concern” that the compact would prove inadequate. He said it could delay construction of the 25-mile city system authorized by Congress last year.

Tydings replied that such problems can be dealt with as they arise and doubted any delay would result.

Craig also asserted that the compact is “being packaged and sold, especially by the newspapers, as being the next step to get the core system built.”

Tydings disputed this, saying it is a “necessary step to get the whole system built You can’t stop at the city line.”

If the compact is approved, Craig said, two sections of the enabling bill should be killed – one that abolishes the National Capital Transportation Agency on Sept. 30, 1967, and another that abolishes NCTA’s Advisory Board immediately. The Advisory Board is headed by lawyer Gerry Levenberg, a foe of the compact. [Eisen, Jack, “Action Is Sped On Transit Bill By Senate Unit,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 23, 1966; Bassett, Grace, “2 Congress Groups To Push Subway Compact Bill,” *The Evening Star*, August 23, 1966]

The few criticisms aside, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the bill on August 24. Its report addressed the criticisms and concerns expressed during the 1-day hearing. One concern related to whether the District’s interests were adequately protected by the makeup of the interstate authority board. “The committee has considered these contentions and also concluded that the provisions of the compact and of the consent legislation properly and adequately protect the interests of the District of Columbia and of the other signatories.”

Equal representation by the three jurisdictions was necessary to build a regional system. Any costs not covered by the fare box would have to be “shared equitably” among the jurisdictions and the Federal Government. The report added, “it is difficult to understand how the interests of the District of Columbia are protected by assuming a preponderance of interest and responsibility for the District of Columbia for the purpose of determining representation on the Board of Directors of the Authority.”

The report also disputed concerns that the District would be outvoted, a concern that “reflects a misunderstanding of the voting arrangements.” For most actions, a majority vote must include at least one representative of each of the three jurisdictions. Most of the concern was about other actions, including the adoption, alteration, revision, or amendment of a mass transit plan or a plan of financing. For those actions, the majority could consist of the unanimous vote of the directors from at least two jurisdictions. These were, however, not final actions, but only

proposals that would not become final until those governments entered into financial commitments in accordance with the compact:

Thus, the adoption by the Board of Directors of the Authority of a mass transit plan or a plan of financing does not bind the District of Columbia or impose any obligations on that Government until and unless Congress appropriates for the District of Columbia the funds required of that signatory by the plans.

The concern about representation by two District commissioners on the board was, really, a home rule issue. “The Commissioners are Presidential appointees, subject to approval by the Senate, and are directly responsible to both the President and the Congress for the performance of their duties.” Maryland’s and Virginia’s representatives would be local officials or political appointees. “It would be a disservice to the District of Columbia, and impair the effectiveness of the compact, to separate the District of Columbia representatives on the Authority from executive responsibility for the general affairs of the District of Columbia.”

The committee also rejected the concerns about financing. Under the compact, costs were to be financed from the fare box and any shortfall “shared equitably” by the jurisdictions. The lack of tax authority was not, as suggested, a fatal deficiency. The New York law firm of Hawkins, Delafield and Wood, “the leading bond counsel in the country,” had concluded that the legislation provided adequate authority “to develop a financing program through the issuance of revenue bonds,” as needed. [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1491, August 24, 1966, pages 23-25]

With only Senators Tydings and Virginia Democrats A. Willis Robertson and Harry F. Byrd, Jr., on the floor, the Senate approved the compact legislation on August 25. After their statements of support, the *Star* reported, “the bill was whisked through the Senate” on a voice vote. [Consent of Congress to Amend the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact, *Congressional Record-Senate*, August 25, 1966, pages 20550-20561]

In the House, Chairman Whitener had introduced an amendment to the compact legislation that the Committee on the Judiciary adopted. Under the amendment, the authority would have until July 1, 1968, to prove to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees that it had a workable financial plan for building a regional rapid rail system. The amendment also eliminated the date of September 30, 1967, for the automatic end of NCTA. The *Post* reported that Chairman Whitener told reporters he did not think the interstate authority would be ready to begin operations by September 1967. “He has expressed strong reservations about the compact and the financing of the system outside the city and said he plans to offer other amendments ‘to clean up the bill’ when it reaches the floor.” [Carper, Elsie, “Senate Vote Speeds Rapid Rail Agency; House Unit Delays It,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 26, 1966; Elder, Shirley, “Senate Votes Transit Pact,” *The Evening Star*, August 25, 1966]

In support of Chairman Whitener’s amendment, Eisen reported, was the White House’s delay in submitting its bill to Congress. The bill’s takeover date was only 13 months away. NCTA Administrator McCarter had testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that achieving the

goal in that period would be “a formidable task – an ambitious undertaking.” Nevertheless, the compact had been “the product of 12 years of patient and painstaking activity that has forged a link between the suburban courthouse and the White House”:

Considering that the compact opens a path toward a multimillion dollar investment by the suburbs, there has been surprising unanimity over the need for the Authority.

But there has been terrier-like resistance in some quarters to details of the compact, chiefly from those who want the D.C. or Federal governments to maintain control of the system of representatives. The controversy that has arisen at the Capitol centers upon the details.

Chairman Whitener proposed to substitute July 1, 1968, as NCTA’s termination date:

Officials regard Whitener’s amendment as not fatal but troublesome, not so much in the date as in the continued involvement of Congress in the details of suburban extensions and the financing plan that must be prepared in the meantime. [Eisen, Jack, “Details Cause Transit Treaty Dispute on Hill,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 28, 1966]

Post and *Star* editors considered the change a needless distraction. As the *Post* editors pointed out:

It would make the Judiciary Committees, which have no special technical competence in mass transit, responsible for the final decision on the planning as well as the legal structure of the system. Other congressional committees would be better qualified to undertake this responsibility, although if further review is really necessary, it would more properly fall to the President and the Executive Branch to approve the system.

Moreover, by eliminating the date when NCTA would cease functioning, the amendment “would encourage procrastination within the organization,” which might be reluctant “to rush plans for its own funeral.”

Chairman Whitener’s “purposes remain unclear,” but the approved amendment and his unspecified additional amendments were “unnecessarily compounding the confusion over future transportation in the Metropolitan area – a confusion he reduced with great skill and resourcefulness only last year.”

The *Star* also found it “difficult to understand” Chairman Whitener’s position. The Judiciary Committees were not the appropriate committees for considering mass transit financing. “So, since Congress through its control over any funds appropriated for the District would always have the last word, why insist on this unnatural form of review?”

The editors did not want “to look for things under the bed”:

But the Whitener amendment, if it stays in the bill, could seriously impair and might wreck the bond-issue aspect of the financing of the system. It could also knock the

compact in the head, thus leaving the job to the NCTA or to some federal corporation. In either event, the result probably would be that only the downtown or “core” portion of the system would be built. And this would contribute nothing toward the important objective of getting people from Maryland and Virginia to and from their jobs in Washington.

[“Confusing the Subway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 29, 1966; “Threat to Rapid Transit,” *The Evening Star*, August 30, 1966]

The Revenue Impasse

In early August, the District appropriations subcommittee released the records of its hearings on the District appropriations bill, FY 1967. Much had changed in the freeway debates since the hearings. The Policy Advisory Committee, with the help of NPS Director Hartzog, had agreed to advance the city’s freeway system. NCPC had given the go-ahead by a 6 to 5 vote. The District was proceeding on several fronts to advance the freeways that had been stalled. Congress was considering the White House bill giving consent, on the District’s behalf, to the interstate compact.

Chairman Natcher’s comments in April were seen as an ultimatum from a man who held near dictatorial power over government expenditures in the District. As *The Evening Star* put it, Chairman Natcher “is sick and tired of the stalling on this city’s freeway and bridge programs.” In April, Chairman Natcher, “noted for his restraint, had said bluntly” that if the District wanted a subway, it would also have to build freeways.

NCPC Chairman Rowe had managed to sabotage the freeway program for years, but that “barrier seemed to have been hurdled last June” by a one-vote margin. Nothing of “any consequence” had happened since then. Chairman Rowe, “vacationing on Cape Cod, doubtless is still as hostile to freeways as ever.” She apparently had used her influence to keep NCPC “from putting its stamp of approval on a final, complete and comprehensive plan.” That vote would occur at NCPC’s September meeting.

The editors encouraged General Duke to stop debating whether the new 14th Street bridge should have four or six lanes, “a controversy which tends to undermine support for the proposed Three Sisters Bridge, and push hard for definitive action when the Planning Commission meets next month.”

That, at least, was the editors’ idea based on Chairman Natcher’s threat:

This, we believe, is the message which Chairman Natcher is trying to put across. And it had better be heeded by all concerned, whether their primary interest is in freeways, a subway, or both. [“Natcher Serves Notice,” *The Evening Star*, August 10, 1966]

With no action taken on the revenue bill, Chairman Natcher moved on the FY 1967 appropriations bill on September 9 when the Appropriations Committee released its bill. The report stated:

For the third consecutive year the Committee has received a budget for consideration that is out of balance – currently there are deficits of \$23,021,000 in the general fund and

\$12,876,000 in the highway fund, a total of \$35,897,000. As in the past the budget was predicated on revenues to be generated through additional taxes, a formula Federal payment, and this year additional loan authorization for the highway fund, all of which require congressional action before they become effective.

The committee had delayed action in the hope the additional revenues would be authorized, but that had not happened. Therefore, it cut the District's appropriations total to \$380.7 million, a reduction of \$43.3 million from President Johnson's request.

The committee supported a freeway system and a rail rapid transit system. "In order to meet the tremendous day by day growth of traffic the highway program must be carried out along with the present rail rapid transit system." As of December 31, 1965, the District had \$20,927,305 million in appropriated funds to match Federal-aid highway funds totaling \$151,273,386 "that will be released as soon as projects are designed and approved." Despite this balance, the city had not "moved ahead at the required rate to meet the deadline of 1972 imposed by the interstate highway legislation." Additional appropriations were unneeded because:

Planning decisions have been and still remain the key obstacle to progress [As revealed during the April 20 hearing] as of now planning decisions still remain to be made and little or no effort is being made to place the major projects into final design for final approval.

On that basis, the committee made good on Chairman Natcher's threat:

Until decisions are made and approval granted to proceed on the freeway system the Committee is reluctant to provide additional funds for the National Capital Transportation Agency, and has accordingly denied the requested \$8,525,000 for the District's contribution for the construction of a rail rapid transit system.

In addition to refusing authorizations for District funds to match Federal NCTA funds, the bill cut highway appropriations for demolition of the old 14th Street Bridge (the Highway Bridge), the Center Leg, North-Central Freeway, North Leg, the 9th Street Expressway, and the East Leg. These cuts came as District officials were planning their presentation to NCPC on a 2-mile section of the North-Central Freeway and Three Sisters Bridge on September 15. NCPC planned to hold a public hearing on September 14 before the District's formal presentation the following day. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1967, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 2019, September 9, 1965, pages 6-7; Flor, Lee, "House Unit Slashes District Roads Also In \$43 Million Trim," *The Evening Star*, September 9, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "House Unit Stops District Grant Needed to Start Subway in 1967," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 10, 1966]

Chairman Natcher brought the bill to the House floor on September 13. His introductory comments discussed all aspects of the bill, but when he came to the freeway/rail rapid transit section, he repeated the summary in the committee report. After describing the available funds, he said:

For a period of 5 years now, our committee has attempted to go along on every request concerning our rapid rail transit system and our freeway system. Time after time when funds were appropriated for projects the plans were discarded and filed away. Millions of dollars have been invested and this money is money down the drain. If the people in our Capital City really understood what has transpired in our freeway system during the past 5 years they would be amazed.

From 1961 up to the present time we have pointed out in our hearings time after time the fact that millions of dollars has [sic] been expended for planning with no action to place the projects under construction. The same projects have been up for consideration year after year and by virtue of delay each of the projects now will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars more to finally complete and the overall amount will run into the millions Time is passing and the pressure groups who have succeeded up to this time to halt our freeway system are jubilant

Now is the time to have a thorough understanding and an agreement as to the construction of our freeway system and the continuation of our rapid rail transit system. A balanced transportation system is necessary and both freeway and rapid transit must go forward together.

We have reached an impasse insofar as our freeway system is concerned and now is the time to eliminate the roadblock which some believe was permanently fixed.

He recalled the decisionmaking machinery for the District's freeway system. "Each decision involves participation of some half-dozen Federal agencies and freeway opponents within this group, and especially on the National Capital Planning Commission have used this out-of-date machinery to delay decisions and make every effort to destroy our freeway system." Opponents knew that major portions of the network could not be built "until a firm decision is reached on the system as a whole."

Of the Little report, he said that following "7 weeks of huffing and puffing the company succeeded in bringing forth a mouse." It called for the freeway system to be brought to a complete halt. "The crux of this report" was that instead of planning a system, the city should plan "one link in the system at a time," in contradiction to the views of all experts. The resulting statement by the Policy Advisory Committee was "full of ambiguous language and really means very little."

He listed the 13 pending freeways and parkways, summarizing the long history of their planning:

Freeway opponents have succeeded up to this time in knocking down all of the main conclusions reached by transportation experts after 20 years of study costing millions of dollars and this pre-meditated foolishness must stop.

Our Capital City must not be embarrassed by further studies and further inaction and more wasted money in the completion of our freeway system. Meaningful decisions must

be made now to remove the planning obstacles set up by opponents of our freeway system.

He pointed out that the Committee on Appropriations had appropriated \$2 million the previous year to match NCTA funds. The committee still favored development of the rail rapid transit system:

At the same time we are not in favor of permitting our highway system program to be destroyed. Until we have decisions upon which we can rely placing the highway program underway we are unable to recommend that the District government borrow \$8,525,000 to continue the rapid rail transit system. We do not want to experience again what we did in 1963. This must not take place.

Representative Gross asked how the District could expect to finance a subway system if it could not complete the freeway network. He also asked what the subway would cost.

Chairman Natcher summarized the NCTA cost estimates, as well as the history of failure in 1963. The subway “will probably cost more than estimated and the bonds will not be retired out of the fare box.”

The chairman went on to other subjects but Representative Smith of Virginia asked to return “to the discussion of the highway system, the rather tragic system.” He wanted to know the chairman’s intentions about rail rapid transit. “Is that going to be laid aside until they start building some highways.”

Chairman Natcher said he hoped that before the appropriation bill was enacted, he would be in a position to return to the House to secure the District’s matching funds for rail rapid transit. NCPC was scheduled to hold a meeting later in the week that might make that possible. “We are not against rapid transit,” he said, but as Representative Smith knew, “there are a great many people who have, all down through the years, tried to destroy the highway system in the District of Columbia to put the rapid transit system ahead.” He hoped that both systems can move forward in the very near future.

After discussion among the members, especially Representative Gross, of several issues, including the D.C. Stadium, the House approved the bill, 320-3. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1967, *Congressional Record-House*, September 13, 1966, pages 22413-22427; the main discussion of highway-subway issues is on pages 22414-22417]

The editors at the *Star* understood Chairman Natcher’s action:

It is an act of rebuttal, clearly threatened in the past, which reflects an end of patience with the senseless, continued failure of this community to resolve its disputes over the highway program.

His frustration should be shared by every responsible citizen.

Only a few years ago, transit “seemed the far-away, difficult-to-achieve dream. Now, there was general agreement on it. “Yet it is the highways which have remained ensnarled in one red-tape planning hassle after another.”

Chairman Natcher’s cut in subway matching funds “precipitates a real crisis” that he was willing to unravel if “meaningful action” occurs to advance the highway program. The first “action” would come on September 15 when NCPC met to consider four essential freeway segments that NPS Director Hartzog had endorsed. The editors thought more would be needed:

Beyond mere approval, however, Natcher also appears to want some clearer evidence of a White House determination that the freeway system – along with rapid transit – will actually be built, and that the foot-dragging, obstructionist tactics by the President’s appointees to the planning commission will really come to an end. It is an assurance that is long overdue. [“Frustration,” *The Evening Star*, September 14]

NCPC Acts

NCPC announced on September 8 that it would consider four freeway projects on September 15:

- The 2-mile section of the North-Central Freeway between Rhode Island Avenue and Buchanan Street, NE. As proposed 2 years earlier, this segment would be located between the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks and 10th Street, NE.
- The Three Sisters Bridge over the Potomac River between Spout Run and the Georgetown waterfront. The proposal does not include approach structures.
- South Leg Freeway in a tunnel between the Lincoln Memorial and Tidal Basin, with interchanges excluded.
- East Leg Freeway between Barney Circle and Maryland Avenue along the west bank of the Anacostia River.

The day before, the announcement stated, NCPC’s transportation committee would hold an informal hearing, called a “presentation,” beginning at 2:30 p.m. Because of space limitations, NCPC said it would allow only the identified witness from each group into the hearing room at 1111 20th Street, NW.

The day before the hearing, 26 people representing citizens groups across the city signed a resolution denouncing the North-Central Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge. As Lee Flor explained:

Construction of the highway projects would raise a complex of social problems, including more intense economic, employment, housing, racial and air pollution problems, according to the 26 persons who signed the resolution.

The groups did not “believe harmony between the races is increased by allowing families and neighborhoods which are predominantly Negro to be uprooted for the convenience mainly of white-suburban commuters Freeways in cities are surely to some extent ‘white men’s roads

coming through black men's homes.”” The resolution referenced the riots a year earlier in the Watts section of Los Angeles and the relationship between unemployment and transportation:

We know that such unemployment is a factor in explosions like that of Watts, a Los Angeles community surrounded by freeways but totally lacking adequate public transportation for employable residents without automobiles.

The Metropolitan Citizens Council for Rapid Transit released the resolution on September 13. The council's chairman, Duncan Wall, sent the resolution along with a letter to Charles Horsky at the White House. The letter said that NCPC's plan for the hearing was a “betrayal of public rights and pledges to the citizenship which we wish to believe were made in good faith.” The groups complained they did not have enough time to gather evidence after old freeway plans had been changed.

Other signers included:

- Bishop Smallwood E. Williams – Bible Way Church
- The Reverend Walter E. Fauntroy – New Bethel Baptist Church – Co-Chairman of the D.C. Coalition of Conscience
- The Right Reverend Paul Moore, Jr. – Episcopal Suffragen Bishop of Washington – Co-Chairman of the D.C. Coalition of Conscience
- Edward G. Hailes – NAACP
- Marion Barry, Jr. – SNCC and Free D.C. Movement
- The Reverend Duncan Howlett – All Souls Church
- The Reverend Geno Baroni – executive secretary of the Catholic Archbishop's Committee on Community Relations
- Peter S. Craig – Committee of 100 on the Federal City
- The Reverend E. Franklin Jackson, Democratic National Committeeman
- Charlton Ogburn, Jr. – national conservation leader

[Flor, Lee, “2 D.C. Road Projects Hit As Threat to Negro Homes,” *The Evening Star*, September 13, 1966; the list of signers from Eisen, Jack, “Freeway Opponents Form Coalition,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 18, 1966]

On September 14, G. Franklin Edwards, chairman of NCPC's transportation committee, held the informal hearing, which began at 3:15. Over 40 witnesses had signed up to testify. Highway officials presented a 2-hour briefing, with only nine witnesses speaking before a 7:00 break for supper. The result of the hearing before and after the break, according to Jack Eisen, was that the city's “embattled freeway program came under one of its sharpest attacks to date.”

Several witnesses raised racial issues, especially regarding the North-Central Freeway. Marion Barry, Jr., said the city was “planning highways for white people.” The people of Watts, he said, “got a nice freeway about five miles away but people couldn't get to work.”

District residents had to “compress their emotions” about the lack of decent housing and other problems. “At some point their frustrations are going to cut loose.” He warned of possible civil

disturbances if freeway development continued. One of these days, suburban commuters would discover District residents had “blocked streets and charged them some taxes for coming over here.” In a reference to Chairman Natcher, Barry said NCPC members “should consider it as an insult that a racist congressman from Kentucky would try to blackmail them.”

Sammie Abbott, described as “a white resident of Takoma Park” and a leader of the new Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis (ECTC), agreed. “It’s a white man’s freeway going through the black man’s homes and that’s going to be the slogan from now on.”

Several witnesses, including The Reverend Jackson, thought the subway should be built first, followed by the freeways, if they were still needed.

Peter Craig told the NCPC committee that the plans before them did not meet legal requirements for consideration. He and other critics cited the District’s Highway Act of 1893, which established procedures for considering highways, including hearings, that they claimed the District had not followed. (The 1893 Act will be discussed later.) The chairman of the transportation committee replied that NCPC’s general counsel had given an oral opinion that the four projects were legal and could be considered by NCPC. He intended to get that opinion in writing.

Craig also said that four government officials who were members of NCPC should be disqualified from voting on the plans because they were interested parties who had “plotted” to build the roads. He was referring to General Duke, Hartzog, McCarter, and Whitton. (Eisen reported that during the dinner break, Edwards assured Craig that his arguments “have not been taken lightly.”)

Arlington County and civic groups from the county made clear their opposition to the Three Sisters Bridge. The County Planning Commission’s J. Fuller Groom said the County Board had expressed “firm opposition to any bridge” in that area. [Eisen, Jack, “Freeways Are Called Highways for Whites,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 15, 1966; Flor, Lee, “D.C. Freeway Foes Picket, Jam Hearing,” *The Evening Star*, September 15, 1966]

Before NCPC’s monthly meeting on September 15, about 150 people had formed a block-long picket outside carrying signs opposing the freeways. One sign had the heading “et tu, Park Service” over a pig in a trough labeled “\$90-10 Money.” On a similar theme, another claimed “Hartzog Sold Out For \$90-10 Money.”

Lee Flor reported that when the meeting began, the crowd moved “into the small board room at the commissioners’ office” The crowd “became vocal” because the room did not have enough seats for everyone. “Mrs. James Rowe Jr said she was sorry about the smallness of the room and urged citizens to take turns sitting.”

The “large but orderly” crowd of anti-highway groups listened to the long discussion of the four freeway projects. Eisen reported:

As the time for voting neared, Sam Abbott . . . jumped to his feet several times with comments. Mrs. Rowe pleaded with him to follow Commission rules, which do not permit audience comments.

NCPC then voted 6-to-4 to approve the location of the 2-mile section of the North-Central Freeway and the meeting “dissolved into near pandemonium . . . when angry spectators shouted their outrage”:

When the vote came, there was a moment of silence. Then Abbott rose, shouting that the vote was a “sellout” by Duke and George B. Hartzog, Jr . . . Mrs. Rowe ordered Abbott removed. Others in the audience shouted support of Abbott. “This is the only forum we have!” cried one woman. “Let him speak! Let him speak!” yelled another.

Meantime, Mrs. Rowe gaveled a recess and Abbott led most of his group, by then about 25 persons, from the room. When one woman stopped to listen to Duke, Abbott grasped her elbow and led her out.

In the corridor, Abbott stopped before a television camera to “mobilize black power along with white power to defeat sellout power.”

. . . . Commission aides said yesterday’s incident was believed to be unprecedented in the body’s 40-year history.

The six ex-officio members who carried the vote were General Duke, Director Hartzog, NCTA’s McCarter, Everett Roberts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, BPR’s Frank Turner representing Administrator Whitton, and William A. Schmidt of the Public Buildings Service. Conrad L. Wirth, the former NPS Director and ex-officio member of NCPC who had joined NCPC as a citizen member on September 15, voted against the freeway, as did Chairman Rowe, Edwards, and Thiry. (Louchheim was out of town.)

Failing in her pleas to quiet the audience, Chairman Elizabeth Rowe, herself a foe of the road, gaveled the session into recess, had the room cleared and resumed.

Then, a half hour later, the Commission cast another 6-to-4 vote endorsing an equally controversial project, the Three Sisters Bridge to Arlington.

NCPC also approved the East Leg Freeway segment, again 6 to 4, and unanimously approved the South Leg Freeway. [Eisen, Jack, “NCPC Backs New Bridge, Freeway Link,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 16, 1966; Flor, Lee, “Start Is Approved On D.C. Freeways Despite Protests,” *The Evening Star*, September 16, 1966]

In the hope of prompting Chairman Natcher to release the District’s matching funds for the rail rapid transit system, the District commissioners gave final approval to the four segments on September 20. With this approval, District highway officials would be able to let design contracts and begin acquiring right-of-way. Of the four freeways, the North-Central Freeway was the only one that would require displacements, estimated at about 284 families. Commissioner Tobriner secured assurances that the families would receive comparable housing.

Detailed design about take about a year and a half, with construction requiring about 3 years. Then, as the *Post* put it, “it will be possible . . . to drive from Georgetown to D.C. Stadium without stopping for a light.” [“Final Approval Granted for Four Freeway Sections,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 21, 1966; “City Gives OK For 4 Parts Of Freeways,” *The Evening Star*, September 20, 1966]

Approval of the design contracts was seen as the pivotal moment in the freeway-subway impasse created by Chairman Natcher. Eisen began an article, “Washington’s latest subway-freeway crisis appears to have passed its peak and the fever is now going down . . .” Approval of the contracts was the “final turning point.”

Chairman Natcher had cited 13 projects that were being delayed, but not all were advanced to the contract stage. Moreover, the four approved projects were the key to as many as eight of the other segments. As a result, “several sources” expected the design contracts would satisfy Chairman Natcher’s conditions for releasing the subway funds. At the same time, NCTA would ask Chairman Natcher to allow the agency to transfer \$2 million in previously appropriated funds for the design work to prevent the consultant, De Leuw Cather and Company, from laying off engineers.

At this pivotal moment, Acting House Majority Leader W. Hale Boggs (D-La.) was prepared to bring the interstate compact legislation to the House floor the following week. The crowded schedule for the week, including other components of the Great Society, might delay a vote.

At this time of optimism for highway and transit supporters, freeway critics were thinking about going to court. They were focusing on the legality of approving the planned design contracts without holding further public hearings in accordance with the 1893 District highway law (again, to be discussed later). Peter Craig had raised the question and said the Committee of 100 for the Federal City had retained his former firm, Covington and Burling, to test the issue in court. The *Star* also reported that, “Another organization, the Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis, submitted letters to all three commissioners today.”

In view of this challenge, the District commissioners asked Acting Corporation Counsel Milton Korman on September 27 whether they had to hold further public hearings before the pending contracts were signed. Within 5 hours, Korman issued a legal opinion that the District commissioners may approve the contracts without holding additional public hearings. A few minutes later, Director Airis signed contracts worth \$2.7 million for the design of three controversial freeways (Three Sisters Bridge, East Leg Freeway, and North-Central/Northeast Freeway) and the South Leg Freeway, which the *Post* described as “itself once controversial, that has since won city-wide endorsement.” [“D.C. Heads Ask Advice On Contracts,” *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1966; Flor, Lee, “Freeways Action Paves Way For D.C. Subway Fund Plea,” *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1966; “Pacts Let on Inner Loop, Sisters Bridge, NE Freeway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 28, 1966]

Sources vary on when freeway opponents formed the ECTC, but a search of the *Star* and *Post* archives indicates that the September 27 reference in the *Star* is the first time the group’s name

appeared. However, in a News Analysis in the *Post* on September 18, Eisen described how opposition was “developing clear signs of turning into a broad-scale and well-organized revolt”:

Opponents of the city’s interstate system, whose efforts began with a series of individual neighborhood protective skirmishes, have stitched together a coalition of civic, racial and political groups to fight the whole program.

Most have proclaimed that a rail rapid transit system – blocked last week by Congress because of the freeway fight – would cure Washington’s growing case of hardening of the transportation arteries.

If the new coalition is successful, Washington will be in danger of having neither freeways nor rail transit, a circumstance that could stunt the city’s economic growth and further isolate the city from its suburbs.

As a result, the Capital Beltway could turn “into the metropolitan area’s economic Main Street, at the expense of the job-providing businesses and agencies now clustered in downtown Washington.” It also might threaten the viability of NCP’s upcoming Year 1985 Plan “which will call for increased centralization of employment downtown.”

Downtown business interests saw a balanced transportation system of freeways and rail rapid transit as the best way to attract businesses, agencies, and shoppers. Failure to create such a system would enhance the attraction of the suburbs where stores and offices were “easily accessible by automobile for county residents – and remote from the mid-city homes of the area’s Negro residents.”

One question was whether city highway planners, in their unsuccessful effort to mollify critics “may not be settling for a system too small to do much real good,” an observation also made by transit advocates about the 25-mile rail rapid transit system:

The whole situation also has intensified a widespread and growing feeling on both sides of the road issue that the Planning Commission’s structure and procedure are unsound and unworkable.

After discussing plans for legal challenges to freeway approvals, Eisen concluded his analysis:

As the long, hot summer of transportation disputes comes to an end, it looks like there’s a long, cold winter ahead. [Eisen, Jack, “Freeway Opponents Form Coalition,” News Analysis, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 18, 1966]

Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966

On March 21, 1966, Secretary of Commerce John T. Connor and Treasury Secretary Henry H. Fowler wrote to Speaker of the House McCormack to transmit a draft of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966 and the Highway, Airway, and Waterway User Act of 1966. Although the House Committee on Public Works had jurisdiction over the Federal-Aid Highway Act, both bills involved highway user taxes to address the increased cost of completing the Interstate

System as shown by the 1965 ICE. Tax changes must be initiated in the House by the Ways and Means Committee.

The letter explained that Section 2 of the highway bill authorized \$2.685 billion for an extra year of Interstate construction assigned to FY 1972. Section 3 authorized the use of the 1965 ICE as the basis for apportioning Interstate construction funds for FYs 1968 and 1969. Section 4 was a “conforming amendment” reflecting the earlier sections. Subsection 4(a) “would declare it to be the intent of Congress that the Interstate System be completed as nearly as practicable over the period of availability of 16 years’ appropriations authorized for the purpose.” Subsection 4(b) extended the apportionment formula for completion by 1 year. (Section 1 simply stated the name of the bill.)

The Secretaries said of the Highway, Airway, and Waterway User Act of 1966 that, “Enactment of this draft bill is essential if we are to complete our interstate highway program as contemplated.” The highway portion of the bill authorized increased user taxes on truckers to provide the needed additional revenue:

Even with the additional revenues proposed in this bill, the pay-as-you-go policy requires us to extend collection of highway user charges for 5 additional months. Without the additional taxes proposed in this bill, the interstate program and the collection of taxes for the highway trust fund would have to be stretched out for a further time. [Proposed Legislation Submitted by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Commerce Entitled the “Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966” and the “Highway, Airway, and Waterway user Act of 1966,” Ways and Means Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, March 23, 1966]

On July 18, the House Committee on Public Works approved the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966, amending the original bill to increase authorizations for FYs 1968 through 1972. The committee also added a sentence specifying that nothing in the bill was intended to authorize the use of Highway Trust Fund revenues for Title 23, U.S.C., Sections 131 (outdoor advertising), 136 (junkyards), or 319(b) (landscaping and scenic enhancement). To limit Highway Trust Fund revenues to highway and bridge construction, the committee wanted revenue for these sections to come from the general Treasury.

The committee agreed that an additional year of authorizations should be provided for the Interstate System. The authorization for that additional year, FY 1972 means that “the actual construction of the system should be completed in 1973”:

It is essential that Congress act now to authorize the appropriation of funds sufficient to complete the system, so that the State highway departments and the construction industry may properly plan and schedule their work to avoid peaks and valleys in the construction program and so that necessary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction may continue without interruption for completion of the system in 1973.

Testimony during the committee’s hearings indicated that the additional authorizations “will exceed estimated revenues to the Highway Trust Fund through September 30, 1972, by

approximately \$6 billion, under existing tax law.” If Congress did not approve additional highway user fees for the Highway Trust Fund, “the funds authorized to be appropriated for the Interstate System could be apportioned only in amounts that do not cause expenditures in excess of amounts available in the Highway Trust Fund.” [Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, House Report No. 1704, July 18, 1966, pages 14-19]

The Senate Committee on Public Works issued its report on July 26. The report stated that “a revised and more accurate estimate of the cost of completion of the Interstate System” would be released in January 1968. Therefore, the committee’s bill deleted authorizations for Interstate construction for FYs 1970 through 1972. Authorizations in the bill would allow State highway agencies to continue construction of the Interstate System, while Congress awaited the new ICE before deciding how much funding to authorize beginning in FY 1970:

The committee cannot overemphasize the urgency of completing the Interstate System and adhering to the 1972 completion date as nearly as is technologically and economically feasible. The benefits of the program are of such magnitude that it warrants the best efforts of the Federal Government, the States, and the construction industry to push toward an early completion date.

Except in urban areas, the primary impediment to completion on schedule was “the shortage of funds.” The solution to that problem, the report stated, rests with the House Ways and Means Committee:

On three successive occasions since 1961 the administration has recommended revenue measures to augment the trust fund. And in each instance the Congress has withheld action. Others may speculate regarding the reasons for this impasse, but as a practical matter affecting the major civil works construction program in the Nation, this committee urges the administration to reappraise its assumptions regarding interstate financing and recommend to the next Congress a realistic revenue measure which will solicit congressional approval. [Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966, Committee on Public Works, United States Senate, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Senate Report No. 1410, July 26, 1966, pages 16-18]

On July 28, the Senate passed the 1966 Act. The House approved its bill on August 11.

House-Senate conferees resolved differences between the two bills on August 29. The final bill retained House authorizations through FY 1972 with some changes in the annual amounts. It also retained the House language prohibiting the use of the funds for Sections 131, 136, or 319(b) of Title 23. [Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966, Conference Report, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1903, August 29, 1966]

The Senate agreed to the conference report on August 30, and the House agreed the following day. On September 13, President Johnson signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-574).

Although the 1966 Act extended the time for completing the Interstate System, Congress did not act on the proposed highway user tax increases to support the added costs reflected in the 1965 ICE. According to the *The Wall Street Journal*:

The LBJ proposals are lying untouched on Capitol Hill. The tax-writing committees show no desire to get caught in the bitter fight that higher truck taxes would provoke.

Instead, there were “plenty of ideas kicking around” Congress to increase highway user revenue without antagonizing the truckers. One idea was to shift revenue from the 7-percent auto excise tax to the Highway Trust Fund account. Another was to restrict Highway Trust Fund revenue to the Interstate System, with the remainder of the Federal-aid highway program funded from the general Treasury.

However, “the suggestion heard most often for solving the money pinch” is to repeal the Byrd Amendment to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Senator Harry Flood Byrd (D-Va.), chairman of the Finance Committee at the time, was a highway booster during a long career in State and Federal offices. However, he was known for a trait that biographer Alden Hatch described as “an almost pathological abhorrence for borrowing that went beyond reason to the realm of deep emotion.” [Hatch, Alden, *The Byrds of Virginia: An American Dynasty, 1670 to the Present*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969, p. 347] To that end, Chairman Byrd amended the 1956 bill to require the Federal-aid highway program to operate on a pay-as-you-go basis. If the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, determined that revenues would be insufficient to defray expenditures for any fiscal year, the Commerce Secretary was required to reduce apportionments by the percentage of the deficiency. In short, the Byrd Amendment, as it is known to this day, was intended to ensure the Federal-aid highway program, with its new Interstate component, was self-sufficient – and would not have to incur debt through bonds to pay the bills.

Senator Byrd’s retirement from the Senate for health reasons in November 1965, replaced by his son, Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr., had “stirred [the] hopes of go-fast highway fans that the borrowing ban can be lifted.” By being able to borrow from the general Treasury, slowdowns due to shortages could be avoided. However, Chairman Wilbur Mills of the Ways and Means Committee “remains cool to the idea of abandoning pay-as-you-go highway financing,” as was the White House:

Perhaps an even bigger objection arises from fear that current borrowing against future highway tax revenues would rob money needed for road-building in the early ‘70s. “It’s like telling your wife to go out now and buy next year’s new dress before the price goes up,” says a Congressional authority on the trust fund’s workings. “You know darn well she’ll want a new dress next year, too.”

Moreover, highway officials were already thinking about extending the Interstate System after 1972:

State and Federal highway officials, plus individual members of Congress, already are hatching ideas for the kinds of roads to be built once the original 41,000 interstate miles are completed Other “post-1972” suggestions circulating in Congress: Massive Federal aid for modernizing city streets and Federal retirement of state and toll road bonds. [Large, Arlen J., “Interstate System Faces a Construction Delay Unless New Cash Found,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 8, 1966]

The situation had not changed by the end of the 89th Congress later that year.

(Congress would not increase highway user taxes until the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 (P.L. 97-424), despite numerous proposals in intervening years. The best known change in 1982 was a nickel-a-gallon increase in the Federal excise tax on gasoline (to 9 cents). The 1982 Act split the Highway Trust Fund into a Highway Account, which received revenue from earlier taxes plus 4 cents of the nickel increase. The Transit Trust Fund received a penny of the increase.)

Details aside, the 1966 Act gave the District of Columbia extra time to resolve the freeway disputes and complete the Interstate System with 90-10 matching funds.

The New Challenge to the Three Sisters Bridge

As discussed earlier, plans under the Capper-Crampton Act for the George Washington Memorial Parkway involved the State or county providing half the funds to acquire right-of-way before the NPS would proceed with a segment. When Arlington County secured the funds to acquire property for the parkway between Arlington Memorial Bridge and Spout Run, it entered into an agreement with the State, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission that President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed on April 3, 1940. The agreement stated:

The property shall be acquired only for park and parkway purposes and that the United States will never use the land so acquired for any other purpose except with the consent of the county of Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The agreement was binding “unless replaced by an agreement of equal dignity.”

Thomas S. Settle, secretary of the park and planning commission, announced on May 24, 1940, that the county’s check for \$45,000 had been deposited in the Treasury. The deposit allowed the commission to close \$70,000 in contracts that had been drawn for acquisition of waterfront property but held until the funds became available. [“Va. Parkway Land Buying Starts Soon,” *The Washington Post*, May 24, 1940]

On May 25, 1966, the Policy Advisory Committee had approved, 5 to 1, an agreement on freeway construction that included the Three Sisters Bridge at its original location between Spout Run in Arlington and the foot of Glover-Archbold Park in the District. NCPC approved the location on June 9.

In the wake of those actions, county officials cited the agreement signed by President Roosevelt. Thomas Richards of the Arlington County Board said, “The document is quite clear – Arlington has to be consulted before any non-park use is made of that land. The action of the federal government is a serious abrogation of the agreement, and Arlington has not been consulted officially nor has Arlington given its concurrence.” The board sent a letter letting President Johnson know that Arlington County was opposed to the bridge and I-266 and asserting its right to be consulted. [Flor, Lee, “Roosevelt Pact Backs Opponents of Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, June 17, 1966]

On September 27, 1966, the day the District let design contracts for the bridge, Arlington County Board Chairman Leo Urbanske, Jr., announced that, “There is a good possibility that the Arlington County Government will take legal action” to block the bridge.” In a speech to the Organized Women Voters of Arlington, he said the county could build a “good case” on the 1940 Roosevelt agreement. [“Urbanske Sees Basis To Block Bridge Plan,” *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1966; “Arlington Board Mulls Bridge Suit,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 28, 1966]

On October 26, the Arlington County Board filed suit in the U.S. District Court in Washington seeking a permanent injunction against construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. Defendants were the three District commissioners, the 10 members of NCPC, and Secretary Udall and NPS Director Hartzog. The suit contended that they did not have the right to construct the bridge to Spout Run without the consent of Congress and Arlington County. The county, which had paid a total of \$225,000 as its share for acquisition of the right-of-way for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, contended that the land could not be used for any purpose other than a park “except with the consent of the county of Arlington and the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Already, the District had engaged the engineering firm of Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendorf to design the bridge. The suit claimed the bridge would be “devastatingly destructive of a very substantial portion of said park and completely inconsistent with its continued use for park purposes.” Arlington County asked the court to enjoin all efforts to design or build the bridge and to rule on the legality of NCPC acting without the county’s consent. [Valentine, Paul W., “Arlington Files Suit Over Span,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 27, 1966; Matthews, Kenneth, “Arlington Files Suit To Block Proposed Three Sisters Span,” *The Evening Star*, October 26, 1966]

The following day, a .17-mile segment of I-66 opened in Rosslyn. It connected Lee Highway and the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. In conjunction with the opening, Arlington County changed several roads to one-way operation as part of an effort to shift traffic to the Roosevelt Bridge instead of Key Bridge. [“Route 66 Leg Opens in Rosslyn,” *The Evening Star*, October 27, 1966]

The Interstate Compact

On August 25, the Senate approved the joint resolution endorsing the interstate compact for construction and operation of the area’s rail rapid system. Next, House approval was needed, starting with action by the Committee on the Judiciary.

The committee issued a report on August 30 in support of the resolution:

The approval of the compact, while imposing no additional obligations or commitments upon either the Federal Government or the District of Columbia, would broaden the choices available to the Congress for development and financing of a regional transit system. Without the compact, the creation of a Federal corporate entity is the only means to complete the basic system and to develop the regional system. The approval of the compact at this session, however, would create an option, which the Congress does not now have, for the financing of the basic system and for the development and financing of the regional system by an interstate instrumentality under a plan providing for the equitable sharing between the Federal, District of Columbia, and local governments of the cost of the transit system which cannot be supported by the fare box. If, when the Authority's plans are presented, Congress does not find them acceptable it can then proceed with a Federal corporation.

The report included three committee amendments for consideration on the House floor. One corrected a typographical error (substituting "operating" for "operation"). The second amendment indicated that the compact agency would not automatically take over for NCTA. The transfer would occur when the House and Senate Judiciary Committees are satisfied the authority has demonstrated a readiness to institute a workable financial plan, a physical plan for the system, and a program for taking over NCTA's work, including an orderly transfer of staff personnel. The third amendment gave Government Accounting Office (GAO) the same audit function for the authority that it had for other Federal corporations. [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Report from the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1914, August 30, 1966, pages 1-2, 7]

Despite the Judiciary Committee's approval, the joint resolution did not make it to the House floor promptly for a vote. The delay, according to the *Star*, was because of the objections that Chairman Whitener and a few others had raised about the proposed interstate authority. In view of his threats to introduce time-consuming amendments when the resolution reached the House floor, managers postponed consideration while the House dealt with other matters on President Johnson's aggressive must-pass agenda.

Chairman Whitener emphasized that he was not opposed to the rail rapid transit system he had helped to pass. He was opposed to the compact because it was "as full of holes as a Swiss cheese." He saw no need to rush the compact; he preferred to delay the authority until NCTA completed the downtown subway.

With indications that Chairman Whitener was picking up support for his views, Representative Broyhill sent a letter to all House members to urge their support of the compact. He denied Chairman Whitener's claim that the authority would be able to spend Federal funds without Federal controls as the system spread into the suburbs. Representative Broyhill assured his colleagues that Maryland and Virginia would assume "proper responsibility" for meeting the area's needs. The bill was, he wrote, the "last important step in a long and complex course . . . the final necessary instrument to allow this community to shoulder its transit responsibilities."

According to the *Star*:

Whitener retorted that Broyhill's version is precisely the opposite of what will happen. He said that the compact contains many vague phrases that could easily result in a continuing drain of federal money into an essentially local transit program. [Elder, Shirley, "House Foes Zero In on Transit Compact," *The Evening Star*, September 30, 1966]

The Members of Congress, especially in the House, were eager for adjournment so they could return to the campaign trail in time for the November elections. If the 89th Congress adjourned without acting on the compact, the resolution would be dead; Congress would have to start over on the legislation in the 90th Congress.

As the resolution languished, several other actions regarding the rail rapid transit system were underway in late September and early October. On September 30, the chairmen of three House and Senate appropriations subcommittees joined Chairman Natcher in allowing NCTA to transfer \$1.6 million to keep De Leuw Cather and Company from dismissing design engineers from its payroll on October 1.

Congress completed work on the District's revenue enhancing legislation and combined it with several unrelated revenue provisions in the District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1966. President Johnson signed the legislation on September 30, 1966 (P.L. 89-610.)

After President Johnson signed the revenue bill, Senator Byrd indicated that the District appropriations bill his committee was developing would restore the highway and transit appropriations that Chairman Natcher had deleted from the District's unbalanced appropriations act.

Representative Smith of Virginia, chairman of the Rules Committee, was still holding the resolution approving the interstate compact. A source told Jack Eisen, "The Judge [Smith] wants to see all his ducks in a row before he moves." In view of Chairman Whitener's opposition, Chairman Smith wanted to be sure Representatives from the big eastern cities would be on hand for the vote as reliable transit supporters. [Eisen, Jack, "One D.C. Subway Crisis Exchanged for Another," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 1, 1966; Carper, Elsie, "Byrd Backs City Transit, Road Funds," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 2, 1966]

The resolution finally reached the House floor on October 7. In the general discussion, Chairman Whitener said it had been assigned to the Judiciary Committee by custom, but this was not a customary compact. Compacts usually were between States, but this one included the Congress as the legislative authority for the District of Columbia. The result was that a committee that was not familiar with the issues had to act on the resolution.

He summarized the history of legislation on the rail rapid transit system, including recommitment of the authorizing bill for the bobtail system in December 1963, and its eventual approval in 1965:

I say to you for whatever it may be worth, as one who has been genuinely interested in rapid transit and who because of interest in helping this city and its environs to have a rapid transit system, I think you are on the wrong track by pushing this co-called compact.

He emphasized his support for the approved system as well as its eventual expansion as a regional network. At the same time, the committee with the legislative authority for the District, the Committee on the District of Columbia, had never reviewed the compact:

I would further point out to you that if you adopt this resolution, you will have done more than approve a compact because this joint resolution is a compact plus legislation. This resolution authorizes the expenditure of funds in an unlimited amount by the District of Columbia government in connection with this compact. It has other language which is legislation and it is not merely the approval of a compact as we normally have in compact legislation.

He wanted the resolution to go through the District committee “before you accept language that was written in Richmond and in Annapolis without Congress having the opportunity to pass judgment on it.” He added:

I say to you gentlemen in all earnestness that the proposed compact is about as devoid of any protection of the interests of the taxpayers and citizens of the District of Columbia and the taxpayers of the Federal Government as any minds could have created anywhere in this country. It could constitute a raid on the Federal Treasury and on the Treasury of the District of Columbia, for reasons that I shall point out as I offer amendments later.

He wanted the system to succeed, but warned that “if you blindly proceed with this proposition that we have before us now, the transit system will be in real jeopardy.”

The House considered the three committee amendments. It approved correction of the typographical error and the amendment giving GAO audit authority. However, the House rejected, 11 to 55, the provision removing automatic transfer of NCTA responsibilities to the authority.

Much of the remaining time of debate involved the Whitener amendments. Arguing that the interstate authority was “going to be the 51st State,” he offered three of his amendments that were defeated 11 to 55, 12 to 50, and 12 to 51. Finally, as the *Star* described:

Whitener gave up, tossed his last three proposed amendments onto the clerk’s desk, listened to them lose on a voice vote and said, “No use beating my head against a brick wall.”

Whitener said, however, that he offered all nine amendments “so that in a later day some historian will look back and say one potter saw the vase was cracked Every single amendment was a sound one.”

The House, after rejecting the amendments without further debate, approved the resolution endorsing the interstate compact authority. [Elder, Shirley, “Whitener Bows, House Passes

Subway Pact,” *The Evening Star*, October 8, 1966; Eisen, Jack, “Suburban Extension Included in Transit Bill Passed by House,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 8, 1966; Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, *Congressional Record-House*, October 7, 1966, pages 25650-25865]

Because the resolution differed from the Senate version, the Senate would have to approve the House version for it to go to President Johnson. If not, the two Houses would have to convene a conference committee to resolve differences and then both Houses would have to approve the conference report. On September 13, Senators Tydings and Byrd brought the approved House bill to the floor of the Senate, which approved it without debate to complete congressional action. [Amendment of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact, *Congressional Record-Senate*, October 13, 1966, pages 26526-26536]

The *Star*’s editors said of the victory:

Any bill that simultaneously earns the approval of the conservative Representative Howard W. Smith of Virginia and liberal Representative Carlton R. Sickles of Maryland must have special qualities to recommend it.

The bill “cuts across party lines and ideology.” The editors added, “The system should be not only a model for other cities but a memorial to the lawmakers who made it possible.” [“Victory for Transit,” *The Sunday Star*, October 16, 1966]

While awaiting President Johnson’s signature approving the compact, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) was able to proceed to establish a permanent presence. It asked GSA to reserve space for its offices in the same building as NCTA at 1634 I Street, NW. Lee Flor outlined the immediate tasks:

The transit authority will have to complete arrangements to hire as much of the staff from NCTA as possible. Then it will have to complete hiring a staff which will serve as the District of Columbia transit construction and planning agency. The two suburban transit groups [Suburban Maryland Transit Commission and Northern Virginia Transportation Commission] are expected to keep most of their staff

The transit authority this year wants to spend about \$700,000, including \$250,000 for selection of new routes and studies of traffic along the new routes. Approximately \$100,000 is expected to be spent for developing costs for each new proposed route.

The area’s two States and the District of Columbia were to formally nominate two directors each for the board of directors.

One of WMATA’s priorities was extension of the 25-mile initial system, with a second District line in the Independence Avenue, SW., corridor considered a priority. NCTA’s Quenstedt said the line was a high priority because it was needed for extensions into the suburbs. “We’ve always considered that extra downtown loop as part of the regional system. It’s necessary to accommodate the increased number of trains that would result from extending the service into

the suburbs.” [Flor, Lee, “2nd Downtown Subway Line Due for Study,” *The Sunday Star*, October 9, 1966]

The original board of directors included:

District of Columbia:

- Commissioner Walter N. Tobriner
- Engineer Commissioner Charles M. Duke

Maryland:

- James Gleason, chairman of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
- Frank J. Lastner, who was retiring at the end of the year from the Prince George’s County Board of Commissioners.

Virginia:

- Leo Urbanske, Jr., of the Arlington County Board
- Lee Rhodes of the Falls Church City Council

On October 17, 1966, the members gathered for their first meeting. They elected General Duke as the first chairman. Gleason was first vice chairman, and Urbanske the second vice chairman. At a press conference, General Duke explained that the chairmanship would rotate each year “in a spirit of metropolitan cooperation.” [Hornig, Roberta, “Transit Authority Picks Duke as First Chairman,” *The Evening Star*, October 17, 1966]

Finishing the FY 1967 Appropriations Act

With the revenue legislation in the background, the House and Senate were completing work on the District of Columbia appropriations act for FY 1967. Senator Byrd had held the bill until President Johnson signed the District of Columbia Revenue Act of 1966. With the additional revenue assured, the Senate Committee on Appropriations released a report on October 11. The report stated:

The total request of \$12,805,000 for all highway projects eliminated by the House because of revenue shortages has been restored.

The committee also approved the District commissioners’ request for restoration of loan appropriations to the general fund of \$4,527,500 for the city’s portion of the rail rapid transit system for FY 1967. “The committee has approved this request which is equal to one-half of the amount appropriated to the National Capital Transportation Agency in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1967 (Public Law 89-435).”

Overall, the bill appropriated \$26 million more than the House-approved bill and \$43.5 million more than for FY 1966. [District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, 1967, Committee on

Appropriations, United States Senate, 89th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 1706, October 11, 1966, pages 4, 17]

On October 12, the Senate approved the District's appropriations bill, 70 to 0, without debate on the highway or transit appropriation measures. Senator Bible brought up the subject, noting, "I have always taken the view that we should have a balanced system." He asked if the appropriations in the bill were "sufficient to move the transit program ahead on schedule." Senator Byrd assured him that the committee had restored the full amount requested. Senator Bible said he understood the rail rapid system would be operational "in the range of 1971 or 1972." He brought up the subject only to ensure that "the amount allowed by the Appropriations Committee this year is sufficient to keep the NCTA on schedule." The answer was that it was. [District of Columbia Appropriations, 1967, Congressional Record-Senate, October 12, 1966, pages 26357-26363]

With the 89th Congress nearing adjournment, House and Senate conferees quickly resolved differences between the two appropriations bills for the District of Columbia. Although the final bill was \$2 million below the Senate appropriations total, it retained the amounts in the bill for highway and transit projects. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1967, Conference Report, U.S. House of Representatives, 89th Congress 2d Session, Report No. 2292]

On October 19, Chairman Natcher brought the conference report to the House floor. He explained how the revenue act had changed appropriations totals. On transportation, he said:

Beginning in the year 1958 our committee made every effort to convince those in authority that here in our Capital City we could have both a freeway system and a rapid rail transit system. We repeatedly made this statement over the years and made every effort to see that our freeway system was not destroyed. We believed then, and we believe now, that in order to meet the tremendous day-by-day growth of traffic the highway program must be carried out along with the present rapid rail transit system.

The District had not moved forward to meet the 1972 Interstate deadline, with planning decisions holding up the key elements in the freeway and parkway system. "Time after time when funds were appropriated for these projects the plans were discarded and filed away." Millions of dollars had been expended for planning from 1961 to the present "with no action to place the projects under construction." The District appropriations subcommittee had refused to recommend borrowing authority of \$8.5 million for the city to add to the amount unused. The House "sustained our position 320 to 3."

Now, however, was "the time to have a better understanding and an agreement as to the construction of our freeway system" and the rail rapid transit system. Several actions had occurred since the House approved the District appropriation bill for FY 1967. NCPC "has finally approved a number of our highway projects." In addition, the District commissioners had given final approval for \$140 million worth of freeway projects:

The Commissioners gave the Highway Department authority to have detailed plans drawn and to start buying land for the four sections of the city's freeway network approved by

the National Capital Planning Commission during the week of September 12. Two of the sections approved – the south leg and part of the east leg will complete the southern section of the inner loop. The Commissioners also gave approval to a section of the North Central Freeway and to the Three Sisters Bridge which are among the projects before the National Capital Planning Commission.

Chairman Natcher said that “it is now apparent that we will carry our freeway and parkway system along with the rapid rail transit system project.” He said that the committee had been right, at the time, to refuse appropriations for the District’s matching share for rail rapid transit in view of the delays in the freeway program. “We now recommend to the House that the conference report, and that portion pertaining to freeways and rapid rail transit be approved.” However, he cautioned:

Mr. Speaker, under no circumstances should further efforts be made to stop the freeway system here in our Capital City. This applies not only at this time, but at any time in the future, and all of us should keep in mind that it is imperative that we have a balanced transportation system and that both freeways and rapid transit must go forward together.

The House approved the bill, without a recorded vote or debate on the highway or rail rapid transit programs. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1967, *Congressional Record-House*, October 19, 1966, pages 27654-27658]

The Senate also approved the conference report on October 19, again without debate on transportation issues or a recorded vote. [District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1967- Conference Report, *Congressional Record-Senate*, October 19, 1966, pages 27621-27624]

President Johnson signed the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1967, on November 2, 1966 (P.L. 89-743).

Advancing North-Central Freeway

After NCPC had voted in September to approve the freeway plans favored by Chairman Natcher, *Star* editors wrote, “No thanks to its citizen members, the National Capital Planning Commission is finally coming to its senses on the subject of highways.” NCPC’s action “flashes the go-ahead signal for the design of four key elements of a freeway system which has been intolerably delayed, and which Washington must have in order to function efficiently.” The editors asked:

What is one to say, meanwhile, of the fact that four citizen members of the planning commission, led by Chairman Elizabeth Rowe, are still clinging to a negative role on transportation?

The North-Central Freeway, “the most controversial of the freeway projects,” had been “modified drastically” to address concerns about its impact on residential neighborhoods. However, this advance “occurred in spite of the vacuum of leadership from the commission.” The commissioners, along with everyone else, favored a balanced transportation system, but to the NCPC minority, “balance” meant “no freeways at all—even if, in the process of trying to stop

them, rail transit should go down the drain as well.” [“Back on the Road,” *The Evening Star*, September 17, 1966]

On October 1, Chairman Funk of the Maryland State Roads Commission said he expected the entire I-95 between the Baltimore and Capital Beltways to be under construction by spring 1967, with completion in 1968. The commission hired the consultant firm, Rummel, Klepper and Kahl of Baltimore, to make location studies for the 6-mile “third route to Baltimore” in Prince George’s County near Takoma Park to the District line.

Funk expected the consultants to recommend the route that the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had approved when it adopted the master plan for the Takoma Park area on September 4, 1963. The planning commission had tried to preserve the corridor for the freeway. Funk said the study was needed to justify the location to BPR. The *Star* described the route:

The missing freeway link would start from Exit 26 on the Capital Beltway, midway between New Hampshire Avenue and U.S. Route 1. Then it would run just west of the University of Maryland, and swing to the east, completely bypassing the city of Takoma Park, but going through West Hyattsville. Then it would enter the District line near Gallatin Street, and connect to the North Central Freeway near Ft. Totten Park along Galloway Street and the Baltimore & Ohio railroad.

The route would displace 163 families in Maryland, compared with 590 families under an earlier routing.

Funk had approached BPR seeking agreement that the State did not have to hold another public hearing on the North-Central Freeway. He argued that the State’s adopted route along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad corridor was similar to plans presented at a hearing 2 years earlier. [“Engineering Firm Is Hired to Route I-95 Freeway Link,” *The Sunday Star*, October 2, 1966]

(On October 4, President Johnson approved Public Law 89-627 authorizing the District of Columbia to replace the Highway Bridge in the 14th Street Bridge corridor with a six-lane bridge on the general alinement of the old bridge. The law authorized the District to provide “approaches and roads connecting such bridge and approaches with streets and park roads in the District of Columbia and with roads and park roads on the Virginia side of the Potomac River.”)

The District Highway Department had two freeway-related items on the agenda for NCPC’s October 13 meeting. One was approval of the last 3 miles of the North-Central Freeway along the railroad tracks between Buchanan Street, NE., near Catholic University and the District line. The District also wanted NCPC to approve transfer of the city’s right-of-way through Glover-Archbold Park to NPS. In exchange, the NPS would provide park land elsewhere for freeways.

Before the meeting, NCPC’s transportation committee held an informal public hearing on October 11, with witnesses limited to 10 minutes although they could present longer written statements. Jack Eisen compared the 5-hour hearing with the hearing in September, saying it was “less strident but seemingly more intense.” Peter Craig presented a statistics-based critique, but

residents made “frankly emotional pleas.” For example, Isham O. Baker of the South Manor Citizens Association said the freeway would be located close to several schools. He asked, “What giant acoustical baffle will be built along the freeway to enable our children to hear their teachers in normal tones?”

The key issue, however, was a legal one. City planning chief Lloyd Rivard told the committee that the North-Central Freeway segment would require 17 acres of Fort Totten Park and that the Northeast Freeway link to I-95 would take eight acres of Fort Drive Parkway land. Committee Chairman Edwards questioned the legality of taking the park land, all of which had been acquired by the District with funds loaned under the Capper-Cramton Act. Although the District had repaid the funds, Edwards argued that the park land could not be used for freeways without congressional approval.

Craig agreed, recalling the dispute about the use of Rock Creek Park in the mid 1950s. He thought a “severe legal and moral question” existed over use of the Capper-Cramton Act land for freeways. NCPC attorney Daniel Shear pointed out, in contrast, that the Capital Beltway had been built through two Capper-Cramton Act parcels in Montgomery County. At Edwards’ request, NCPC attorneys would look into the issue.

After the public hearing, the transportation committee voted, 3 to 2, to recommend that NCPC approve the 2.5-mile section of the North-Central Freeway. [Flor, Lee, “Congress May Get Freeway Land Issue,” *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1966; Eisen, Jack, “Foes Unsheathe New Legal Weapon To Fight North Central Freeway Link,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 12, 1966; “Committee to Ask OK For North Central Leg,” *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1966]

On October 13, NCPC voted by a surprising 8 to 2 to approve the North-Central Freeway segment. “The united front of freeway opposition by citizen members,” Eisen wrote, “was shattered.” Two of the citizen members who had previously voted against freeways switched sides. Vice Chairman Louchheim reached his decision reluctantly. “I am apprehensive at our negativism . . . where we could be useful [creatively].” He added:

There comes a time when you’ve got to be realistic and pragmatic. It is about time we realized that these highways are going to be built.

He also was concerned about the very real possibility that Congress would delay the subway if the freeways did not advance.

Architect Thiry voted for the freeway after winning agreement that the city would consult NCPC on design details.

A third citizen member, former NPS Director Wirth, abstained. He was concerned about the legal issues that had not been resolved about the taking of park land.

Only Chairman Rowe and Edwards voted to turn down the freeway segment. Rowe acknowledged that, “Everyone realizes that this is better than it was before.” She voted to turn it down because she agreed with those who thought “Washington is a place to live, not a place to

get in and out of quickly.” Edwards, like Wirth, was concerned that the proposed use of parkland was not legal.

When Sammie Abbott called out repeatedly to demand that he be given time to express his group’s views, Eisen noted, “a policemen stationed in the lobby walked into the meeting room.” After the meeting, Abbott told reporters that NCPC had “sold out to the highway interests” and he planned to “mobilize black power along with white power against sellout power.” He predicted riots when the city began relocating 280 African-American families in the North-Central Freeway corridor. [Eisen, Jack, “Final Link On Freeway Voted 8 to 2,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 14, 1966; Flor, Lee, “2 on Plans Panel Shift, Help Pass Freeway Leg,” *The Evening Star*, October 14, 1966; Franklin, Ben A., “Highway Backers Win Capital Fight,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 1966]

Despite NCPC’s vote, Edwards was increasingly convinced that construction across parkland was prohibited. Aside from the prohibition under the Capper-Cramton Act, he now cited Section 8-133 of the District Code, which read:

There shall not be erected on any reservation, park, or public grounds of the United States in the District of Columbia any building or structure without the express authority of Congress.

Although he had questioned NCPC’s authority to approve the North-Central Freeway and Northeast Freeway through parkland acquired under the Capper-Cramton Act, he now questioned the authority under the District Code to route the South Leg Freeway beneath the Lincoln Memorial and the Tidal Basin as well as the East Leg Freeway through Anacostia Park near D.C. Stadium.

Lee Flor provided background:

The old legal prohibition [Capper-Cramton Act] apparently was cited by the Bureau of the Budget 11 years ago, when it said legislation forbidding use of parkland for an extension of U.S. Route 240 was unnecessary.

At the time, the Maryland State Road Commission wanted to run U.S. 240 through Rock Creek Park, for 2.5 miles between Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. Civic groups filed a complicated lawsuit, which was never tried.

Highway planners decided to build the U.S. 240 extension as a “parkway,” and prohibit trucks from using it. This compromise apparently satisfied the court, and it dismissed the case.

Then, in 1964, some parkland was incorporated into the Capital Beltway, but civic groups seemed to be caught asleep and never protested.

The District of Columbia argued that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which authorized construction of Interstate highways in the city, provided the needed congressional authorization.

[Flor, Lee, "North Central Freeway Fight May Peril Others," *The Evening Star*, October 17, 1966]

Despite these concerns, the District commissioners approved the final 2.5-mile segment of the North-Central Freeway on October 20. General Duke said the impact of the freeway on the neighborhood was "certainly approaching, if not at, an irreducible minimum." [Matthews, John, "D.C. Chiefs OK Final Leg Of Freeway," *The Evening Star*, October 20, 1966]

Anti-freeway groups and individuals were planning their legal strategy. By the end of October, 10 groups had joined as plaintiffs:

- Washington's Federation of Citizens Associations
- Committee of One Hundred
- Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association
- Brookland Civic Association
- Save Takoma Park Committee
- South Manor Neighborhood Association
- Arlingtonians for the Preservation of the Palisades
- Georgetown Planning Council
- Democratic District Committee
- Washington's Federation of Civic Associations

Helen K. Leavitt of the Democratic District Committee told a *Star* reporter that the group had raised \$3,500 to finance the court suit to be prepared by Covington and Burling. Leavitt said, "We're demonstrating a metropolitanwide opposition to any more freeways." [Adams, Michael, "Freeway Foes Unite," *Voice of the City*, *The Evening Star*, October 29, 1966]

For FY 1968, the District Budget office recommended a record \$141 million for highways. Most of it, \$109.7 million, would come from BPR under the Federal-aid highway program. Another \$13.6 million was for operating expenses. The balance, \$17.9 million, would be the match for Federal-aid projects such as the Center Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, the North-Central Freeway, the K Street tunnel, and replacement of the Highway Bridge in the 14th Street Bridge corridor. As the *Star* reported, "The total reflects favorable recent action by a number of public agencies on controversial expressway proposals." [Lewis, Robert J., "\$141 Million Is Requested For Highways," *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1966; Mathews, John, "Record Budget Is Proposed For District," *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1966]

As Abbott's comments after the NCPC approval suggested, highway opponents were not intimidated. ECTC held a rally in the board room of the District Building on November 16 "to unequivocally condemn every aspect of Washington's highway program," as the *Star* put it. The board room was full, with the crowd estimated at 400 people spilling out into the hallway:

The speakers at last night's meeting ranged from Mrs. Angela Rooney, speaking for the white, middle-class residents of the Brookland area who "reject the dreamworld of the frantically protected, segregated suburbs," to Marion Barry Jr., militant leader of the District branch of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

“I’m not surprised that the three Commissioners didn’t show up,” said Barry, “because I think we live in a plantation system here . . . and the Commissioners are the slave masters.”

“But the white and black slaves are going to rebel,” he shouted to applause from the integrated audience.

Peter Craig said he expected Covington and Burling to file an “across-the-board” lawsuit before the end of the month to block the North-Central Freeway, East Leg, and the Three Sisters Bridge. ECTC had raised \$5,000 to help pay the prestigious law firm.

Craig also called for a boycott of city gas stations:

“You have the right to do something about the freeway problem every time you drive up to the gas pump,” he said, explaining that every gallon of gas bought in the District contributes \$.70 to the District highway fund—the 7 cent tax on the fuel, he said, is matched by 63 cents from the federal government. “So buy that gas in Maryland or Virginia,” he said. “This is little tiny action of self-help citizens of the District can do!”

As announced during the meeting, the law firm had written to Bernard W. Pryor, chairman of the Brookland Civic Association, to inform him that “a private property owner or occupant” was not required to allow District employees or agents “to enter upon his property to make appraisals or surveys for the so-called ‘North Central Freeway.’” The letter continued:

If you learn of any attempts by District agents to enter private property in connection with the North Central Freeway, we would be grateful if you would furnish us with complete information.

The protesters also criticized the District commissioners because they were part of “the nongovernment [that] permeates every aspect of life in the Nation’s Capital.” They asked President Johnson “to remove the District Commissioners from office at once” and “give some measure of elective control over District affairs to those who care, the people.” [Adams, Michael, “400 Foes of Freeways Urge Removal of Commissioners,” *The Evening Star*, November 17, 1966]

The lead attorneys for Covington and Burling, Roberts Owen and Gerald Norton, filed the suit on December 1, 1966. It asked the U.S. District Court for a permanent injunction and declaratory judgment to block the Three Sisters Bridge, the North-Central Freeway, the East Leg of the Inner Loop, and the Missouri Avenue Expressway. (The Missouri Avenue Expressway would be located along Missouri Avenue, NW., between 8th Street and 16th Streets.)

The complaint accused the District government and NCPC of acting illegally on 18 counts, including a charge that members of NCPC voted illegally and were in conflict of interest to approve the freeways because they were acting as judges of their own case. The vote also was illegal because alternates to six ex-officio NCPC members provided the margin of victory for the freeways. The suit argued that only the chairmen of the Senate and House District Committees could appoint alternates, and they had not done so before the votes. Further, the suit claimed that

the projects involved the illegal use of parklands after BPR pressured NPS to agree to the freeway projects; NPS officials then voted for the freeways.

The key legal issue, however, was based on the failure of officials to comply with the strict requirements of the Act of March 2, 1893 “Providing a Permanent System of Highways in That Portion of the District Of Columbia Outside the Cities of Washington and Georgetown.” The legislation grew out of concern that developers were building subdivisions within the District’s border, but beyond the established cities of Georgetown and Washington in Washington County. The developers did not align their roads with those within the Washington street plan. Gutheim and Lee summarized the legislation:

This act authorized the commissioners of the District of Columbia to prepare a plan for the extension of the L’Enfant streets, and required that all subdivisions—including those already extant—conform to this new plan.

A new map of the city was to be made showing the “boundaries and dimensions of and number of square feet in the streets, avenues, and roads,” and providing that circles be drawn up at intersections of principal avenues and streets. Anticipating that many legal difficulties would arise between existing subdivisions and condemnations by the commissioners to enforce the lines of this new highway map, the statute provided for a process of hearings and damages to be paid to the landowners.

The 1893 Act required a series of steps, such as:

- The District commissioners are directed “to prepare a plan for the extension of a permanent system of highways over all that portion of said District not included within the limits of the cities of Washington and Georgetown.” The plan was to follow the street plan of the city of Washington, to the extent possible, and call for streets between 90 and 160 feet, except for existing highways.
- The commissioners were to develop the plan in sections, beginning with “existing suburban subdivisions not in conformity with the general plan of the city of Washington,” referring here to suburbs within the city limits but outside of Georgetown and Washington.
- The commissioners were to prepare maps of each section showing the roads, including traffic circles at principal intersections.
- The maps were to be submitted to the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Interior, and Chief of Engineers “who shall make such alterations, if any, therein, as they shall deem advisable, keeping in view the intention and provisions of this act, and the necessity of harmonizing as far as possible the public convenience with economy of expenditure.”
- After the District commissioners approved the final map, they were to file it with the Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia. Future subdivisions were not to be approved unless “the same be first approved by the Commissioners and be in conformity to such map.”
- If land was to be condemned for highway purposes, the District commissioners were to petition the supreme court of the District of Columbia. The court was to provide public notice within 30 days of the petition to “warn all persons having any interest in the

proceedings to attend the court at a day to be named in said notice, and to continue in attendance until the court have made a final order in the premises.” Further, the court “shall afford all parties in interest a reasonable opportunity to be heard during the proceedings.” If “practicable to do so,” the court was to have the marshal of the District of Columbia serve notice “upon each of the owners of the land sought to be condemned.”

- The court was to summon a jury of “seven judicious, disinterested men” to hear the evidence, along with the court. After hearing the evidence and, if called for by the court, visiting the property, the jury was to issue a verdict unanimously or via majority. The court may accept the verdict or reject it if the court considers it “unjust or unreasonable.” If the verdict is rejected, the court was to summon a new jury to hear the evidence.
- The court may then proceed to issue its condemnation order. The jury was to assess compensation based on a formula specified in the law.

Many of the suit’s claims involved failure by the District government and NCPC to comply with the Act of March 2, 1893, including the public hearing requirements. In fact, in coming years, protestors would often claim that public hearings were illegal, meaning they did not comply with the 1893 Act. [Flor, Lee, “Citizens Suit Seeks Halt To D.C. Freeway Work,” *The Evening Star*, November 30, 1966; Gutheim and Lee, page 116; the 1893 Act can be found in *Laws Relating to the Permanent System of Highways Outside of the Cities of Washington and Georgetown*, Government Printing Office, 1908, pages 3-11])

Star editors dismissed the latest anti-freeway gambit:

Having failed to persuade anyone else that they are on firm ground, several die-hard bands of citizen opponents to the District freeway program now have decided to try the courts.

Whatever else may be said of this latest delaying tactic, the lawsuit is not timid.

The suit reflected a “catch-all, dragnet approach.” If the court ruled that the 18 counts were valid, the impact “would be remarkable, to say the least.” If NCPC’s ex-officio members had a conflict of interest, Congress having designated them for membership would be at fault. If allowing alternates to cast ex officio votes was invalid, “the status of literally hundreds of other actions taken by the commission on a variety of subjects would also appear to be questionable.”

The District commissioners, the editors argued, should continue “pushing ahead with all phases of the freeway program.” [“Freeway Challenge,” *The Sunday Star*, December 4, 1966]

Changes in Leadership

On November 8, 1966, Maryland elected Spiro T. Agnew, the Republican leader of Baltimore County, as the next Governor. By 82,000 votes, he defeated Democrat George P. Mahoney, who ran a racist campaign with the slogan “Your Home Is Your Castle, Protect It.” Governor-elect Agnew had called for a “crusade for conscience” against the white backlash that Mahoney represented. The *Star* reported, “The bulk of Negroes in Baltimore City lined up behind Agnew, and were instrumental in his carrying the pivotal urban center.” (Baltimore City is not part of

Baltimore County where Agnew served as County Executive.) [Rowland, James B., "Voters Silence Backlash Cry In Maryland," *The Evening Star*, November 9, 1966]

Chairman of the Maryland State Roads Commission understood that he would leave his post with a new Governor taking office. In a year-end interview, he said his departure was "a normal thing to do." The Governor "naturally likes to have someone close to him, so decisions can be made by the chairman-director based on a close relationship between the governor and the Highway Department." Governor-elect Agnew selected Jerome B. Wolff, an attorney and engineer, to replace Funk.

Despite the change in leaders, Funk predicted that the North-Central Freeway would proceed as planned in the District and Maryland. He said that, "if there had been any weaknesses in the handling of the North-Central Freeway, it would have become a campaign issue." During the campaign, Agnew had not criticized the freeway or the State's highway plan.

BPR was formally reviewing the plans for the freeway, but had informally okayed the location in Montgomery County. Despite opponents' demands, Funk was confident BPR would soon approve the plan formally without requiring another public hearing. He indicated, however, that the Maryland State Roads Commission was planning a hearing in early 1967 on I-95 between the Capital Beltway and the District line. ["Funk Expects Freeway to Stand as Planned," *The Evening Star*, December 23, 1966]

On election day, President Johnson announced that General Robert E. Mathe would replace General Duke as the District's engineer commissioner. General Mathe was serving as Corps Engineer for the 7th Army Corps of Engineers in Germany, but was familiar with his new position because he had served as assistant engineer commissioner for urban renewal from 1955 to 1958.

General Duke, who had served as engineer commissioner since July 1963, said that "a more qualified person could not have been selected." During his years in the District, General Duke said he had a "thrilling experience," with his greatest satisfaction being the adoption of a balanced transportation system for the area.

General Mathe, a 49-year old native of Oshgosh, Wisconsin, earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Illinois. During World War II, he had been assigned to the 249th Engineer Combat Battalion during campaigns in France, the Ardennes, and Germany. He, his wife Elinor, and five children would live in a rented home at 3725 Fessenden, Street, NW., in the city's Chevy Chase neighborhood.

While stationed in Germany, he had not followed news about the city. "I hope to catch up as quickly as possible." However, he had been in Washington during the period when the freeway and rail rapid transit system were in early stages. He was convinced the city needed a balanced transportation system of freeways and rail rapid transit. He said he had observed cities all over Europe building the same types of networks. In addition, he said, "It gave me a thrill to see in actuality some of the things we were talking about when I worked here before."

He also saw another need. "Housing, of course, continues to be a major problem. I want to do whatever can be done to solve the housing problem," especially for the city's low income minorities.

General Mathe took the oath of office on December 14. He said, "Our problems are no worse than those of the cities of Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. We shall succeed." He already had received "a little indication last night of what it will be like to serve as District engineer commissioner," as the *Star* reported:

While he and Duke were being honored inside the Mayflower Hotel by the Washington Metropolitan Board of Trade, about 50 pickets paraded in the slush and snow to indicate their dislike for the Board of Trade specifically and District engineer commissioners in general.

"Board of Trade is the Enemy of the People," said a sign carried by Joseph L. Rauh, chairman of the District Democratic Central Committee. "Pave the Board of Trade," said another sign.

The picketing was instigated by Americans for Democratic Action, in which Rauh is a guiding light.

"We are picketing to show the new commissioner the low esteem by which the board is held by the citizens of this city," he said.

Also on the picket line were members of the Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis, Southeast Victims of the Freeway, Save Takoma Park Committee and the Brookland Civic Associations.

After receiving a scroll from the Board of Trade lauding his role in creating a balanced transportation system, General Duke said, "My tenure here as engineer commissioner is going out in good fashion . . . it snowed all day . . . and there's a picket line outside. In other words, things are back to normal."

On January 5, 1967, General Duke left to serve as commander of the 18th Engineer Brigade at Dong Ba Thin in Vietnam.

[Mathews, John, "President Names Mathe Engineer Commissioner," *The Evening Star*, November 9, 1966; Eisen, Jack, "Mathe Says He'll Attack Housing Crisis," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 10, 1966; Conconi, Charles, "New Commissioner Urges Priority for Housing," *The Evening Star*, December 2, 1966; "Mathe Takes Oath of Office," *The Evening Star*, December 14, 1966]

The U.S. Department of Transportation

President Johnson, as part of his Great Society initiative, proposed creation of a U.S. Department of Transportation. In his State of the Union Address on January 12, 1966, he explained that a Transportation Department would "bring together our transportation activities." With 35

government agencies spending \$5 billion a year on transportation, he said, the “present structure makes it almost impossible to serve either the growing demands of this great nation or the needs of the industry, or the right of the taxpayer to full efficiency and frugality.”

With bipartisan congressional support, President Johnson was able to sign the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 on October 15, 1966, before about 200 guests at the White House. The new Department “will have a mammoth task – to untangle, to coordinate, and to build the national transportation system for America that America is deserving of.” With its help, “A day will come in America when people and freight will move through this land of ours speedily, efficiently, safely, dependably, and cheaply. That will be a good day and a great day in America.”

The President selected Alan S. Boyd to be the first Secretary of Transportation. A 44-year old lawyer over 6 feet, 3 inches tall, Boyd had been general counsel of the Florida Turnpike Authority and chairman of the Florida Railroad and Public Utilities Commission before President Eisenhower appointed him to the Civil Aeronautics Board. Boyd became chairman in 1961 and was appointed Under Secretary of Commerce in 1965. He had been the Johnson Administration’s chief promoter of the new department.

He and his wife Flavel lived in Arlington, Virginia, at 1200 North Nash Street. A profile in *The New York Times* said the house across from Washington “overlooks the Potomac River and the Iwo Jima Memorial Monument.” [“Bold Transport Chief,” Man in the News, *The New York Times*, November 7, 1966]

On January 16, 1967, Boyd took the oath of office in the East Room of the White House. The President explained that Boyd would “coordinate a national transportation policy for this great land of ours . . . and give the kind of results that the American people would like to point to with pride.”

The new Secretary had not been directly involved in highway issues. His views on urban freeways were neutral initially but, as Professor Schrag wrote after interviewing Boyd, his perspective would change:

When Robert Weaver, secretary of housing and urban development and the nation’s first African American cabinet officer, drew him aside to discuss urban freeways, Boyd was willing to listen. Weaver introduced him to a group of black Baltimoreans who had worked all their lives to own houses, which were about to be taken for highway right-of-way for what they argued was inadequate compensation. Boyd was shaken and began reconsidering the desirability of urban freeways.

In the interview, Boyd recalled that one of the Baltimoreans was a stevedore who had volunteered for the army in World War II. He had worked all his life to buy his home. Then, in Boyd’s words:

. . . along comes the highway system, and [says], “For the greater good, we’re going to take your house. We’re going to pay you . . . \$28,000.” He said, “There is no way I can

buy a house like the one I have for \$28,000, and I haven't got any money other than that, other than what you give me." He said, "White folks—that ain't fair." That made an impact, I'll tell you. It really made an impact on me.

Secretary Boyd would have to find a new Federal Highway Administrator. Rex Whitton, who had assumed the post in 1961, resigned at the end of 1966. One of the most respected highway leaders in the country, he had done everything he could to keep the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways on schedule amidst growing criticism, especially in cities. He had worked hard to advance the District of Columbia's freeway program, seeking compromises with NCPC and NPS. However, he understood that one reason for creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation was to reduce BPR's power and influence based in part on close relations with members of the House and Senate Public Works Committees. Having become used to something approaching autonomy in the Department of Commerce, Whitton could see that his authority would be greatly diminished in the new Department.

In replacing Whitton and staffing leadership posts, Secretary Boyd was influenced by his discussions with Secretary Weaver as Professor Schrag explained:

Soon the upper ranks of the new department swelled with freeway skeptics. For his highway administrator, Boyd chose Lowell Bridwell, a former reporter who Boyd believed would stand up to the engineers. Paul Sitton, deputy under secretary, had monitored the Bureau of Public Roads as an examiner for the Bureau of the Budget. He had grown disgusted with the road builders, so he had used his post to support Stolzenbach and to feed information to Washington highway protestors. He had also served on the NCTA Advisory Board in its last year of existence. Now Boyd turned to him for background information and advice on D.C. highway issues.

Most inflammatory was Boyd's assistant general counsel for litigation: anti-highway activist Peter Craig. Craig recused himself from department work involving the Washington region, but by hiring him Boyd had made his sympathies clear. Boyd himself told the pro-highway Board of Trade, "I do not believe Washingtonians will receive the greatest possible return on their investment – returns in service and convenience – if the community tries to resolve today's problems by the simple expedients of more automobiles, more freeways, and more parking lots." [Schrag, page 126; stevedore anecdote from Schrag, Zachary M., "The Freeway Fight in Washington, D.C.," *Journal of Urban History*, July 2004, page 655]

(For information on the Baltimore freeway controversies, see Earl Swift's *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011). Swift uses the Baltimore freeway fighters to illustrate the urban controversies underway around the country during the construction phase of the Interstate System.)

Lowell Bridwell was the first head of the Federal road agency, dating to 1893, who was not, in some way, a road builder. Bridwell had been a journalist, most recently as the top writer on

highways for the Washington bureau of Scripps-Howard Newspapers, a post he had assumed in 1958. A biographical sketch in *America's Highway 1776-1976* said:

From this vantage point he set up close liaison with both government and industry. He became well known as an individual who was exceptionally well versed in the technical aspects of highway administration, finance, and construction.

As a representative for Scripps-Howard, Mr. Bridwell participated in many local and national highway meetings. These included numerous conclaves of State highway officials as well as leading trade associations.

He had joined the Commerce Department in April 1962 as assistant to Under Secretary for Transportation Clarence Martin, Jr., before being appointed Acting Deputy Federal Highway Administrator on January 20, 1964, a post he held until becoming Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Transportation (Operations) on July 2, 1964. He would provide strong support for Boyd in his advocacy work for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Following Senate confirmation, he became Federal Highway Administrator on March 23, 1967, and held the position until the end of the Johnson Administration on January 20, 1969:

Mr. Bridwell was responsible for administering a \$4.4 billion highway program. This figure dwarfed everything else in the Department of Transportation's \$6.6 billion budget. [*America's Highways 1776-1976*, page 194]

The 44-year-old native of Westerville, Ohio, lived with his wife, son, and daughter in a District townhouse built in 1910 at 146 D Street, SE.

The U.S. Department of Transportation opened on April 1, 1967. The FHWA began operations that same day, with BPR as one of its four bureaus. BPR, now headed by a career employee, Director Frank Turner, would remain responsible for administering the Federal-aid highway program in partnership with the State highway agencies.

The first issue of FHWA's newsletter, replacing BPR's *The News in Public Roads*, explained the new agency's twin safety bureaus, the National Traffic Safety Bureau and the National Highway Safety Bureau. They had been "established last November 9 [1966], under separate laws passed by Congress last fall":

The major function of the Traffic Bureau is to develop and issue performance standards for all new motor vehicles to make them safer in operation. The other Bureau seeks to bring about improvement in State and local highway safety standards and programs, including vehicle registration, operation and inspection, driver training, accident investigation, highway design, traffic control, laws and codes, traffic surveillance and emergency services.

The fourth element of FHWA was the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety, which the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 shifted from the Interstate Commerce Commission to FHWA. It had

jurisdiction over the safety of 3 million trucks and buses using America's roads. [*Federal Highway Administration News*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1967]

(The two safety bureaus separated from FHWA and became the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in March 1970. The Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety remained with FHWA under January 1, 2000, when it became the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration under the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999.)

The 89th Congress had been productive in ways that few Congresses have duplicated. President Johnson had achieved important changes that advanced his Great Society even as escalation of the Vietnam War eroded his popularity.

Most Presidents lose support in mid-term elections such as those in 1966. True to form, the election reduced Democratic majorities in the 90th Congress, while increasing the percentage of Democratic and Republican conservatives who were less inclined than their 89th Congress counterparts to support President Johnson's liberal agenda. Professor Zelizer summarized the change:

As Johnson had expected, the elections went poorly for liberals. Although Democrats continued to control Congress, with 64 Democrats in the Senate and 248 Democrats in the House, the size of the conservative coalition had grown substantially. In the House, their numbers grew from approximately 240 members in the Eighty-ninth Congress to 278 in the Ninetieth. Republicans gained 47 seats in the House and 3 seats in the Senate

The number of liberal Democrats in the House and the Senate had significantly declined. Southern committee chairmen would face a diminished threat that the Democratic caucus could force bills out of their committees. Allied with non-liberal Republicans, conservative southern Democrats would have enough votes on the floor to threaten the success of liberal proposals

Ray Bliss, the Republican National Committee chairman, told a packed room of reporters in a Washington hotel, "This press conference will be a little different from my first one, when you were asking me if the Republican Party would survive. It looks to me as if we have a very live elephant." [Zelizer, pages 257-259]

Washington's Ponte Vecchio Bridge

On October 7, 1965, Representative Harold T. Johnson (D-Ca.) introduced a bill to build a shop-lined pedestrian bridge from the Maine Avenue waterfront in the vicinity of the 10th Street Mall across the Washington Channel to East Potomac Park. The bill would permit the Secretary of the Interior to oversee the bridge to provide direct access to the National Fisheries Center and Aquarium scheduled to be built on East Potomac Park. Representative Johnson emphasized that the bill did not seek funds. "It is designed to satisfy public need through private enterprise." The concept would be similar to the way NPS contracted for concessions in National Parks.

The bridge would serve multiple purposes. It would provide “a diversity of tourist and visitor services” near the Smithsonian Institution museums and “complement the attractiveness of Washington’s redeveloping Southwest.” It also would provide pedestrian access to Hains Point “to accommodate the millions of persons expected to visit the aquarium each year as well as those wishing to take advantage of other attractions of East Potomac Park.”

Under contract with the Interior Department, the developer or concessioner would pay a franchise fee in return for subleasing portions of the bridge to businesses such as restaurants and specialty shops.

He continued:

As is the case with so many so-called new ideas, this one is based on an old concept that has already stood the test of time. What this bill proposes for Washington is an updated American version of a venerable structure located in Florence, Italy. It is called the Ponte Vecchio – or old bridge – and it remains a prime attraction today, drawing countless visitors to its rustic shops and specialty stores.

I respectfully submit that a modern-day version of the Ponte Vecchio connecting Washington’s Maine Avenue with East Potomac Park has the potential to become one of the major tourist attractions of the world while adding a desirable blend of charm, excitement, and beauty to America’s Capital City. [Providing a Bridge to East Potomac Park, *Congressional Record-House*, October 7, 1965, page 26323]

(Flooding in 1881 pushed water from the Potomac River across the riverfront marshlands almost to the White House and as far east as the Botanic Garden on the western edge of the Capitol grounds. Engineers concluded that taming the river and reclaiming the flats along the waterfront were essential to improving drainage and sanitary conditions at the Executive Mansion. Major Peter Conover Hains began the reclamation project in the late summer of 1882. The project used dredged material to create hundreds of acres of land separating the main channel of the Potomac River and the reclaimed waterfront. The water between the two was named the Washington Channel, a recreation of a historic channel in the same general location. A reservoir intended to supply fresh water to the channel was formed and later named the Tidal Basin.

(In 1897, with private interests seeking to develop the land, Congress approved legislation setting aside the 621 acres and reclaimed flats and the 118 acres of tidal reservoirs as “Potomac Park . . . to be forever held and used as a park for the recreation and pleasure of the people.” Charles C. Glover was largely responsible for securing the legislation. East Potomac Park, which is often called Hains Point, is usually referred to as a peninsula, although it actually is an island. [Gutheim and Lee, pages 94-97])

The idea for the bridge dated to 1959 when Chloethiel Woodard Smith suggested the “Ponte Vecchio proposal” as part of her concepts for the new southwest. The idea gradually gathered support, which increased when the Department of the Interior decided to move the National Aquarium from the Department of Commerce’s Herbert C. Hoover Building to Hains Point. In

January 1966, Smith signed a contract with NPS to design the bridge. [“Chloethiel Smith To Design ‘Ponte Vecchio’ Footbridge,” *The Sunday Star*, January 30, 1966]

The viability of the bridge and the aquarium depended in part on construction of a parking garage for visitors. It would have 2,500 spaces on several levels in the hill beneath an overlook at the end of the 10th Street Mall 40 feet above the waterfront.

On August 13, 1966, NPS unveiled the design for the “World Bridge,” which Robert J. Lewis reported would be “studded with 120 shops, stores, cafes, galleries and exhibit spaces to be built on five man-made islands across the Washington Channel.” The \$5 million project, which would provide access to the \$10 million aquarium on East Potomac Park, would include a roadway for trackless “mini-trains” to supplement pedestrian access:

The design prepared by Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Associates calls for a series of five 2-story and 3-story buildings to be built over the water on foundations driven deep into the channel bottom.

The buildings and connecting spans would be placed 20 or more feet above the water level to permit boats to travel beneath them

Also needed as part of the project are plazas at both ends of the bridge and a small span to carry pedestrians and mini-trains across Maine Avenue from the overlook. [Lewis, Robert J., “A ‘World Bridge’ for D.C.,” *The Sunday Star*, August 14, 1966]

In the final days of the 89th Congress, the Ponte Vecchio “World Bridge” was approved as part of the Flood Control Act of 1966, which President Johnson signed on November 7 (P.L. 89-789).

In February 1967, the Interior Department unveiled the “simple and dramatic” design for the National Fisheries Center and Aquarium. The main building would be on a square, 432-foot concrete deck six feet above the ground. The facility would include displays of fish and other aquatic life, a series of ecological systems and two 500-seat theaters. Construction and operation would be financed by admission fees paid by the expected 3 million visitors a year.

Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates, which designed the facility, excluded the World Bridge. In its place was an empty bridge with shops and other retail facilities on an island abutting the north side of the bridge in mid-channel. In the view of the *Star*’s editors:

It falls far short of the design drafted by architect Chloethiel Smith, which is attractive both to users and to the private entrepreneurs who will be expected to put up the hard cash necessary to get the bridge built We trust, however, that the deserved praise heaped upon the aquarium portion of the Roche plan by Interior and the Fine Arts Commission does not mean that a Ponte-Vecchio-type bridge is in any sense precluded. [“Elevated Aquarium Design Unveiled,” *The Sunday Star*, January 12, 1967; “National Fish Bowl,” *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1967]

On March 14, 1967, the Interior Department invited bids for construction of the Ponte Vecchio-type bridge and the underground parking garage on Maine Avenue, SW. Contractors were

invited to bid on their own design for the bridge or the design submitted by Chloethiel Smith. Bids were due in mid-May.

The solicitation did not result in a single bid.

By mid-June, Lewis reported:

Southwest Washington's much-heralded "Marvelous Mile" is threatened with deep trouble.

Failure of the Interior Department last month to find a private developer for a proposed shop-lined bridge across the Washington Channel and a nearby parking garage has set off a chain of events which seems about to knock down several key beautification projects like a row of dominoes.

If that happens the long-awaited linking of the Smithsonian Institution complex along Independence avenue with a proposed \$10 million National Aquarium a mile south on East Potomac Park by way of the 10th Street Mall – the planned monumental gateway to \$500 million Southwest Washington redevelopment – may be dead.

The garage was "the key factor" in selecting East Potomac Park as the site for the aquarium. An anonymous planner said that "to push the aquarium through without the garage which in turn, jeopardized the bridge, would be one of the most serious mistakes that could be made in the Southwest area." [Lewis, Robert J., "Southwest 'Marvelous Mile' Is in Deep Trouble," *The Evening Star*, June 26, 1967]

Although the Interior Department would pursue the bridge concept, Washington's Ponte Vecchio bridge was doomed, along with the garage and the National Fisheries Center and Aquarium. The aquarium would remain in the Commerce Department building, while Congress bestowed the "national" designation in 1979 on an aquarium planned for Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The National Aquarium opened in Baltimore on August 8, 1981. The Commerce Department closed its aquarium on September 30, 2013.

The Furor of the Past – at an End

The developments in 1966 gave highway advocates a sense of optimism. The *Star* reflected the optimism in an editorial about the East Leg Freeway on January 16, 1967. The editorial recalled the plan to build the freeway in the 11th Street, SE., corridor, a plan that would have uprooted many families. Citizens recommended construction of the freeway along the banks of the Anacostia River. "Well, after a great deal of inter-agency hemming and hawing, that has been done." NCPD had approved the route from the Southeast Freeway to Barney Circle at 17th and Pennsylvania Avenues, SE., "thence northward through Anacostia Park to Benning Road near the D.C. Stadium."

Considering "all the furor of the past," the fact that officials had agreed on this alignment "is noteworthy in itself." The freeway would improve access to the stadium and the National Arboretum, "an asset of the Nation's Capital which has never been used to its full potential by

visitors or residents because of its isolation.” West of the arboretum, highway officials planned to put the freeway in a 1,700-foot tunnel that would reduce family displacements in half.

Some may believe that “freeways have no place in Washington,” but “they are essential, and the fact is that, sooner or later, they will be built”:

The real message is that a variety of community benefits can be realized if the various agencies concerned really cooperate to develop the best possible freeway plans—and that grievous errors can result if they don’t. [“Improved With Age,” *The Evening Star*, January 16, 1967]

On January 18 and 19, the District commissioners held a public hearing on the East Leg Freeway between Benning Road and Rhode Island Avenue, NE. Sammie Abbott, the *Post* reported, “spent about 7 hours yesterday giving the District Government a piece of his mind.” Around noon, he led 20 ECTC members on a picket line in front of the District Building. They carried signs, such as:

- Gagged and gassed by the highway lobby
- Not one inch of the arboretum or parklands for freeways
- Bus fare rise means more cars means more freeways
- How come there’s plenty of \$ for freeways but not enough for homes & schools

A few witnesses endorsed the East Leg plan. Supporters included AAA, the Federal City Council, the Greater Washington Central Labor Council, NCTA, the Washington Trucking Association, and the local chapter of the Automotive Trade Association. However, “most people came to register opposition, Abbott perhaps most vociferously of all. “These are commuter roads,” he told the hearing. “Men come in an average of 1.6 to a car. They drive back to their bedrooms [in the suburbs] at night. They don’t care what happens in the District.” He added ECTC’s motto: “This is a white man’s road . . . through black men’s homes.” He said that ECTC was going to organize a boycott against buying gasoline in the District. “They take 7 cents out of every gallon, then use it to bury us in concrete.” What the city needed, he said, is rapid transit. He remained in the hearing room until the hearing ended at 7 p.m.

Peter Craig had new information to present based on a deposition that attorneys from Covington and Burling had secured from General Duke before he left for Vietnam. Craig emphasized several points. General Duke said he had never read the law establishing NCTA. He also had never attended a public hearing on the freeways or read the hearing transcripts, even though, as Craig noted, General Duke made many decisions on freeway development. [Milius, Peter, “Freeway Foes Carry Protest to District Building,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 18, 1967; “North Central Freeway Airing Continues Friday,” *The Evening Star*, January 18, 1967]

Senior District Court Judge Matthew F. McGuire delivered a setback to freeway opponents on February 2 when he agreed with the District that their lawsuit was vague and confusing. He gave litigants 60 days to “rewrite your complaint and put it in language that can be understood.”

[“Revise Suit On Freeway, Court Orders,” *The Evening Star*, February 3, 1967; “Suit to Stop Freeways Bogs Down in Words,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 3, 1967]

District highway officials planned to introduce their design for the North-Central Freeway to NCPC on February 9. Von Eckardt described it as “an improvement over last year’s controversial proposal,” but added that “it fails to live up to the promise that Washington’s freeways would henceforth be designed to enhance rather than split the city’s neighborhoods.” Officials had promised that freeways would “spark new housing, shops, offices and community facilities alongside and over the concrete ribbons.” BPR had even provided “pretty sketches” of what air rights structures might look like:

The important idea, enthusiastically expounded by top highway officials, was that new housing would be constructed along with the freeway so that families who must be displaced as the bulldozers move along would find a new home ready and waiting for them in the neighborhood in which they are rooted.

Von Eckardt understood why the sketches had not been specific as to location pending detailed studies. “But, it is not understandable, in fact, it is downright distressing, that such studies still have not been started and don’t even seem to be contemplated.” The department left itself open “to the suspicion that the much touted ‘joint housing and highway improvement project’ was merely a meaningless ploy to appease the freeway opponents.” (To be fair, he added, the District had asked Congress for legislation authorizing air rights construction and it was expected to be approved during the 89th Congress.)

The J. E. Greiner Company and architectural advisers at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill had “at least come up with a concept which would make new housing construction over the freeway technically possible.” They placed the freeway, with room for the rail rapid transit line, alongside the railroad tracks at ground level but depressed in parts. “Depressing the freeway affords the opportunity at a later date to bridge it with buildings, overpasses and parks.”

The architects gave the overpasses and retaining walls “elegant, well-proportioned simplicity and directness”:

But by adding the freeway ditch to the railroad, the design naturally also widens the swath that the B&O already cuts into the city’s fabric. This is particularly tragic in Brookland, the residential neighborhood east of Catholic University. To a lesser extent it makes itself grievously felt in Totten Park and Takoma.

The failure to propose new housing for the 535 displaced families was bound “to have unpleasant repercussions that will prolong the smoldering freeway feud in this city.”

Community leaders were afraid that opposition “of a voluble nature” might erupt. One said:

There is a lot of free-floating unrest in this city. In the slums it is disorganized. But the higher-income communities that are hurt by this freeway have a strong organizational capacity. They know the ropes.

Von Eckardt concluded:

The people of this city now need some evidence that all this talk means more than making the Tidal Basin more beautiful. And if such evidence is to be shown, it had better start along the North Central Freeway. [Von Eckardt, Wolf, "New North Central Freeway Fails to Solve Problems It Creates," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 5, 1967]

On February 9, NCPC voted 8 to 2 to approve the general route of the 2.3-mile, \$48 million section of the East Leg Freeway. It would slice off part of the boundary of the National Arboretum and go into a tunnel next to Mount Olivet Cemetery. The segment would wipe out 350 homes and apartments and 26 businesses, mostly small stores, that paid approximately \$115,000 a year in property taxes. Professor Edwards and acting NCPC chairman Louchheim voted against the location, both citing the pending litigation among their reasons.

NCPC also acted on a NCTA proposal for the Connecticut Avenue subway line. The line would be built in a tunnel through solid rock from Dupont Circle to the next station near Woodley Road. It would tunnel under Rock Creek instead of on a new bridge or through the supports of the William Howard Taft Bridge on Connecticut Avenue. NCPC approved additional stations at Port Street and Van Ness Street, but rejected a proposed station below Columbia Road and 18th Street because of concerns that the projected use would not justify the added cost of \$11.5 million.

McCarter revealed that NCTA, which was planning to ask Congress for authority to build a second downtown subway line along Independence Avenue, SW., had concluded that the line would pay for itself. The first subway line would cost \$170 million, while the second would increase the downtown construction cost to \$203 million. However, abandoning plans for a subway spur to Columbia Heights would save \$55 million. The *Star* pointed out, "This would mean that with the new downtown subway, total construction costs would be only around \$41 million over previous estimates." [Levy, Claudia, "Subway, Freeway Routes Are Approved," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 10, 1967; "2 Agencies OK Subway For Rock Creek Park," *The Evening Star*, February 10, 1967; "NE Section of Freeway Approved by Planners," *The Evening Star*, February 9, 1967]

Engineer Commissioner Mathe, appearing on WWDC's "Report to the People," said that criticism of the absence of housing proposals for the new design of the North-Central Freeway was premature. "Our plans are not so far along as to warrant criticism." After Congress approved the air rights legislation, "We will be making plans for air rights and hopefully for housing." ["Officials Still Considering Building Housing Above N. Central Freeway," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 19, 1967]

Reconsidering Three Sisters

On March 8, NCPC released its draft of the Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan for the Nation's Capital. The report divided the plan among the city's sections. For the Central Employment Area, the plan called for:

The construction program for highways, transit, and parking facilities should be designed to relieve promptly the greater part of downtown from heavy vehicular traffic.

The construction of the subway system and the completion of the freeway system will do much to achieve this objective (in addition to improving overall accessibility to and from downtown). So should the designation and improvement of selected streets for downtown arterial use, together with the construction of underpasses at key locations.

Neither of these systems will realize its full potential as a diverter, however, unless corresponding attention is given to the systematic provision of parking facilities. Within the downtown area, major parking facilities should be located on sites having direct access to the freeway and arterial systems. Many of these sites may have to be acquired through public action. Publicly created parking facilities uptown and suburban transit stops also will have an important role to play in relieving downtown from heavy vehicular traffic.

For the Near North, the plan predicted that as a result of early subway construction, “the downtown renewal effort should also gather momentum during this period.” Public works projects included completion of the K Street tunnel and the Center Leg Freeways, the Florida Avenue boulevard, and the Connecticut Avenue subway line.

In Capital East Southwest:

The first rapid transit line through CAPITOL EAST should be constructed, and the second line to serve the employment concentration on South Capitol Street and in the weapons plant area should be programmed for early construction in the second stage.

The plan included completion of the East Leg Freeway.

For the Anacostia section, the plan anticipated construction of the rail rapid transit line serving the northeast section of the city, with a station at Benning Road. “An early extension of this line northeast along the Pennsylvania Railroad should be programmed.”

For Northeast, the plan included:

The rapid transit system elements already committed should be completed, with three stops in NORTHEAST—at Rhode Island Avenue, at Michigan Avenue and at Riggs Road

Approved elements of the freeway system should be completed, including the North Central Freeway and the section of Interstate Route 95 in the District.

In the period 1973-1986, “Further study, including the evaluation of the rapid transit system in operation, will be required before the need for additional improvements to the highway system can be firmly established.”

In North Central, the approved rail rapid transit system should be completed with an extension of the Columbia Heights line to be provided in the later stages of the plan.

Similarly, in the Northwest section, the subway should be extended first to Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness Street, then to Wisconsin and Western Avenues. As for the Georgetown waterfront, direct public involvement on a large scale was needed “to remove the blighting conditions and to develop part of the area for public open space and recreation.” Some of this work would have to be deferred because of pressing needs elsewhere. “Deferral of some phases of the program would also make it possible to plan the redevelopment of the waterfront in conjunction with the proposed tunneling of the Whitehurst Freeway in the latter part of the planning period.”

NCPC planned meetings with community groups to obtain their comments and suggestions. After the period of review, NCPC expected to adopt the plan in 1967. [“1986 Guide Divides District Into 7 Planning Sections,” *The Evening Star*, March 8, 1967]

On March 9, NCPC voted to accept “preliminary geometric design” for the North-Central Freeway between Rhode Island Avenue and Buchanan Street, NE. This action was “step three approval” in NCPC’s four-step process for freeways and bridges. (NCPC approved District highway projects in four stages: (1) the system, (2) geometrics, (3) final geometrics, and (4) ensure the project is built in accordance with final geometrics.)

However, NCPC engaged in a bitter debate over the Three Sisters Bridge before approving, 6 to 5, the location of the bridge. As approved, the bridge would include an approach in Virginia that extended about 550 feet into the Spout Run Parkway. In the District of Columbia, the bridge connected with the Potomac River Freeway at 31st Street, NW. The freeway would serve as a mile-long approach between Whitehurst Freeway and the bridge.

Members of NCPC were aware of the lawsuit that Arlington County had filed to block the bridge. In response to the suit, the Justice Department had said that any discussion of adverse impacts on county residents was premature because the location of the bridge was not known. Following NCPC’s vote, Edmund Campbell, the county’s attorney, said the action would “give us a new legal weapon” because the location in Virginia was now specified.

NCPC also received a complaint from Chairman McMillan of the House District Committee:

I feel that there should be a slow-down on some of the highway proposals and attention be centered on such parts as are needed beyond question in the short-range future.

I personally have held the opinion that enough money had been spent in the vicinity of the Whitehurst Freeway.

The prolonged debate about the bridge ended with a split between the six Federal and District officials and the five presidentially appointed members of NCPC. However, the vote itself became a subject of debate, as the *Post* reported:

Further argument over the Three Sisters Bridge broke out after the vote for approval when minority members questioned the right of Robert Horne, alternate member representing the National Park Service, to vote for the project. The park land in dispute is maintained by the National Park Service and debate yesterday indicated that Horne's right to vote may be taken up with the Interior Department.

Louchheim raised a point of order regarding Horne's vote. Although NCPC counsel Shear ruled that Horne was entitled to vote, Chairman Rowe overruled him. Flor reported that she did so "contending the Park Service previously had agreed to preserve Spout Run Park in Arlington. The approaches for the bridge would intrude upon the park land and Interstate Route 266 would have to be built through the park to reach the bridge."

Shear concluded that "the action was not final." He said that NCPC had decided to submit the question to Secretary Udall. NCPC would vote on the bridge again at its April meeting. However, Engineer Commissioner Mathe said that "as a practical matter," the District considered the vote final. [Levy, Claudia, "Site Approved for Three Sisters Span," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 10, 1967; Flor, Lee, "3 Sisters Bridge Site Voted After Bitter Fight," *The Evening Star*, March 9, 1967; Flor, Lee, "3 Sisters Site Not Final, Counsel Says," *The Evening Star*, March 10, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Interior Claims a Vote On Three Sisters Bridge," *The Evening Star*, May 5, 1967]

As reporters requested comment from the Interior Department about the dispute, Udall assistant Pozen was asked to reconcile the pro-bridge vote with the fact that Secretary Udall's Potomac Planning Task Force opposed the bridge. The task force had been appointed 2 years earlier following President Johnson's pledge to make the Potomac River "a model of scenic and recreation values for the entire country." Its report had not yet been published, but Von Eckardt reported that it called the Three Sisters Bridge "a major threat to present values" that should "somehow be averted." Officials should make "every effort" to prevent damage to the Potomac Palisades from the "ill-considered bridge with overbearing mazes of ramps and roads."

Pozen explained:

Support of the Three Sisters Bridge is part of the agreement between George B. Hartzog Jr., director of the National Park Service, and Rex M. Whitton, the former Federal Highway Administrator. It is part of the price we had to pay to get the East Potomac Freeway [sic] tunneled under the Tidal Basin.

He did not know if Secretary Udall would back Hartzog's agreement with Whitton or the task force's opposition. However, as Lee Flor reported, Secretary Udall had previously "insisted on staying out of disputes over the Three Sisters Bridge." He had delegated the issue to NPS.

The agreement had not been a handshake or secret deal. Flor pointed out that the agreement had been signed the previous May and made public. "The agreement has been cited by citizen groups suing the planning commission and District government." They argued that in view of the agreement, NPS should not vote on NCPC decisions on highway projects.

(The Potomac Planning Task Force report also stated, “The new highway that must replace the present hideously constructed Whitehurst Freeway should be either underground or so thoroughly assimilated in the surrounding urban fabric that it neither obtrudes from it nor conflicts with it.”) [Von Eckardt, Wolf, “Secret Bridge Pact Is Revealed,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 11, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Planners to Study 3 Sisters Wrangle,” *The Evening Star*, March 11, 1967]

Neither the *Star* nor *Post* agreed with NCPC’s decision to defer the vote. In view of NCPC’s call for a coherent freeway system in its draft Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan, a *Star* editorial indicated, the members “would normally be expected to support that essential element of their plan. The NCPC, however, almost never acts normally.” The minority, having lost their battle “to purge freeways from the plan,” aimed their “anti-freeway popguns this week at plans for one of the systems [sic] most crucial segments, the Three Sisters Bridge.” Although “the Rowe militia” was outvoted, they are still arguing the point. They probably would continue to do so until the freeways are built “or the planning commission gets a chairman whose views on urban transportation are not mired in the 19th Century.” The *Star* editors opted for the latter option.

The *Post* editorial began:

“The National Capital Planning Commission has cleared the way for work to begin on the Three Sisters Bridge across the Potomac next year . . .” began a story in this newspaper on August 6, 1961.

Five and a half years later, NCPC had voted to approve the location for the bridge. “The greatest menace to orderly development in Washington is the city’s inability to make up its mind.” If people thought that such delays would result in “unusually good design,” they need only look at the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. After years of debate, “nothing about it rises above sedate mediocrity.”

The uncertainty about the Three Sisters Bridge was delaying other decisions, such as the location of the Potomac River Freeway. “Meanwhile, of course, the badly needed [George Washington Memorial] parkway down the north bank of the Potomac comes to an abrupt end in a patch of mud, where it waits for the planners downstream to decide how to proceed.” [“Time for a Change,” *The Sunday Star*, March 12, 1967; “Over and Over,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, March 12, 1967]

Chairman Rowe spoke with Secretary Udall, who agreed with the Justice Department that NPS did not have a conflict of interest in voting on freeways. Flor wrote:

It also was reported that another compromise was brewing over the exact location of the bridge. Last year the Arlington County staff recommended that it be tunneled through the Potomac Palisades bluffs, so it would not ruin parkland, and this compromise may be studied more by the planning commission and Interior Department. [Flor, Lee, “Interior Claims a Vote On Three Sisters Bridge,” *The Evening Star*, April 5, 1967]

Three Sisters Tunnel

On March 28, Secretary Udall followed up on the discussion with Chairman Rowe by writing to Secretary Boyd about the Three Sisters Bridge controversy. Secretary Udall referred to the agreement of May 25, 1966, in which NPS accepted “a new Potomac crossing between Virginia and the District of Columbia at Spout Run.” Since then, “some preliminary studies have been made of a possible tunnel crossing of the Potomac at this location”:

It is my understanding, further, however, that these preliminary tunnel studies have not been explored to the point where meaningful costs (economic, social, esthetic, and cultural) and engineering feasibility can be weighed in comparison to similar costs and engineering feasibility involving a bridge crossing.

He believed that “the preliminary tunnel study should be completed to the point where such meaningful comparisons can be made.” In view of the funding made available to the District of Columbia for the project, he did not want to delay the highway program. “I believe that the additional study I suggest can be completed in not more than 60 days on the basis of the preliminary information already developed.”

Secretary Boyd forwarded the letter to Administrator Bridwell to prepare a reply for the Secretary’s signature.

At NCPC’s April 6 meeting, Chairman Rowe told the members about her meeting with Secretary Udall and his agreement to ask Secretary Boyd to study the tunnel option. In a prolonged debate, General Mathe complained that the bridge issue had already taken too long to resolve. “We have had our little dispute, and the chair went well beyond what she was supposed to do. Tunnel studies in the past have shown that a tunnel is not feasible.”

General Mathe considered the Three Sisters Bridge a “local problem” for local officials, including NCPC, to resolve, not the Interior or Transportation Departments. Louchheim replied, “What we are trying to do is protect the banks of the Potomac from the highways . . .” He then withdrew his objection to Horne’s vote on behalf of Hartzog the previous month. Hartzog then made a motion to reconsider the vote, thus erasing the 6 to 5 vote in support of the bridge.

NCPC decided to delay the vote until May 4, but stipulated that it wanted Secretary Boyd’s study by April 19. According to the *Star*, Chairman Rowe “was jubilant over the vote.”

Director Airis, saying his department had a great deal of information from studying past tunnel proposals, promised to work with Federal officials to speed the study. General Mathe said his staff would “give the study everything we’ve got.” [Severo, Richard, “NCPC Nullifies Three Sisters Vote; Tunnel Study Due,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 7, 1967; “Road Aides to Push River Tunnel Study,” *The Evening Star*, April 7, 1967]

Star editors considered the decision to study a tunnel alternative inevitable. This, after all, is a time-tested tactic of delay for the bridge opponents.” A similar study delayed the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge “for months before the bridge was finally unblocked.” The new study was due in only 2 weeks, but that was “not as short as it sounds”:

Studies of tunnel possibilities at this location were made earlier in the Three Sisters game, and rejected. Beyond that, a vast amount of data collected during the Roosevelt dispute concerning the river bed and tunnel construction techniques is readily available.

The editors predicted the tunnel would be rejected on the usual grounds – cost and engineering issues such as excessive grades on the Virginia side:

The major absurdity in this whole diversion, however, is that it seeks an alternative to a bridge design which is in no sense offensive, and which has won high praise from nearly everyone who has studied it, including officials of the National Park Service and the Fine Arts Commission. The effort is an obvious stall. And it is too bad that Secretary Udall permitted himself to be persuaded to go along with it. [“The Tunnel Caper,” *The Sunday Star*, May 9, 1967]

The *Post*'s editors were equally dismissive. NCPC, they wrote, “is rarely useful, but it is always amusing.” Having approved the Three Sisters Bridge in March after years of delay, NCPC, “appalled at its own bravery . . . hastily revoked its decision to await further study.” NCPC’s “comedy comes, of course, at a price.” Citizens may wonder why general planning “has fallen into contempt among those people in Washington who must make decisions” or why NCPC’s “plans and decisions very rarely have any visible effect upon the development of the city.” Citizens seeking an answer to these puzzles “have only to regard the whimsical history of the Three Sisters Non-Bridge.” [“More Farce,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 11, 1967]

The cost of delay became clearer to the public on April 10 when Chairman Natcher’s appropriations subcommittee released the transcript of its hearing a few weeks earlier. The transcript revealed that the cost of the District’s Interstate network had increased by nearly \$150 million (from \$489 million to \$639 million, with the District’s share being around \$60 million). Airis told reporters the increase was mainly a result of “the yearly escalation in land and construction costs.” NCPC decisionmaking was another factor resulting in costly design changes, as reflected in the May 1966 agreement for extensive tunneling that allowed the freeway program to move forward.

Airis told the subcommittee that the District could meet the slightly extended deadline for Interstate completion “provided, of course, that planning decisions continue to be made and that further cutbacks or freezing of program funds are not imposed.”

General Mathe was less optimistic:

It has . . . been my observation that we are not out of the woods yet on the program; that each decision made at the Planning Commission is almost a forced decision; and that we still have . . . many difficult decisions to obtain from the Planning Commission.

He added that NCPC “keeps going back to the controversy of freeways versus no freeways, and therefore each decision is made after we re-travel some of the same area over and over again.”

Chairman Natcher reiterated that on the Appropriations Committee “we have believed sincerely for a number of years that there is a place in our Capital City for the freeway system . . . along with a rapid transit system.” In view of the many positive steps taken on the District’s freeway program, Chairman Natcher was assured that the May 1966 agreement was holding firm, but he warned Airis:

Now, if at any time in the future, Mr. Airis, they attempt to proceed as they have done in the past, we will take the same action that we took last year, and I say that to you frankly . . . we are not going to let them do this to you. [Flor, Lee, “Natcher Warns District on Freeways, Subway,” *The Evening Star*, April 11, 1967; “D.C. Freeway Cost Estimate Is Increased by \$160 Million,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 11, 1967]

Despite the *Star* editorial’s comments about the reception the design had received, the Commission of Fine Arts had reviewed preliminary sketches for the Three Sisters Bridge in January and said it wanted an elegant single span. On April 19, the commission reviewed the District’s second design by Gerald I. Sawyer for what the *Star* described as “a gentle-arched strip, with an 800-foot span, and with four piers, two resting in the water and two on land.”

The Commission rejected the design as ugly. Chairman Walton said “it may be improper to have any bridge at all” if this was the best the engineers could propose. “This design is an aesthetic disaster and nothing but a bad version of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, which is bad enough.” Commission Member John Carl Warnecke said the design looked like “just another freeway anywhere in the country.” Commissioner Gordon Bunshaft told District officials the commission wanted “the greatest bridge ever built” for this scenic location. Such a bridge should be an arched concrete span, one that is “exciting and ingenious.”

When the engineers pointed out such factors as cost, loads, and flooding, the commissioners suggested that in view of public objections, if the District wanted to build the bridge, it may take more than engineering talent. [“Fine Arts Unit Rejects 3 Sisters Bridge Design,” *The Evening Star*, April 20, 1967; Von Eckardt, Wolf, “Engineers Told to Make 3 Sisters ‘The Greatest Bridge Ever Built,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 20, 1967]

Secretary Boyd sent letters on May 4 to Secretary Udall and Chairman Rowe before NCPC’s meeting on May 5. His department had worked with the District Highway Department to study four alternatives for a tunnel to replace the Three Sisters Bridge. The tunnel alternatives ranged in cost from \$176 million to \$214 million, compared to \$110 million for the bridge. His conclusion was that the tunnel was “a less desirable solution” than the bridge. However, he added that his conclusion was a response to “the narrow context of the question as presented to me.” In a broader context, he would “seek the cooperation of the Secretaries of the Interior and Housing and Urban Development in evaluating whether the proposed project is responsive to national and community goals for making this city a more desirable place to live”

His representative at the NCPC meeting, Assistant Secretary for Policy Development M. Cecil Mackey, emphasized that this answer was in response to the narrow question Secretary Boyd had been asked. The Secretary “did not intend to pass judgment on the question of bridge or no bridge.” He continued:

I think that it is probably safe to assume that that is a fair question that would go into the review of a request for a grant of federal money for a proposal of this sort.

Under the charge which we have, I don't think you can confine our review in such a way that we wouldn't get into that question. That is the intent of the Secretary's letter.

These comments were a surprise because NCPC members were operating on the assumption that the need for a crossing was no longer in question, whether individual members liked it or not.

After District highway officials explained the four tunnel alternatives, Chairman Rowe called a recess and invited commission members to her office for a meeting that excluded the press.

After NCPC resumed the public meeting, Director Hartzog offered a resolution asking Secretary Boyd to "complete at the earliest practicable date his review of the necessity for additional laneage in the interstate system now designated I-266." If additional laneage was needed, the resolution asked the Secretary to study "alternate locations and proposals for such laneage, including especially the up-grading of the Jefferson Davis Highway to interstate standards to accommodate this need."

The resolution included one concession for bridge supporters. If the Secretary concluded that additional laneage was needed and that "no feasible and prudent alternative" to the bridge existed in the vicinity of Three Sisters Islands, "the Commission approves the geometric design (stage 3) of the interstate route 266 Potomac River crossing . . . provided the District of Columbia connections between the bridge and the interstate east of Wisconsin Avenue are placed in cut and [cover] tunnel to be approved by the Commission."

Hartzog said that even if Secretary Boyd said the bridge was needed, NPS would not grant a construction permit for the Three Sisters Bridge unless the plan included tearing down the Whitehurst Freeway as called for in the resolution's reference to a cut-and-cover tunnel.

Louchheim, according to the *Post*, "was elated" by developments. He issued a statement saying he was satisfied that if Secretary Boyd conducts an objective study, he will conclude that the bridge is not needed. "We have great confidence in Secretary Boyd and his sincere concern for the social and aesthetic values in his consideration of highway projects." [Flor, Lee, "Three Sisters Bridge Wins Limited Planner Approval," *The Evening Star*, May 5, 1967; Severo, Richard, "3 Sisters Bridge Proposal Is Passed To Boyd for Study," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 6, 1967]

Representative Gude warned that key Members of Congress may be annoyed by NCPC's decision to again delay approval of the bridge. He was supportive of rail rapid transit and, as a State legislator, had helped establish the Washington Suburban Transit Commission that represented Montgomery and Prince George's Counties under the interstate compact. However, he told WWDC's "Report to the People, "Subways [alone] aren't the answer" to the area's transportation problems. "There have been 20 years of studies costing a million a year. It's time we got moving."

With the Capital Beltway luring growth away from downtown, he said, the new growth pattern resembled an attractive doughnut with the District as the empty hole in the middle. He referred to Chairman Natcher's effort to hold up District matching funds for NCTA, fearing that he might do so again following NCPC's decision. ["Gude Prods for Action On Three Sisters Span," *The Sunday Star*, April 9, 1967]

For *Star* editors, the situation was clear. NCPC had approved the bridge as part of the May 1966 compromise agreement. Since then, one of the participants, Administrator Whitton, had left the scene and the U.S. Department of Transportation and Secretary Boyd had arrived. "And this process of change apparently has aroused in the opponents of highways in Washington –

represented by the leadership of the National Capital Planning Commission – new hopes of returning the freeway program to a state of confusion." First, they asked Secretary Boyd to study whether a tunnel would be a better alternative than a bridge at Three Sisters Island. He concluded that a bridge was preferred:

And that should have ended the matter. Of course it didn't.

Instead, NCPC agreed in "a secret meeting" to approve the bridge only if Secretary Boyd, after further study, agreed additional lanes were needed, that no alternative to the bridge could meet that need, and other conditions were satisfied:

Ironically, the new transportation secretary had made it plain that he would like to stay out of local controversies, but that probably is a desire he cannot fully realize in the case of the Nation's Capital.

In the case of the Three Sisters Bridge, "he should have no difficulty extricating himself." All he had to do was ask for a briefing "on the countless studies and decisions affecting this project in the past. They clearly justify the need." ["Back to Confusion," *The Evening Star*, May 12, 1967]

"Feasible and Prudent"

NCPC's decision to include the phrase "feasible and prudent" in its May 5 resolution was not a random choice of words. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 prohibited the Secretary of Transportation from approving "any program or project which requires the use of any land from a public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge or historic site unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge or historic site resulting from such use."

The Three Sisters Bridge involved park land in Arlington County, recreational areas in the District, and the Georgetown waterfront, which the Department of the Interior had designated an historic landmark. Therefore, NCPC put its resolution in the context of Section 4(f).

On May 28, Lee Flor reported that BPR had approved the estimated cost of the Three Sisters Bridge for inclusion in the 1968 ICE. BPR approved the estimate "just as [NCPC] was balking at a clear-cut approval for the bridge, it was discovered yesterday."

Flor added that General Mathe had written to Secretary Boyd to point out that officials in the new department had studied the bridge many times:

Mathe asked Boyd to give the planning commission “early notification that Boyd’s agencies previously had studied the bridge question, always coming up with the conclusion that the bridge was needed.

There is a time to end planning, however, and to proceed with implementation. We are already overdue in this respect. [Flor, Lee, “Planners Balk Just as Span Clears Hurdle,” *The Sunday Star*, May 28, 1967]

As officials of the Department of Transportation, which had begun operations less than 2 months earlier, began considering the resolution, they concluded that the requested investigation involved broader questions than the need for the Three Sisters Bridge. Under Secretary Sitton, who had been the primary author of the 3C language in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, suggested putting the request in the context of the Washington area’s entire Interstate System network. In an internal summary, he and his assistant, Charles Carroll, explained that on the surface, the issue appeared to be narrow and limited to the Three Sisters Bridge, but “on closer examination, much broader questions concerning the traffic service features of Interstate expressway corridors in the Washington Metropolitan Region are evident”:

One such (and even greater) concern is the question of whether the planning process for transportation development in the Washington region has given appropriate consideration to the impact which the planned highway development program, involving financial commitments of over \$750 million during the next five years, will have upon the historical, cultural, social and economic characteristics of the Nation’s Capital. Without question, the transportation system profoundly influences the behavior patterns of an urban region and a city’s developing form and organization – more so probably than any other series of urban public policies and development programs.

On July 27, Secretary Boyd held a staff meeting on the issues. As for I-266 and the Three Sisters Bridge, staff recommended that the Secretary remove them from the Interstate System because the bridge had not been studied in the context of Section 4(f).

Beyond I-266, staff members had been impressed by the Arthur D. Little report that had concluded that the freeway network was based on insufficient data and questionable assumptions and forecasting techniques. They also were impressed by the House District Committee’s report in 1965 stating that “the projection and forecasts of future needs made by highway officials show trends contrary to actual experience and do not seem to justify some of the proposed program. Accordingly, a careful objective review and reappraisal is desirable.” (This quote is from Chairman McMillan’s report dated October 8, 1965, on the revenue bill, cited earlier.)

In addition to rejecting I-266, staff recommended that Secretary Boyd:

- Remove the designation I-70S from the District’s north central area along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks and re-route it along the north bank of the Potomac River as a

parkway between I-495 at the Cabin John Bridge and I-66 at the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge;

- Remove I-695 from the Interstate System between I-66 at the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and I-95 near the 14th Street Bridges;
- Retain I-66 as a connection from the Roosevelt Bridge to some point on I-95 between K and V Streets to the north, with the routing to result from studies underway by the District of Columbia; and
- Retain the remainder of the Interstate System in the District as designated.

Administrator Bridwell, who attended the staff meeting, strongly dissented in a memorandum to Secretary Boyd on August 3. He pointed out that “no official nor responsible unit of Government or organization has presented any evidence which cast doubt on the traffic need for Interstate Route 266.” During the meeting, he had taken the “strong position and recommendation that we go forward as diligently as possible to construct the entire Interstate System as designated in the metropolitan area.” The staff recommendations “did not take into account any analysis of traffic requirements and effect upon systems operation and ignored the several criteria which, as a matter of law or policy, the Department of Transportation requires every State to meet.”

He cited four provisions of Title 23 that the recommendations had not considered:

1. Section 134 of Title 23 which states that the Secretary shall not approve “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 in this section.”
2. Section 101(b) which states that it is the intent of Congress that “local needs, to the extent practicable, suitable, and feasible, shall be given equal consideration with the needs of interstate commerce.”
3. Section 103(d) which states that the routes of the Interstate System “shall be selected by joint action of the State highway departments of each State and the adjoining States, subject to the approval by the Secretary as provided in subsection (e) of this section.”
4. Section 109(b) which says that standards for the Interstate System “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” and that “the Secretary shall apply such standards uniformly throughout all the States.”

He said of the idea of shifting I-70S to a parkway along the north bank of the Potomac River:

Item 4 above has specific application to the decision to approve as a part of the Interstate System a parkway type highway from the outer belt to 26th Street along the north bank of the Potomac River. Any rational assignment of traffic to that corridor would require more than a four-lane facility under the 20 year statutory requirement and the decision to build it to parkway type standards such as have been applied to the portion already constructed by the Park Service does not satisfy the Interstate System standards which the law says shall be applied uniformly throughout all the States.

He pointed out that such a shift “does not look at other alternatives or other potential solutions.”

He was sympathetic to concerns about the cost of building the South Leg in a tunnel from the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge past the Lincoln Memorial and Tidal Basin to 14th Street:

However, we presently face and will continue to face similar kinds of problems in many urban areas as the Interstate System progresses towards completion. A decision to drop a segment of the System merely because it seems to have a high price tag does not take advantage of the potential of a systematic analysis or evaluation of the cost as compared with community (not highway user) benefits.

He also commented that the recommendation to leave the North Leg on the System “as some undefined connection between the 26th Street interchange and I-95 [because] this is under study and is subject to analysis is not consistent with the type and degree of analysis which went into the above described decisions.”

These staff recommendations did not “square with DOT’s stated policies that transportation will be considered as a total system and will be carefully analyzed both from a standpoint of total transportation requirements and in support of other public policy goals and objectives.” He had been trying to apply this concept in considering Interstate controversies in other cities, such as Boston, New Orleans, and San Francisco, each of which could “be used as pilot or demonstration projects.” If the staff recommendations were adopted, they would:

- Deprive Washington of application of the findings from successful pilots;
- Deny the city “needed highway facilities without offering any alternatives”;
- Set a precedent for opponents of urban freeways throughout the country “again without being able to offer any alternatives or any meaningful understanding of the consequences”; and
- Deny to Washington and other cities the opportunity to use the new freeways “as a catalyst for urban aesthetic, recreational, cultural, and other forms of social improvement.”

In an August 8 memorandum to Assistant Secretary Mackey, Deputy General Counsel R. Tenney Johnson dismissed the legal objections Bridwell had raised. The provisions Bridwell cited did not “demonstrate any illegality in those recommendations.” He emphasized that he was addressing only the legal provisions Bridwell had cited and was “not passing a legal judgment on the recommendations themselves.” He suggested:

The decisions of the Secretary recommended in the meeting of July 27 can be phrased in terms such as “I am prepared to approve . . .” and formal approval would be given only when conforming proposals are cleared with the local agencies and formally submitted. This would take care of any technical objections implicit in the sections of law cited by Lowell regarding criteria to be met before formal approval is given.

This internal debate took place behind closed doors. Neither outside officials nor the media was aware that the U.S. Department of Transportation was considering extensive changes to the area's Interstate System.

(The internal documents cited in this section are from "District of Columbia Highway Dispute," part of an unpublished *History of the DOT in the Lyndon B. Johnson Administration*, Volume 4, The compilation is in the U.S. Department of Transportation Library.)

District Reorganization

In 1966, President Johnson had supported home rule without making it a priority after the failure of the plan in 1965 despite the White House's vigorous efforts. Professor Tom Lewis cited the Washington Board of Trade's ruse in working to defeat the measure as one of the reasons:

"It was a bitter, bitter defeat," said John W. Hechinger, a prominent District businessman with a reputation for appointing and advancing blacks and women in his hardware and home improvement [stores]. Hechinger had worked [with] Johnson to secure the bill's passage. "Here was a man who had devoted so much of his energy to bringing people into the political system through civil rights legislation and the War on Poverty and yet he couldn't manage to bring the basic right of self-determination that all other Americans enjoyed to the nation's capital." [Lewis, pages 401-402]

The President could see the situation clearly. After all the efforts the White House had applied to securing the discharge petition in 1965, it, too, had failed to secure home rule for the city. He had to get around Chairman McMillan, who would continue to block home rule legislation as he had successfully done in years past. Now, in 1967, President Johnson decided on a different approach that Professor Lewis referred to as "a half measure," but one that Chairman McMillan might not be able to block.

On February 27, 1967, President Johnson issued a special message on the Nation's capital. He began, "Our goal for the Nation's Capital is a city of which all Americans can be proud." The city was the ninth largest in the country and "the center of the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country." The District's citizens "have all the problems – and are entitled to all the rights –

of the citizens of any large city in this country." These problems included "a rising crime rate, traffic congestion and parking shortages, decaying buildings and homes and inadequate health and education service." To help citizens meet those needs, "the District must have the most responsive and efficient government we are capable of providing."

He had submitted home rule legislation to the 89th Congress, he said. The Senate approved the bill, but the House did not, even though "a majority of its members clearly went on record in support of the principle of home rule" by signing the discharge petition.

He still believed that home rule was the best option, but improving the District government "need not await the passage of home rule legislation." For that reason, he planned to "shortly transmit to the Congress a reorganization proposal to strengthen and modernize the government of the

District of Columbia.” It would replace the current organization established nearly a century earlier:

The reorganization plan I propose would create a mayor-council form of government – the form which has been found most successful in the Nation’s 27 largest cities. Under the reorganization plan, the President, subject to Senate confirmation, would appoint from among District residents a single Commissioner as chief executive and a Council of nine Members.

The single Commissioner would serve at the pleasure of the President. Council members would serve two-year terms, five to be appointed one year and four the next. The staggered terms would insure continuity of experience on the Council.

The powers and responsibilities which the three-man Board of Commissioners presently have would be apportioned between the single Commissioner and the Council. The Commissioner would be assigned the executive functions now vested in the Board of Commissioners. Like most mayors, he would be given responsibility and authority to organize and manage the District Government, to administer its programs and to prepare its budget of revenues and expenses.

The Council would be responsible primarily for making local rules and regulations – the District’s city ordinances. This would include the quasi-legislative functions which are now performed by the Board of Commissioners, such as licensing rules, the issuance of police regulations and the establishment of rates for property taxation. It would also review and approve the Commissioner’s budget for submission to the President.

In addition, he recommended an amendment to the Constitution to give the District one Representative in the House “and such additional representation in the House and the Senate as the Congress may from time to time provide.” In the meantime, he recommended that Congress pass legislation giving the District a nonvoting delegate similar to the delegate representing Puerto Rico and the delegates who represented Alaska and Hawaii before they became States.

After discussing other local issues, President Johnson concluded that, “It will not be easy to achieve our goal for the Nation’s Capital – a city in which all Americans can take pride.” Nevertheless, “The task is difficult and success will take time. We must – and we will – succeed.”

Behind the scenes, the chief advocate for the reorganization would be Stephen J. Pollak, who had replaced Charles Horsky as White House Adviser for National Capital Affairs on January 31, 1967. Pollak, 38, was First Assistant in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice before President Johnson announced the appointment. In prior years, he had been an attorney with Covington and Burling (1956-1961), assistant to the Solicitor General (1961-1964), and legal counsel to the President’s Task Force on the War Against Poverty (1964) before moving to the Office of Economic Opportunity as deputy general counsel. He joined the Civil Rights Division in April 1965. He had been chairman of the Washington Planning and Housing Association.

Pollak and Horsky, who left the White House to return to Covington and Burling, were friends. They had worked together at the law firm, the planning association, and the American Civil Liberties Association. Horsky was “enthusiastic” about his replacement.

In announcing Pollak’s appointment, President Johnson said the adviser would “handle a wide range of national urban affairs, not just District matters.” Anonymous sources told reporters that Pollak was “under orders to do his work in the District’s behalf behind the scenes and not take as active a public role as did Horsky.” [Grigg, William, “Pollak Succeeds Horsky As Johnson D.C. Adviser,” *The Evening Star*, February 1, 1967; Milius, Peter, “U.S. Civil Rights Aide To Succeed Horsky,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 1, 1967]

ADA Chairman Donald Green was one of the critics of the White House reorganization idea. He wrote to the White House to suggest that the plan be made available to the public 6 weeks before it was sent to Congress. The gap would allow time for public hearings and comment that would allow the White House to revise the plan to reflect “practicable revisions brought to light during the hearings.”

Pollak rejected the idea, saying members of Congress would not want details of the plan to be made public before they had seen it. He said he’d be willing to discuss the plan during a meeting with an ADA delegation, but Green said, “we told him we did not want privileged information but wanted community involvement.”

Green wrote again to the White House to request further consideration of his idea for public involvement. Strong citizen support, he said, would be needed to move the plan through Congress. As for Pollak’s argument, Green said, “It is just another case of residents of Washington being left out when important decisions are made concerning their government.”

Despite ADA’s concerns, Tilford E. Dudley, chairman of the D.C. Democratic Committee, supported the plan. Public involvement would be nice, he said, but “we will let the White House call the shots” on how to secure approval.

David Carliner of the Washington Home Rule Committee said that Pollak had discussed the proposal with his group on an off-the-record basis. “We support it as a welcome step toward self-government. We can appreciate the President’s problems in sending it to Congress and we do not want to second guess him.” Carliner had joined with Bishop Williams of the Bible Way Church as co-chairmen of the new Committee to Support the President’s Reorganization Plan. [Carper, Elsie, “2 City Groups Back Johnson D.C. Plan,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 19, 1967]

By mid-May, the President was reportedly having second thoughts. He met with House and Senate District Committee members who questioned whether the city government needed reorganization, with some members saying the District ran well and lacked the corruption found in other cities. They suggested that 1967 was not the year for Congress to consider such a plan in view of the many other issues under review. Further, House District Committee members were upset that they would be bypassed; reorganization plans are handled by the Committee on Government Operations.

As for details, they asked if the single commissioner should be a member of the President's party and a District resident or the best nonpolitical city manager in the country. As for the makeup of the council, they asked if it should consist of six Democrats and three Republicans, as the President had suggested, or be nonpartisan – the best men or women, regardless of party.

Amid rumors that the President might postpone the reorganization plan, he said, "No decisions have been made one way or the other." He denied that the White House would drop the idea. "I don't know whether we could abandon something we hadn't launched." [Elder, Shirley, "D.C. Reorganization Stalled by Johnson," *The Evening Star*, May 19, 1967]

President Johnson transmitted Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1967 to Congress on June 1:

The plan I submit today is more than a matter of routine reorganization. Its vital purpose is to bring Twentieth Century government to the Capital of this Nation: to strengthen and modernize the government of the District of Columbia; to make it as efficient and effective as possible

Under the plan, subject to Senate confirmation, the President would appoint a single Commissioner as chief executive and a bipartisan Council of nine members. The Commissioner would serve a four-year term, corresponding to that of the President. Council members would serve three-year terms, with three members to be appointed each year. The staggered terms would insure continuity of experience on the Council

The Commissioner would be assigned the executive functions now vested in the Board of Commissioners. He would be given responsibility and authority to organize and manage the District government, to administer its programs and to prepare its budget. The plan also provides for an Assistant to the Commissioner to help him carry out these responsibilities.

The Council would be assigned the quasi-legislative functions now performed by the Board of Commissioners. The plan describes more than 430 functions which would be transferred to the Council. These include major responsibilities such as the approval of boundaries and plans for urban renewal, establishment of rules governing the licensing of professions, and setting of rates for property taxation. The Council would also be empowered to review and revise the Commissioner's budget before submission to the President.

Based on interactions with Members of Congress, the current commissioners, and others, the White House had modified the plan in four ways:

- First, the Commissioner could veto council actions that he disagrees with. The council could override a veto by a three-fourths vote of its members.
- Second, the reorganization plan extended the length of service for each council member to 3 years instead of 2. "The reduction in turnover and increase in experience would add strength to the Council."

- Third, salaries of the council members, including the chairman and vice chairman, would be increased “to reflect their important responsibilities.”
- Fourth, “the plan recognizes that the machinery of the District’s Government, no matter how modern, cannot realize its highest purpose unless it is infused with the most experienced, informed and able leadership.” The “best talents” must be found to fill the positions of Commissioner and assistant to the Commissioner. To balance the need for the best talent in the country and local involvement, the plan provided that, subject to Senate confirmation, “at least one of them be a resident of the District for three years prior to appointment.”

The plan would “provide improved management of the municipal responsibilities” and bring savings to District taxpayers even though the “overall costs will not be less because of the increasing scale and complexity of municipal government.” Savings “cannot be itemized at this time.” At the same time, the plan would not “in any way detract from the powers which the Congress exercises with respect to the District.”

The plan was “in no way a substitute for home rule . . . [which would] provide the District with a democratic government – of, by and for its citizens.” Home rule was “the truest course” and he would continue to work for that. In the meantime, “I recommend that the Congress allow the reorganization plan to become effective.”

The reorganization plan would go into effect in 60 days unless the House or Senate approved a resolution “disapproving” the plan by simple majority. The plan was not subject to change in committee or by amendment during debate on the House or Senate floor. The Committees on Government Operations in the House and Senate would have jurisdiction.

Ben A. Franklin, writing in *The New York Times*, put the plan in perspective. President Johnson “made his latest move against considerable odds in Congress, but also under mounting pressure to forestall municipal chaos in the capital”:

The risk of another, 1965-style House defeat on a District of Columbia plan was weighed against repeated warnings that the existing city government is near paralysis in the face of what may be a taxing summer of racial unrest. On the strength of compromises in the White House plan, which has some House opponents, the decision was finally made to submit the proposal.

The position of chief commissioner was “already being widely described as that of ‘mayor.’” The plan gave the “mayor” an “unusually strong veto power,” requiring a three-fourths vote of the council to override, compared with a two-thirds majority common “in American governmental practice.” In addition, the “mayor,” unlike members of the city council, did not have to be a prior District resident. (Either the commissioner or assistant commissioner, but not both, must have been a District resident for at least 3 years.) This difference would allow the President to recruit the best person for the job from around the country. “It also tended to placate segregationists’ fears of a local Negro ‘mayor,’ although the appointment of a Negro was not ruled out.” As for the council, Pollak “specifically declared that ‘race would be one of the

factors' in selecting the councilmen. No more than six would be of one political party. A majority, however, could be – and are expected here to be – Negroes.”

The possibility of civil unrest was another factor in the decision to proceed with the plan:

The reorganization device, if it works, also is expected to limit the effectiveness in Washington this summer of Stokely Carmichael, the militant Negro leader and former chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Mr. Carmichael said last month he would come here for a summer home rule campaign among Washington Negroes, an announcement that alarmed some community leaders, including some Negroes.

Southern opposition to home rule for Washington has been at least partly a reflection of segregationist views about a city whose population is 64 per cent Negro, and Southern members were aroused. One of their fears has been that a predominantly Negro city council would gain influence over the policy in this crime-ridden city.

The Senate, Franklin explained, was “not expected to take up the matter at all, thus extending their tacit approval.” [Franklin, Ben A., “Johnson Presses His Plan on District Home Rule,” *The New York Times*, June 4, 1967]

(On May 4, Carmichael had used a fundraising letter to announce that SNCC would be “conducting a major project in Washington, D.C., where almost a million people, the majority black, have long been denied a voice in government – in their own affairs.” As it turned out, however, he spent little, if any, time in Washington or fighting for home rule during the summer, with his focus on other issues around the country and the Vietnam War. The city did not experience the feared racial turmoil that Carmichael, who had begun using the term “Black Power” in June 1966, might have inspired that summer. [“Carmichael Confirms D.C. Is Target,” *The Evening Star*, May 5, 1967])

The House District Committee, the most vocal opponents of reorganization, planned a two-pronged attack. First, Representative Nelsen introduced legislation that was identical to the President’s plan but that, as legislation, would be referred to the District Committee, not the Government Operations Committee. As legislation, the bill also was subject to amendment, in contrast to the reorganization plan that could not be changed. The District Committee planned to hold hearings on its bill.

Second, the committee was considering a disapproval resolution. “They haven’t proved anything to me,” Chairman McMillan said. [Elder, Shirley, “House Unit Maps End Run On City’s Reorganization,” *The Sunday Star*, June 4, 1967; Elder, Shirley, “McMillan Hints Move To Kill Plan for D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, June 6, 1967; Elder, Shirley, “Hearings Will Be Held On Nelsen’s D.C. Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1967]

Congress Considers D.C. Reorganization

Pollak and Commissioner Tobriner conducted closed-door briefings for the District Committee on June 6 and 7, but they did not change minds. Chairman McMillan told reporters, “It seems to

me it makes a dictator out of the President, which may be all right as far as the District is concerned.” He concluded, “They haven’t convinced me it would save money or work any better.” He could not see how a commissioner and nine members of a city council could function better than the three current commissioners. He was pleased to introduce a resolution of disapproval if the District Committee members supported it. He realized the answers were not simple, but he believed the proposed system would be very “confusing.”

Other committee members were critical as well. Representative Nelsen complained that the plan was “the size of a summer-sale Sears Roebuck catalogue” but would require detailed study with an attorney and a copy of the D.C. Code. Representative Broyhill, a leading opponent of the plan, was concerned that the provision allowing the new commissioner to shift funds from one agency to another might rescind an act of Congress. He also thought the plan took power away from Congress. He added that he would introduce a resolution of disapproval if Chairman McMillan did not do so.

Representative Sam Steiger (R-Az.), serving his first term in the House, objected to Pollak’s unwillingness to commit to selecting Negroes for the council. He thought that to be “truly representative,” the council members should be at least three-fourths Negro and possibly the commissioner should be as well. “This is something no one wants to talk about,” he said, adding that Pollak would commit only to the selection of the best qualified people. [Elder, Shirley, “Hearings Will Be held On Nelsen’s D.C. Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1967; Carper, Elsie, “House Unit Sharply Criticizes Plan for D.C. Reorganization,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 7, 1967; Carper, Elsie, “Hill Weighs Opposition to Rule Plan,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 8, 1967]

Representative John Blatnik (D-Mn.), chairman of the reorganization subcommittee of the Government Operations Committee, opened hearings on June 13. Before the hearing, the chairman and three District commissioners met with the press. The commissioners supported the President’s plan. Tobriner said, “A strong single executive would be more geared to today’s municipal problems, and the council will give people more effective say in the city government.”

Chairman Blatnik responded to the District Committee’s concern that the plan could not be amended. Nothing, he said, was stopping the District Committee from offering legislation to amend and possibly approve the plan after it went into effect.

As events turned out, Chairman McMillan and Representative Broyhill introduced identical resolutions of disapproval on June 14 that were referred to the Government Operations subcommittee. Chairman McMillan said, “I fully realize there is some need for change in the District government,” adding, “I think the District Committee is the only group with authority to change the city government.” Representative Broyhill declared the White House plan “dead as a dodo.” He explained, “I object to the District Committee working under the gun” of the automatic approval in the absence of a House or Senate disapproval within 60 days.

Representative Chet Holifield (D-Ca.) a member of the Government Operations Committee, expected the committee to report out one of the resolutions but recommend the House turn it down. [Elder, Shirley, “2 in House Act to Kill Johnson’s D.C. Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 14,

1967; Carper, Elsie, "House Foes Push Vote on District Rule," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 15, 1967]

By July, the White House was "lobbying in earnest in the House" to secure clearance for the reorganization plan. As the *Post* reported:

Presidential aides have begun telephoning Congressmen, stressing that the plan has high White House priority, and trying hard, as one put it yesterday, "to get the civil rights and home rule implications out of this thing."

They were "pushing it almost exclusively in terms of governmental efficiency."

At this point, the White House head-counters indicated the vote on a resolution of disapproval would be close. [Milius, Peter, "White House Lobbying For New District Plan," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 3, 1967]

The House District Committee began hearings on the Nelsen bill on July 13, with subcommittee Chairman Abernethy of Mississippi in charge. Earlier, a committee clerk had denied a request from David Carliner to testify as co-chair of the Committee to Support the President's Reorganization Plan. The clerk, James Clark, explained that he could not comply because of the large number of witnesses already scheduled to address the panel. "We're not going to start off with Carliner. We want to hear from people with some expertise in local government."

The first witness was former Engineer Commissioner Lane (1954 to 1957), now retired. He said the first purpose of the District government was to protect Congress from "those who manipulate the city mob." At that, Carliner stood up to ask if he would be allowed to testify. The *Star* described what happened next:

He never got past: "Mr. Chairman . . ." Over and over, Abernethy pounded the gavel and shouted: "Will the gentleman take a seat?"

Finally, Abernethy, his voice cracking in anger, called for the police. Within minutes, three armed policemen arrived, but Carliner already was sitting down and the hearing proceeded stiffly under the eyes of police.

Chairman Abernethy later said he wanted "everyone to have the privilege of being heard," but added that he would not permit disturbances. Chairman McMillan later said that Carliner was on the list to be heard.

With police keeping an eye on Carliner, General Lane continued his testimony. The present governmental arrangements created a sanctuary where Congress could be "secure from the mob" because the Founding Fathers thought it important that the capital provide a "secure home for the legislature." The council, being more "responsive to the people," would be "hostile to Congress."

Chairman McMillan agreed. “The people seem to forget that the only reason Congress created this 10-mile square was to protect the federal government.” Congress must control the local government “or else we’ll be run out of the city as they were in Philadelphia.”

(Chairman McMillan was referring an incident in 1783 when the Continental Congress was meeting in what is now called Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Soldiers from the city barracks demanded that the Congress give them the pay owed for their service in the Revolutionary War. Under the Articles of Confederation, the Continental Congress had limited authority and could not raise revenue; it depended on voluntary contributions from the States. When Congress did not, and could not, provide the back pay, soldiers blocked the exits from the hall on June 20, only letting the members of Congress leave after Alexander Hamilton, a delegate to the Congress, persuaded them the Congress would meet later to address their concerns. On June 21, after State officials refused to protect the Continental Congress, the members fled to Princeton, New Jersey, and thereafter met in several cities, never returning to Philadelphia while the Articles of Confederation were in effect. During the Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia in 1787, the Founding Fathers had this incident in mind when they included creation of a Federal District, over which Congress would be able to exercise authority and assure its own security, in Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution.)

General Lane said the President’s plan was “without any redeeming feature whatsoever” and constituted “a reiteration of a management theory that has no validity in reality.” He considered the present city government “far superior to that in other major cities,” concluding that “there simply is no need for reorganization.”

Carl L. Shipley, chairman of the District Republican Committee, also opposed the plan. He said the current governmental structure was satisfactory. “The men who exercise the power are sometimes a little weak in the spine.”

Only two citizen representatives testified during the 3 days of hearings, Shipley and John Immer of the Federation of Citizens Association, both in opposition. Immer told the subcommittee that the plan was part of a plot to allow a few people to control the city government. He cited only one person as an example: David Carliner.

On July 26, Chairman McMillan and Representatives Abernethy, Nelsen, and Broyhill met to develop an alternative reorganization plan. The District Committee was split 14-11 against the plan, but opponents concluded they needed to develop a reasonable alternative if they wanted to convince the full House to approve the resolution of disapproval before Reorganization Plan No. 3 went into effect on August 11.

Shirley Elder described the draft plan:

Their draft calls for a city manager and election of school board members by wards. It retains the present three appointed commissions but directs the President to name one as head of the board, presumably eliminating the need for a White House adviser on national capital affairs.

Under the committee plan, District officials would be required to analyze the city government and report back to Congress with recommendations for changes.

It is inefficiency within the government, according to some committee members, that causes the city's problems. They charge that the President's plan fails to reach these root causes. On the contrary, they contend, the White House plan merely affects the superstructure, and is, therefore, useless

The city manager would "handle all administrative problems, with the three commissioners remaining as policy makers:

To avoid delays – one of the main complaints against the present board – the new president-commissioner would be able to act alone in cases of decision deadlocks.

When news of the draft came out, Carliner sent a telegram to Chairman McMillan:

You personally assured me that citizens of the District who favor the reorganization would be given an opportunity to testify before you took any action.

After citing the testimony of Shipley and Immer, he continued:

The 47 community organizations which support the plan are entitled to present their grievances regarding the commissioner form of government before your committee. Do you intend to keep your promise?

In what was seen as a direct threat to the President's plan, House Minority Leader Gerald R Ford (R-Mi.) announced that he supported the committee's plan as "a great improvement over the President's Reorganization Plan." He was certain that Republican leaders "will consider it favorably." The *Post* reported:

Ford's stand would appear to doom President Johnson's District-government reorganization plan. White House strategists have privately said many times they would need Republican votes to get the reorganization plan approved in the House, where Southern Democrats are expected to oppose it.

The *Star* added, "This set the stage for a GOP-Dixie Democratic alliance which has proved so effective this year in defeating other Johnson administration proposals." [Elder, Shirley, "House Unit Chiefs Draft Own D.C. Plan," *The Evening Star*, July 27, 1967; Elder, Shirley, "District Plan Climax Near," *The Evening Star*, July 28, 1967; Milius, Peter, "Ford Gives Support To Compromise Bill On Reorganization," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 28, 1967]

Chairman McMillan scheduled an additional hearing during which Carliner and Representative Clarence J. Brown, Jr. (R-Oh.) testified. Carliner told the panel, "Sitting here in this air-conditioned sanctuary, you may not be aware of the state of tension and crisis in the District." He referred to rumors of riots and efforts by civic leaders to maintain order. He also warned that if the committee takes its reorganization plan to the House floor, an effort would be made to substitute a home rule bill.

Representative Brown, a member of the Government Operations Committee, opposed the President's plan. He was cosponsor of an alternative plan calling for one elected and two appointed commissioners, an elected nonvoting delegate to the House, and a nonpartisan, elected 15-member school board. When Chairman Abernethy suggested retrocession ("Wouldn't it be wise if some consideration was given – and I mean this seriously – to ceding as much of this area as possible back to Maryland if Maryland would take it?"), Representative Brown said the idea "boggles my mind a little." He added that he had been trying to find something wrong with the current organization of city affairs but "the commissioners and others failed to give us this testimony" in hearings before the Government Operations Committee. [Elder, Shirley, "Carliner Disputes McMillan On Need for Johnson's Plan," *The Evening Star*, July 31, 1967]

With the August 11 deadline nearing, the Reorganization subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee considered a resolution that would push the date back. Members were concerned that if a vote took place in the House, the resolution of disapproval would be approved. The only way the extension could work was with White House support.

On August 1, the subcommittee discarded the delay plan because, as Representative John N. Erlenborn (R-Ill.) put it, "It didn't seem possible to get that delaying motion passed by the House and Senate in time." Based on the schedule, Congress had only 4 working days to defeat or delay the reorganization plan.

Instead, the subcommittee voted in support of the plan, 6 to 1, by voting against the resolution of disapproval. Representative Brown was the lone vote in support of the resolution. [Grigg, William, "House Unit Endorses President's D.C. Plan," *The Evening Star*, August 1, 1967]

On August 2, the House Government Operations Committee voted 26 to 4 to support the President's plan by defeating District Committee Chairman McMillan's resolution of disapproval. Among the surprises in the overwhelming vote, itself a surprise, was that Republicans voted 11 to 2 in favor of the plan, thus mitigating the fear that Republicans and southern Democrats would collaborate to defeat the proposal. Representative Holifield, who would be one of the floor managers, along with Representative Blatnik, for the White House plan, said the vote "makes me more optimistic than I was. Our chances have increased considerably. We got almost twice as many Republicans as I'd expected."

At the same time, the House District Committee was advancing the Nelsen bill as an alternative. Minority Leader Ford, who supported the Nelsen bill, met with civic leaders and clergy, including Carliner. According to Carliner, the Minority Leader said he was keeping an open mind. The strong Republican support in the committee prompted Ford to issue a statement saying, "I have not decided whether I will vote against the Administration plan." [Grigg, William, "House Committee Endorses D.C. Plan," *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1967; Milius, Peter, "Committee Approves LBJ District Rule Plan," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 3, 1967]

On August 4, Senator Morse, whose plan to attach the home rule bill as a rider to an education bill had faltered in 1966, announced his support for Reorganization Plan No. 3. Calling the present District government a "mish mash," he said the President's plan was a "giant stride

toward home rule.” He added, “Congress should walk with him toward a goal of home rule, rather than throw a bomb of political rejection into the President’s proposal for progress in the District of Columbia.”

The result of the pending House vote was still uncertain. Democratic leaders counting votes found that many Democrats had not made up their mind. Advocates for the plan were lobbying as hard as they could. One unnamed supporter said, “I’m not going to be optimistic or pessimistic. I’m just going to work like hell.”

The House Republican caucus, meeting on August 8, discussed the reorganization plan. Representative Nelsen gave an impassioned speech against the President’s proposal and in support of his bill, prompting the only applause during the session. Given the uncertain outcome, he requested that the caucus not take a position. The members agreed to avoid taking a collective position, leaving members free to vote as they wished.

Although many Republicans were expected to vote with Nelsen, Speaker McCormack was encouraged by the outcome of the Republican conference. He needed 40 Republican votes to defeat Chairman McMillan’s resolution of disapproval; now he thought he would get them. [Elder, Shirley, “Present D.C. Rule Scored by Morse, Backing President,” *The Evening Star*, August 5, 1967; Elder, Shirley, and Grigg, William, “D.C. Plan Gets Push as GOP Takes No Stand,” *The Evening Star*, August 8, 1967]

Ahead of the House’s August 9 vote, President Johnson met with House and Senate leaders on August 7. The following day, he sent a letter to Speaker Mansfield calling on the House to “strike the antiquated shackles from the government of the District of Columbia.” The nearly 100-year old commissioner system “has never worked well. No matter how able, diligent, or energetic the Commissioners, they have never been able to overcome the defects of the machinery they inherited.” Those defects may have been tolerable at the turn of the century, but “amidst the complexities of America’s fastest growing metropolitan area – they are inexcusable.” Today’s problems would “not yield to archaic and obsolete government installed as a temporary solution just after the Civil War.”

After summarizing the plan and citing the votes in the Government Operations Committee, he urged the House to follow the same bipartisan path:

In the hands of the House is the long awaited chance to replace a jerry-built government of the 1870’s with a new government for the new problems of the 1960’s.

I ask for bipartisan support of this reorganization plan. What is at stake is good local government in the Capital that belongs to all of us.

Time and opportunity will not wait. We just must not lose the chance we have now.

On August 9, the House took up the resolution of disapproval. The “normally taciturn” McMillan gave “an emotional speech” before the vote. “I should be the last person to stand in the well here trying to protect anything for the District of Columbia” after the smears and misrepresentations he had been subjected to during his 30 years on the District Committee and

his 20 as chairman. “The only reason I did not get off the committee was because I did not want the Washington Post to think they could run me off.”

His committee heard from all available District commissioners during hearings, but none pointed out any deficiencies. By contrast, the new government would be able to pass laws, “and if the Congress does not object, then they will go into effect.” He asked, “who is going to have the time here on Capitol Hill to keep up with all this council will be doing downtown when we can hardly keep up with the three Commissioners?”

He warned those who opposed his resolution, “This is your baby and if you want to vote for it, I am not going to lose any sleep about it.” He had done everything he could for the District and thought his committee had “done a wonderful job.” Every year, the House passed 20 or 25 bills from the District Committee that became trapped in the Senate District Committee. “Do you ever hear the press criticize that committee? No – they are too busy criticizing the House Committee on the District of Columbia all the time.”

He did not think President Johnson really favored Reorganization Plan No. 3 “so that he could more effectively handle the affairs of the District of Columbia.” If he thought the President supported the plan, Chairman McMillan said he would not oppose it:

But I do not think the President created this plan. I do not think the President has time to know anything much about it because any man who is serving as President, with two wars going on, I am certain he does not have the time to think much about the District of Columbia affairs

If a majority of the Congress thinks that the President should handle the affairs of the District of Columbia, I am willing to let him do it. [House Resolution 512—Disapproving Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1967, *Congressional Record-House*, August 9, 1967, pages 21941-21976]

(In citing two wars, Chairman McMillan was referring to the war in Vietnam and the outbreak of the Six-Days War on June 5, 1967, Israel and its Arab neighbors.)

The House voted 244 to 160 to defeat the resolution of disapproval. Although 50 Democrats, mostly from the South, voted for disapproval, 180 Democrats voted in support of Reorganization Plan No. 3. What the *Post* called “a surprisingly large number of Republicans (64) voted for the plan,” with 110, including Minority Leader Ford, favoring disapproval.

Following the vote, President Johnson issued a statement:

Today, after 93 years, the House of Representatives has voted to replace the rusted gears of government in the Nation’s Capital with an efficient city management.

It has said “yes” to good District Government – to responsive District Government.

In supporting this reorganization plan, the House has brought good news to every American – for the Nation’s Capital belongs to all of us.

I have begun an intensive search for a good executive to fill the new post of District Commissioner. High on the new Commissioner's agenda will be the task of stemming the District's spiraling crime rate.

With modern government and the best executive talent, the Nation's Capital can move forward into a new era of progress.

As President, and as a resident of the District for the past 36 years, I am proud of this moment and grateful for the action taken by the House of Representatives for the benefit of the citizens of the District and our country.

As Lee Flor wrote on August 11, the vote raised concerns among highway advocates. The District freeway system may be a casualty of the reorganization "as a result of major changes in personnel and procedures in several planning and housing agencies." The members of the City Council, who would have "proud powers over the \$700 million District freeway program," were to be "broadly representative of the District of Columbia community":

Because so many citizens organizations and other groups over the years have vigorously opposed the freeway program, many of the council members will be in a position to carry out this opposition and halt construction work.

The engineer commissioner carried out administrative duties for urban renewal, city planning, highways, and rapid transit. Now, the council would "carry out most of these responsibilities, passing on contracts and the day-to-day approvals which usually got only a few seconds consideration by the District Commissioners." For freeway advocates, Flor offered the worst possible analogy:

In effect, it is as if another National Capital Planning Commission had been created. With projects already being delayed while planners argue over details, another group may come along with different ideas on how programs should be carried out.

Planning and transportation officials told Flor that they "expected the new council probably would either kill or badly hinder the freeway building program."

The engineer commissioner, a member of NCPC, would be replaced by the District's new single commissioner who "may insist on more emphasis on social planning for housing and low-income housing and may not spend as much time backing up highway officials." As for the District Highway Department, which was trying to finish the \$700-million freeway network, it "has only freeway segments and plans to show so far":

The engineer commissioner has been the strongest force pushing for freeways, against almost completely unified opposition from citizens.

The highway projects reviewed and approved by the three District Commissioners normally were carefully worked out at the staff level, so the commissioners took the word of the Engineer Commissioner and passed projects. The new city council will have almost unlimited power over freeway and highway projects.

In effect, the basic decisionmaking responsibility for highways will be transferred from the executive branch, the commissioners, to the nine councilmen. [Flor, Lee, "D.C. Plan May Stall Freeways Program," *The Evening Star*, August 11, 1967]

Nevertheless, an editorial in the *Post* on August 10 said that congressional acceptance of the plan "has blazing significance as a symbol of hope and change." The city was "still far from self-government," but had "at least a somewhat improved possibility that this community will now be able to grapple with its immense and manifold programs." The vote was "wonderfully invigorating." The editorial's headline conveyed the feeling:

Hallelujah!

Addressing the North Central Freeway

Throughout 1967, changes were occurring that would have unpredictable impacts on the shape of transportation in Washington. A new U.S. Department of Transportation opened on April 1 amidst implications that it would take a less positive view than the Department of Commerce on urban freeways. President Johnson was planning changes in the District government that would not be clear until the fall.

In the meantime, the current city government continued to advance the city's freeway network within the existing framework.

Early in the year, District officials were still considering construction of replacement housing above the North-Central Freeway if Congress approved the District of Columbia air-rights legislation. On February 18, Engineer Commissioner Mathe said on WWDC's "Report to the People" that if the legislation passed, "We will be making plans for air rights and hopefully for housing." ["Officials Still Considering Building Housing Above N. Central Freeway," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 19, 1967]

The consultant firm of Tippetts, Abbett, McCarthy and Stratten submitted its report to the District on March 28 regarding the two-block pilot portion of the North-Central Freeway bounded by H, K, 2nd, and 3rd Streets, NW. The report called on the District to build high-rise apartments and town houses above the freeway, including 327 dwelling units in three ten-story apartment buildings and 18 three-story town houses. The housing would be grouped around a playfield, a children's recreation area, and an adults' landscaped recreation and sitting area.

The report emphasized that the air-rights proposal was feasible if the freeway were entirely depressed but complete decking would be needed to prevent fumes, noise, and dirt from interfering with a livable, healthful, and attractive residential area. Most families that would have to be displaced could be accommodated over the freeway, but 14 families would require larger living quarters than would be possible on the deck. The consultant estimated the proposal would cost \$14.8 million. [Hornig, Roberta, "Study Favors High-Rise Units Over Freeway," *The Evening Star*, March 28, 1967]

On April 23, Lee Flor reported on J. E. Greiner Company's latest study of the North-Central Freeway. In 1964, the consultant had recommended an eight-lane freeway with two reversible

lanes in the middle. Following public criticism, the District and Maryland had called for a new study. The new plan eliminated the reversible lanes to narrow the path of the freeway. It would “duck back and forth under the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad track to avoid homes, in part through tunnels.”

Flor compared the number of freeway lanes for I-70S and I-95 inside and outside the Capital Beltway:

Under the new plan the two freeways from suburban Maryland would have a total of 16 lanes outside the Capital Beltway, would be cut down to 12 lanes inside the Beltway, and then merge into eight lanes.

One advantage of the narrower route was that it would displace 775 fewer families than the earlier plan that would have displaced 720 families in the District and 590 in Maryland:

The consultant stated that displacement was not an insurmountable problem in Maryland, because families there, mostly white, generally have good incomes and own their homes. Therefore, if their homes were purchased, the families could easily buy others.

But within the District, protest groups charged, Negroes displaced by the freeway would have trouble buying new housing. Also, many Negro families do not have enough income to buy homes, the protest groups charged.

In 1964, Greiner had estimated that its design would cost \$128.2 million. The new reduced plan would cost \$196 million. Greiner attributed the increase partly to inflation, but also to the unique design involving tunnels. [Flor, Lee, “North Central Freeway Lanes Are Cut by Two,” *The Sunday Star*, April 23, 1967]

General Mathe saw air-rights construction as likely to find “more and more possibilities,” as he told a meeting at the National Gallery of Art on the schools and park section of NCPC’s Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan. “In my opinion, we could take a system of depressed freeways and put entire schools over it.” Sports arenas, as well as housing, were other options. All options were subject to congressional action on the District’s air-rights legislative proposal.

Only about 40 people showed up for NCPC’s presentation of its schools and parks ideas. They had a few questions “but no strenuous complaints,” according to the *Post*. [Blanchard, Eric, “Building Atop Roads Predicted,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 25, 1967]

By contrast, about 150 people were in the nurses’ auditorium of Catholic University for NCPC’s presentation on the city’s northeast quadrant within the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, New York Avenue, and the District line. According to Flor, NCPC “was urged last night to roll back its proposals . . . and make a greater effort to be responsive to the wishes of citizens.” After NCPC’s presentation, most questions concerned the North-Central Freeway. The Reverend James Scanlon of St. Anthony’s Roman Catholic Church accused NCPC of being hypocritical:

You’re asking us if we want a guardrail here, or some other minor detail there. The real gutsy question is whether the freeway should be built, whether it is justified.

He stated that thousands of displaced families would have little chance of finding suitable replacement housing. Referring to NCPC four-stage approval process, he said that the freeway was now “at stage three,” but should really be in stage one.

Other questioners claimed that NCPC had ignored the strong anti-freeway recommendations by Brookland area civic associations. Charles Conrad, NCPC’s planning director, disputed the claim that NCPC had ignored such recommendations. Five years ago, he said, the District had been planning three freeways through northern Washington that would have displaced thousands of families. Now, only one freeway remained in the plans and would displace only a few hundred homes. [Flor, Lee, “Freeway Gets Most Fire in Briefing on ’85,” *The Evening Star*, April 27, 1967]

On May 4, NCPC approved the first construction project on the 8-mile North-Central Freeway. The \$900,000 project involved reconstruction of the Taylor Street Bridge over the railroad tracks at the edge of Brookland. The bridge was to be widened to allow for passage of the freeway, as well as the railroad, under its span. Because the bridge also would be modified to handle rail rapid transit, NCTA would provide \$200,000 for the project, the first construction money for the area’s 25-mile system.

The vote to approve the project was 7 to 3, with Chairman Rowe, Vice Chairman Louchheim, and Dr. Edwards opposing the plan. Chairman Rowe argued that the city should hold a public hearing on the project before it proceeded. They disagreed because the project did not involve displacing residents or right-of-way problems.

During the meeting, Walther Prokosch of Tippetts, Abbett, McCarthy, and Stratton told NCPC that BPR, now part of FHWA in the new Department of Transportation, had agreed to pay for a \$2.9 million deck over the depressed section of the Center Leg in the residential area bounded by H, K, 2nd, and 3rd Streets, NW. Chairman Rowe asked General Mathe to study building the Center Leg in a tunnel instead of as a depressed segment to save current housing. He agreed to do so, but pointed out that the tunnel would have to be so deep that it would be impractical.

NCPC also approved preliminary sites and plans for the National Aquarium and Fisheries Center in East Potomac Park. The members decided not to condition approval of the aquarium on construction of a Ponte Vecchio-type channel bridge and construction of a parking garage below the 10th Street overlook at Maine Avenue. They did so after NPS Director Hartzog warned that conditioning the aquarium on those projects, both of which had been delayed, might prove “tantamount to saying no aquarium will be built.” [Hoagland, Jim, “Planners’ Approval of NW Bridge Clears the Way for 1st Freeway Link,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 5, 1967; Lewis, Robert J., “Aquarium Site Approved In East Potomac Park,” *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1967; Bernstein, Michael, “Housing Complex Seen Over Freeway,” *Washington News*, May 5, 1967]

On May 7, Lee Flor published an Interpretive Report in the *Star* looking back on recent developments involving the Three Sisters Bridge and the North-Central Freeway. The report began:

Last spring's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) agreement, which appeared to settle all District freeway disputes, apparently is falling apart at the seams.

NPS, which had been the key to the agreement, "apparently is balking at supporting freeway and bridge projects before the National Capital Planning Commission." As a result, the North-Central Freeway was "in deep trouble," as was the Three Sisters Bridge.

The Policy Advisory Committee agreement had allowed NCPC's six government officials to outvote its five citizen members "until two months ago" when a dispute arose over whether an NPS representative could vote for Director Hartzog in his absence:

The Park Service and the five NCPC members made a discreet agreement and voted solidly in April to force study of a tunnel for the Three Sisters Island crossing.

This was a tip-off that the PAC agreement was in trouble. But the real crisis came Friday when Mrs. James H. Rowe Jr., NCPC chairman, had the commission meet in her office, away from the press.

Flor reported on what he had learned about the meeting. General Mathe reminded NCPC of the Policy Advisory Committee agreement, "only to be told that it no longer was important because of the creation of the Department of Transportation on April 1, 1967." He reminded the other members that a key factor leading to the agreement had been Chairman Natcher's threat to withhold funds for rail rapid transit if the freeway network did not advance:

However, this year Natcher's Subcommittee has not been asked to vote for any subway construction money, so Natcher's influence reportedly was discounted at the NCPC executive session.

Out of that session came an NCPC resolution on the Three Sisters Island bridge which will be interpreted many ways. The resolution said the NCPC voted approval for geometric designs for the bridge, provided that the Department of Transportation reviewed the over-all traffic justification, review [sic] an alternate truck route highway, or, finally, say the bridge is needed.

NPS Director Hartzog, after the meeting, "made some remarks, in which he appeared to be apologizing for his participation in the PAC agreement last year." He explained that he now was fighting for restudy of the Jefferson Davis Highway as an alternate route for trucks, an option that would negate the need for the Three Sisters Bridge.

The bridge, therefore, would "once again . . . run the gauntlet of anti-highway forces, because the Transportation Department probably will have to ask the Interior Department and possibly NCPC itself for aid in the new studies." [Flor, Lee, "Split Perils Freeway Accord," Interpretive Report, *The Sunday Star*, May 7, 1967]

The cost of the new plan for the North-Central Freeway was raising concerns within FHWA. The agency's Division Office in the city had approved the District portion for right-of-way acquisition, but the Division Office in Maryland, based in Baltimore, was challenging the cost of

the State's segment. The office ordered a full review of the 3½-mile Maryland segment to determine if disrupting fewer people was worth the added \$22 million. Routing the freeway to minimize disruption in a densely populated area such as the District of Columbia could be justified, but FHWA questioned doing so in a loosely packed suburban area, especially one where residents would have much less trouble finding new homes than their counterparts in the city's African-American communities.

Maryland and District officials thought the Greiner plan had satisfied the goal of BPR/FHWA officials who spoke of weaving freeways into the urban fabric. According to Jack Eisen:

What especially bothers Federal road officials is the high cost per mile of each lane for a road so narrow that it almost certainly will not meet the needs for the corridor, the Washington area's heaviest generator of traffic.

For the four-lane section, this will average about \$5 million per lane per mile.

The cost is pushed up by the design dictated by hugging so close to the railroad tracks. It involves stone embankments, split-level sections and crossing of the B&O's two tracks on extra-long bridges because of the fact that the road and the rails are nearly parallel.

Maryland and District officials planned to meet with BPR Director Turner to reconcile differences in how its two field offices viewed the project. [Eisen, Jack, "U.S. Balks at 70S Plan Cost," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 5, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Talks Slated on Cutting Costs Of North Central Freeway," *The Evening Star*, May 8, 1967]

Reading of the dispute, the Save Takoma Park Committee made clear that it did not want the freeway, whatever the cost or location. Mrs. Philip Young, a committee spokeswoman, said members had "no interest in discussing the cost, route or design of facilities for which the need has never been justified." The money could better be spent on schools, housing, recreational facilities, the subway system, and other facilities that served real needs. She also objected to the smog from automobile exhaust that would affect the predominantly Negro area of the District. ["The Committee in Takoma Park Doesn't Want a Freeway—Period," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 10, 1967]

During a meeting with Montgomery County officials, Senator Tydings joined with Representative Gilbert Gude, a Republican State legislator from the county who had won election to the House in 1966, in denouncing BPR for its concerns about the cost of the North-Central Freeway. Senator Tydings said, "The Bureau of Public Roads is just all wet. The bureau has a habit of bulldozing and bullying cities all over the country." The concern about cost was "just another example of the bureau's short-sightedness." Representative Gude said, "They want to study, study, and study some more. It's time to stop studying and start building." They also rejected BPR's idea of an elevated freeway instead of one that hugged the railroad tracks. They pledged to continue working in Congress for the District's air-rights legislation. [Feuerzeig, Henry, "Officials Hit Roads Bureau," *The Evening Star*, May 27, 1967; "Montgomery Told It Should Oppose Elevated Freeway," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 27, 1967]

(The District commissioners had submitted air-rights legislation to Congress on July 12, 1966. Assistant Corporation Counsel for Legislation Robert F. Kneipp said the commissioners considered it “must” legislation. “Because of the housing crisis, the commissioners would like to see the legislation pass this session, if Congress can see its way to holding public hearings.” The *Star* added:

Kneipp said the proposal took nearly a year to draft because it had to be reviewed by a variety of agencies, including the Bureau of Public Roads, the Justice and Commerce Departments, the National Capital Planning Commission and the Fine Arts Commission.

The latest delay resulted from a review by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to make certain that the language of the legislation would permit full use of federal funds from a variety of recently passed legislation.

(Under the legislation, the first priority would be allowing construction of government buildings over the freeways, followed by low-income housing that would be built by the National Capital Housing Authority. The demonstration project General Duke had unveiled a few months earlier for low- and moderate-income housing over a two-block section of the Center Leg Freeway was an example of a project the District of Columbia Freeway Airspace Utilization Act would allow.

(The 89th Congress had not acted on the proposal, but the District was hoping to secure passage during the 90th Congress. [“Congress Gets D.C. Proposal On Air Rights,” *The Evening Star*, July 12, 1966])

The Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan

NCPC held a public briefing on the Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan on May 9 at MacFarland Junior High School at 4400 Iowa Street, NW., in the Petworth neighborhood. Although the housing and education sections of the plan received some discussion, freeways were the primary issue for the public. ECTC’s Sammie Abbott drew applause when he declared, “There’re asking our approval to bulldoze our own homes.” When NCPC presenters asked the 140 or so people in the crowd for a show of hands in support of the North-Central Freeway, only one person raised his hand. [“Citizens Assail Freeway At Briefing on ’85 Plan,” *The Evening Star*, May 10, 1967]

NCPC planned to hold a June 14 public hearing on the draft transportation section of the comprehensive plan at the State Department West Auditorium. The draft section had two elements: (1) highways and transit and (2) long distance, non-highway transportation (rail, water, and air). “Although these two elements have some important interrelationships (as in local transportation of air and rail passengers), they raise different issues and deserve separate treatment.”

In “the city of the future,” transportation would have to accommodate more people, more travel, and more city-suburban traffic. “It will be necessary not only to accommodate more physical movement, but to protect residential neighborhoods, local shopping districts, and institutions from the harmful effects of heavy through traffic.” Although the transportation system is “a shaper of urban development,” it also “requires sizable amounts of the city’s scarce land, and the

construction of freeways and rapid transit facilities may cause the destruction of some of the already inadequate supply of housing for low-income groups.” Further, these “large and usually very conspicuous facilities are prominent features in the cityscape.” As such they have powerful influences on the community:

Thus, the transportation plan must strive for economy in the use of land and minimal destruction of housing. The facilities should be as unobtrusive as possible and should be attractively designed.

The draft discussed the major transportation plans developed since World War II, including the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, the 1959 Mass Transportation Survey, and NCTA’s 1962 proposal for a rapid rail transit system. Each contained a different mix of transportation modes:

The current construction programs of the NCTA and the highway agencies represent still another combination of facilities. Although the rapid transit program is widely supported, the highway plans are the subject of debate. This debate is concerned not just with the location or design of highways, but with the quantity to be built.

In the past, transportation plans have proposed highways in sufficient quantity to carry all predicted traffic without congestion during the peak hours. This method produces proposals for highway systems larger than can or should be built in the District of Columbia. Construction of a highway system capable of carrying all peak-hour traffic without congestion would pre-empt too much land, destroy too many homes, produce too great a change in the overall character of the city, and would cost too much both in terms of initial investment and in the reduction of the city tax base.

The transportation system in the proposed Comprehensive Plan is therefore based on the assumption that construction of enough highways to carry all of the vehicles seeking to enter the highway system during the peak hour is neither feasible nor economical, and that the magnitude of the highway system will have to be determined by other criteria.

This does not imply an abandonment of the attempt to reduce congestion, or at least to minimize the ill effects of a shortage of peak-hour highway capacity. This is still a worthy objective, which should be pursued by reducing the amount of traffic on overloaded segments of the highway system, as well as by increasing the system’s capacity.

Because the highway system could not accommodate all peak-hour traffic, “a rapid transit system is essential to carry a large proportion of the daily movement along the most heavily traveled routes, and especially to carry workers into and out of downtown Washington.”

The plan identified three policies for freeways:

1. All new highway construction should be oriented to the service of specific land-use objectives. The north-south and east-west freeways through the city should serve the city and Region as a whole and should not be primarily peak-hour facilities for downtown traffic.

2. Design standards for freeways in the District should preserve urban amenity through the extensive use of tunnels, and through the use of design methods which will reduce operating speeds.
3. Management measures should be employed on freeways to prevent congestion due to overloading during peak hours, and to assure safe and efficient movement at all times of the day.

It described the segments that should comprise the Inner Loop, including the Southwest and Southeast Freeways as constructed. The South Leg should be tunneled under the Lincoln Memorial and Tidal basin. The Center Leg should be built in a tunnel under the National Mall and the proposed Labor Department building, “and perhaps under other structures north of the Mall.” The loop should include the West Leg as constructed and an East Leg from Barney Circle passing by D.C. Stadium, to the east of Spingarn High School, tunneled under Mount Olivet Road and elevated over New York Avenue and the adjacent railroad yards to connect with the North Central Freeway near Rhode Island Avenue. The plan also described the North Leg:

A North Leg in a tunnel under K Street between the Potomac River Freeway and the Center Leg. The K Street route must meet three conditions: (i) a detailed traffic analysis must support the use of the facility; (ii) the available right-of-way must permit construction of six traffic lanes to Interstate standards acceptable to the Bureau of Public Roads; and (iii) construction plans and procedures must permit the continued viability of its general utility.

Cross-river freeways “should” include a “Potomac River crossing near Three Sisters Island,” the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, the 14th Street Bridge complex, and “an additional river crossing below Anacostia-Bolling” to be added “later in the program.”

The plan listed additional radial freeways and parkways. The Palisades Parkway, generally following Canal Road, entered the District near the river bank to a junction with the Potomac River Freeway near Foxhall Road:

The Potomac River Freeway should be tunneled across the Georgetown Waterfront from as close as possible to Rock Creek to a point beyond Key Bridge. After passing across the bottom of the bluff at Georgetown University it would split, one branch joining the Palisades Parkway, the other crossing the Potomac River to join Interstate Route 66 at Spout Run.

The North-Central Freeway would enter the District as close as possible to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to an interchange with the East Leg. “The route from this interchange to the Center Leg of the Inner Loop should be carefully located and designed to create minimum displacement and provide maximum service to the community.”

The I-95/Northeast Freeway would enter the city near Eastern Avenue at Gallatin Street and proceed westerly to the North Central Freeway.

The radial freeways from the east should remain largely as at present (Baltimore-Washington Parkway, John Hanson Highway, and Kenilworth Expressway). At a later stage, the John Hanson Highway might be extended to New York Avenue. From the south and southeast, facilities included the existing Anacostia Freeway and Suitland Parkway.

The plan also listed freeways that should proceed to construction:

- a. Center Leg of Inner Loop from the Southwest Freeway to a connection with the K Street Freeway;
- b. South Leg of Inner Loop from the Lincoln Memorial to 14th Street with as much of the freeway in tunnel as is consistent with local service requirements;
- c. Southeast Freeway (including Interchange C) from Sixth Street to Barney Circle;
- d. K Street Freeway in tunnel from the West Leg to the Center Leg;
- e. Palisades Parkway connecting to a tunnel under the Georgetown Waterfront;
- f. Jefferson Davis Highway improvements as an alternative route for Interstate 66 traffic to reach downtown via the 14th Street bridges;
- g. An additional 14th Street Bridge replacing the old Highway Bridge;
- h. A river crossing to connect Interstate 66 in Virginia with the Potomac River Freeway on the District side;
- i. North Central Freeway from Silver Spring, Maryland, to a connection with the Center Leg at K Street;
- j. Northeast Freeway connecting Interstate 95 in Maryland with the North Central Freeway near Fort Totten; and
- k. East Leg of the Inner Loop from Barney Circle to an interchange with North Central Freeway near Rhode Island Avenue.

The draft also covered parking garages. “They should be located and designed so as to harmonize with the rest of the system.” All-day parking should be limited to employment needs, with spaces downtown or in suburban park-and-ride facilities “when allowance has been made for maximum use of mass transit.” In the downtown area, parking spaces should be distributed to ensure vehicles do not exceed the capacity of the arterial streets.

To accomplish these goals for parking, off-street parking “should be provided promptly for bus riders, some of it at the prospective sites of rail transit stations.” Further:

All parking space in the downtown area should be offstreet [sic] and at locations established as a matter of public policy. Parking space in the CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT AREA should be located in structures associated as closely as possible with freeways and arterial streets.

A public authority should manage and control the amount of parking spaces in downtown “to encourage an equilibrium between parking space, arterial street capacity, and highly utilized transit.” The plan did not envision an increase in the number of parking spaces by 1985, but added that “some redistribution of offstreet [sic] facilities” should occur. To illustrate the need for redistribution, the plan pointed out the CENTRAL EMPLOYMENT AREA had 65,000 parking spaces, with 50,000 of them in the area bounded by Constitution Avenue, 23rd Street,

Massachusetts Avenue, and 2d Street. “Management of such parking spaces should insure the availability of adequate parking for non-work trips and keep the amount of employee parking in balance with the availability and usage of transit service.” In addition, a program should be undertaken “to provide offstreet [sic] parking space in crowded residential areas.”

The draft plan offered policies for transit. The authorized rapid rail system should be built as rapidly as possible, with extensions added to provide efficient peak-hour transportation. The system should eventually have “six trunk lines feeding into a downtown loop,” with an extensive bus system feeding the rail lines.” Much of the transit discussion involved identifying needed rail lines, with the plan adding that stations “should be located at points suitable for intensive development and convenient to residential areas of high and medium density.”

Bus service should be improved promptly “on routes eventually to be served by rail transit and on other routes.” The plan added:

There should be feeder service to the rapid transit system, express service to downtown on freeways, and a network offering good local service. Traffic management on the streets and freeways should expedite the movement of buses. The minimum system should be extended to serve downtown shoppers and tourists visiting monuments and museums in the Central Area park system.

The District should have arterial streets and avenues, but they should be “specially designed and limited in number, to carry vehicles that do not use the freeway system.” Widening the arterials and avenues “should be minimal and should only be undertaken to serve specific land-use objectives.” Traffic should be managed “to minimize the intrusion of traffic on other residential streets.” In the long run, these arterials and avenues could be converted to local streets “when results of new management measures and new construction of both freeways and transit are felt.” [Notice of Public Hearing, National Capital Planning Commission, *The Sunday Star*, May 28, 1967]

When NCPC presented its plans for the north-central area at a public hearing at Theodore Roosevelt High School on June 6, citizens targeted the North-Central Freeway. Adolph Edward of the South Manor Park Citizens Association said the plan “proposes to tear down hundreds of homes and businesses, acres of parks and playgrounds for an unwanted freeway system.” He urged NCPC to reject the freeway. Hosea Taylor of the Brightwood Community Association said the freeway east of Georgia Avenue would demolish “some of the finest middle income homes in the District.” Joseph Hairston of Neighbors, Inc., called for fringe parking and rush hour buses to replace the freeway that was being “jammed down our throats.

Chairman Rowe said, “I feel as the citizens do. When the freeways are financed and the other proposals aren’t, it is tough.” [“North-Central Freeway Comes Under More Fire,” *The Evening Star*, June 6, 1967]

In anticipation of the June 14 hearing on the transportation element of the Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan at the State Department West Auditorium, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City sent a postcard to everyone on its mailing list to encourage attendance. The *Star*

reported that this committee's initiative reflected the view of many civic groups that "the hearing is their last chance to show massive public opposition to the freeways and bridges proposed by the planning commission's six-member majority." ["Attendance Urged At Public Hearing On Freeway Plan," *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1967]

About 500 people attended the hearing. As Lee Flor began his report on the hearing, "A hooting, unruly crowd of freeway opponents at a public hearing last night wound up jeering one of their staunchest allies—Mrs. James H. Rowe Jr." She had limited all speakers to 10 minutes, a restriction that did not sit well with Sammie Abbott. "This is planning by egg timer," he said at the start of his testimony. "I do not propose to be limited." He began criticizing public officials for not attending hearings, but Chairman Rowe pointed out that he was not sticking to the subject of the hearing:

When the 10-minute timer buzz sounded, Mrs. Rowe tried to get Abbott to leave the podium, reminding him about the rules.

"The rules are the rule of people tonight," Abbott replied.

Many in the crowd . . . applauded, with some voices crying out over the din, "Let him speak, let him speak."

After a further confrontation, Mrs. Rowe asked the crowd whether any other witnesses would relinquish part of their 10 minutes for Abbott. Several anti-freeway witnesses gave Abbott extra time.

Abbott's basic theme was a charge that previous transportation studies had been grossly incorrect in predicting heavy auto use of certain traffic corridors, so that traffic justification for highways was false. The theme has been followed numerous times at previous hearings.

Abbott got a huge ovation from a standing crowd, after getting a straw vote by asking freeway opponents to stand. About 400 persons stood.

When he finished, Chairman Rowe declared a recess but asserted that she would enforce the 10-minute rule when they returned.

After the recess, Marion Barry, Jr., said, "We should take our bodies and stand before those bulldozers . . . we should say 'Hell no, you ain't going to build any freeways in this town.'" Angela Rooney of the Brookland area citizens group "warned that Barry was not kidding."

Flor counted 11 anti-freeway witnesses and 8 pro-freeway witnesses before the hearing ended at 11:30 p.m. "A relatively new development at the hearing was the appearance of several citizens who said they did not represent any pressure group, organized lobby, or special interest group, and then testified in favor of freeways."

When Chairman Rowe urged the crowd to be polite to pro-freeway witnesses such as Robert F. Koch of Bethesda, they jeered. Koch “was heckled repeatedly by the crowd, which at one point tried to drown out his testimony by clapping and shouting”:

“If this is a democratic process – I would be permitted to speak,” Koch said.

“During the past few years, I and hundreds of thousands of persons have left the [transportation] arena to a few noisy individuals,” Koch said.

The result was the false impression that most people opposed the freeways. He said that the loud voices should not “ride roughshod over citizens” who supported the plans. (On later occasions, Koch would be identified as representing the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce.)

NCPC held a second night of hearings at the State Department West Auditorium with about 100 people, mostly anti-freeway, in attendance. The witnesses, however, were about equal; Flor counted 14 witnesses in support of the transportation plan and 13 opposed. “Many of the anti-freeway witnesses had testified on Wednesday, when a big noisy anti-freeway crowd staged several demonstrations to show their anger.”

Thomas P. Rooney of Catholic University was one of the anti-freeway speakers. Interstate freeways had “become instruments of racial and economic discrimination.” He stated that indifference to the impacts of the freeways had “more to do with the rioting and the bloodshed of the worsening ‘long hot summers’ than the lack of kiddie pools and recreation”:

Several anti-freeway witnesses said that residents of Tampa, Fla., had been throwing Molotov cocktails at motorists on interstate highways which ran through areas where riots were going on. They indicated that rioters here also might do the same.

Chairman Rowe assured the crowd that NCPC would carefully consider anti-freeway testimony. [Flor, Lee, “Freeway Foes Jeer an Ally,” *The Evening Star*, June 15, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Hot Hearings On Freeways For D.C. End,” *The Evening Star*, June 16, 1967]

Freeway Conflicts

While NCPC was working on its Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan, local officials continued to consider the area’s immediate freeway plans.

On June 21, the District Highway Department presented its plans for the South Leg to the Commission of Fine Arts. The commission objected to plans for a tunnel under the Lincoln Memorial’s Reflecting Pool and the placement of two 50-foot high ventilating shafts near the memorial. Chairman Walton said the plans would “leave a permanent scar on the single most important monument in this city.” The city planned to use the cut-and-cover method of building the tunnel, but the commission objected to that approach because the “cut” portion of the plan meant digging a trench that would displace some of the trees on the memorial grounds. “The trees are as important as the Memorial itself,” Walton told Deputy Director G. I. Sawyer. Walton urged use of the boring method to create the tunnel. Commission member Gordon Bunshaft suggested replacing the two ventilation chambers with a single globular structure of 35 feet or

fewer near the Tidal Basin. Sawyer promised to consider these ideas. [“Arts Unit Hits Tunnel At Lincoln Memorial,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 22, 1967]

At an Allied Civic Group banquet in Silver Spring, Governor Agnew said the conflict between State and Federal officials was causing “serious delays” on the North-Central Freeway:

Federal highway planners favor an economic route that would penetrate the existing neighborhoods and internal Takoma Park. The State Roads Commission, on the other hand, advocates a route following the railroad tracks which would neither disrupt the existing residential patterns nor contribute additional traffic congestion to Takoma Park. Obviously, communication is absolutely necessary and the mutual acceptance of a construction design policy is essential.

He said the roads commission also would intensively study I-70S to relieve the severe traffic congestion along the existing freeway in Montgomery County north of the Pooks Hill interchange with the Capital Beltway. [“Agnew Cites Conflict on Freeway Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 15, 1967]

On July 12, Chairman Wolff revealed that the commission was considering a toll expressway parallel to I-70S in Montgomery County to relieve congestion in the corridor. He referred to discussion of the idea in the spring. In April, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had included a parallel 19-mile expressway, 2 or 3 miles west of I-70S, in its proposed 12-year comprehensive plan. The plan also called for a second Outer Beltway, 5 to 10 miles beyond the Capital Beltway, from a crossing of the Potomac River at River Bend, continuing south of Rockville in Montgomery County past Bowie, Marlboro and Clinton in Prince George’s County. It would cross the Potomac River in Charles County south of Fort Washington.

The plan included a 28-mile Third Beltway, also called the Cross County Freeway, from Edward’s Ferry across the Potomac River linking Montgomery County and Loudoun County, Virginia, circling through Montgomery, Howard, Anne Arundel and Charles Counties before crossing the river into Virginia at the Prince William-Stafford County line. This beltway would be a “regional bypass” rather than a service road like the Capital Beltway. It was included in the plan “to show recognition of the value – at some future date – of a regional bypass route for the Washington metropolitan area.”

Members of the Montgomery County Council appeared to support the freeway parallel to I-70S, with one, William W. Greenhalgh, calling it “the most critical need in the County.” The members tentatively supported the Third Beltway, but saw it as a project for a distant future.

Civic groups questioned both projects. They argued that a rail rapid transit line parallel to I-70S would be a better choice. Mary P. Vinton of the Citizens Planning Association said traffic was “beginning to get very bad, but we have to decide what’s more expensive – rapid transit or an alternate route – and which would take longer to get. I would hate to see more highways projected before we get further than we have with rail transit.” William S. Green of the Planning

Association objected to the I-70S parallel freeway because “any time you build a superhighway, it’s a good excuse to build high density around it.”

The groups also objected to the Third Beltway because it would cut through land the county’s General Plan for the Year 2000 had reserved for green space and low-density development, and likely lead to intensive development instead. Green, for example, was concerned a Third Beltway would lead “to the complete amalgamation of Washington and Baltimore.” [Drosnin, Michael, “Plan Urges 70-S Bypass, 3d Beltway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 23, 1967; Hanrahan, John, “Parallel Road to Rt. 70-S, 3rd County Beltway Asked,” *The Sunday Star*, April 23, 1967; Levy, Claudia, “Council Likes New Road Plan, Citizens Object,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 27, 1967]

Wolff, during the State Roads Commission meeting in Baltimore on July 12, acknowledged that the State did not have money for the parallel expressway or several other needed freeways. Citing Chicago and New York City as metropolitan areas that found toll roads to be viable alternatives, he said the question was whether the Montgomery County facility would generate enough toll revenue to retire the bonds issued to pay for its construction. [Eisen, Jack, “Toll Road Considered To Relieve Jam on 70S,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 13, 1967]

On July 18, Representative Broyhill wrote to Secretary Boyd to object to the delay in building the Three Sisters Bridge. Representative Broyhill asked Secretary Boyd, while he reviewed the plan as requested by NCPC, to consider that the delay was holding up other projects. The projects included the Potomac River Freeway, Palisades Parkway, George Washington Memorial Parkway, I-66, and the Dulles Access Road. A decision on the bridge, Representative Broyhill told Secretary Boyd, was needed immediately to eliminate the roadblock to these other projects. [“Broyhill Raps Bridge Delay,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 18, 1967]

The District was advancing one of those projects, the Potomac River Freeway, by paying \$3.2 million to acquire the block that included an abandoned Capital Transit power plant on the Georgetown Waterfront. The block was between 32nd and K Streets and the present end of the freeway at 31st Street, NW. The power plant included 220-foot high smokestacks that, as Flor reported, “still dominate the waterfront.” District highway officials were debating how to remove the smokestacks because if they fell in the wrong direction, bricks would land on Whitehurst Freeway.

The city was appraising other needed properties between Whitehurst Freeway, 32nd Street, and Key Bridge, including the active Milton Hopfenmaier Company rendering plant at 3300 K Street, NW. For decades, Georgetown residents had complained about the plant “because of its odor.” The city wanted to acquire the property during the summer or fall, but had one problem. “The District has to prove an immediate need for possession, to get a business out of a building after it has condemned the site.” To do so, it had to demonstrate a need for the property that was contingent on construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. [Flor, Lee, “D.C. Moving on Georgetown Front,” *The Evening Star*, July 19, 1967]

(After negotiations, court challenges, and other delays, the District and company agreed on acquisition of the site in June 1971 for \$707,000. The company, which began operating at the site in 1873, closed on July 18, 1971.)

The route of the East Leg Freeway was under consideration as a result of a not-yet-released report by Lawrence Halprin, a San Francisco landscape architect. The Interior Department had hired Halprin at the White House's suggestion, as part of the President's beautification drive. He presented an interim version of the plan to Secretary Udall, NPS's Hartzog, Engineer Commissioner Mathe, and other officials at a meeting on July 21. Halprin suggested developing a major park and recreation area east of D.C. Stadium that would involve Kingman Island in Anacostia Park just north of the East Capitol Street Bridge. His plan would require moving the freeway farther from the river north of the stadium toward the National Arboretum. He recommended tunneling the freeway west of the stadium to minimize demolition of residences. ["Freeway East Leg Revision Urged to Develop Parkland," *The Sunday Star*, July 23, 1967]

On July 25, Wolff released a July 10 letter he had received from BPR Director Turner agreeing to a meeting to discuss the North-Central Freeway in Montgomery County. Maryland had requested the meeting 4 months earlier when BPR's District and Maryland offices provided different reactions to plans for the freeway, but BPR had refused. Turner's letter was in reply to Wolff's renewal of the request on June 12. Turner replied that when BPR completed internal discussions of the issue, he would invite Wolff and Airis to meet "for a full exploration of the proper next steps."

He added that BPR/FHWA now was part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, which is responsible for modal coordination. The North-Central Freeway involved a road, railroad, and rapid transit line. Therefore, it was "desirable that we attempt to achieve policy coordination within the Federal establishment before proceeding with further steps in the development of the design." ["Roads Chief Agrees To Set North Central Freeway Meeting," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 25, 1967]

During this period, Senator Tydings of the Senate District Committee was holding hearings on air-rights legislation. The Washington Urban League and residents who were to be displaced by the Center Leg Freeway testified in support. Arlene M. Neal, the league's director, said the question was not whether the community should approve or reject freeways. "Our need to use air space comes from a single fact: In the face of growing needs the supply of available central city land is shrinking." Two residents of the Center Leg Freeway area that the District had designated for the pilot air-rights housing testified in support as well. Peggy Lee Horseley said, "Unless air rights legislation is passed, our community will be wrecked by this freeway and the people scattered into already overcrowded housing."

Several freeway opponents attacked the bill. One was Robert Kennan, Jr., a Washington attorney who had replaced Peter Craig as chairman of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City's roads subcommittee. The legislation was "plastic surgery for the wounds inflicted by freeways" that District officials would use as "political anesthesia for building more freeways." Senator Tydings replied, "I think your argument is specious. I wonder if this blind opposition [isn't] cutting off your nose to spite your face." Kennan replied that air rights proposals were only a

ruse to silence critics. He recommended changing the bill to allow the District to use air rights only if granted by Congress on a project-by-project basis.

When Airis testified on July 27, he took the opportunity to dispute Kennan's "deliberate falseness" in claiming that the city was paying only lip service to the air rights idea so it could build more freeways. Airis pointed out that the city had rerouted freeways to reduce impacts on families; the current network would displace 2,600 families, compared with a 1960 estimate of 9,038. The city had used the air rights authority it already had more often than people realized, as the *Post* reported:

Among examples that he cited were the Connecticut Avenue tunnel under Dupont Circle, the Twelfth Street expressway beneath the Mall, the plan to build the new Labor Department building over the Center Leg and "a whole block" under the Southeast Freeway between Seventh and Eighth Street se. that can be developed commercially "for a supermarket or something similar."

In applying air-rights, the city's priorities were, in order: municipal purposes, low-income housing, Federal construction, privately developed low- or moderate-income housing, nonprofit corporations, and general business use. He listed 12 potential sites, beginning with the model block set aside for the Center Leg Freeway. Five of the sites would be suitable for housing, while others could be used for shops, light industry, parking garages, and school expansion. Unlike the model block, the city had not studied the other sites in detail, partly because routing was not yet final and the city was awaiting statutory authority. [Hoagland, Jim, "Housing on Sunken Freeways Debated," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 26, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Tydings, Kennan Tangle On 'Air-Rights' Housing," *The Evening Star*, July 25, 1967; "Road Chief Denies Stall On Freeway Air Space," *The Evening Star*, July 27, 1967; "Many Areas Listed For Using Space Atop Freeways Here," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 28, 1967]

General Mathe emphasized the importance of the air-rights bill during an informal conference by members of the House of Representatives from Virginia and Maryland. From Virginia were Representatives Broyhill and William L. Scott (R), who had practiced law in Fairfax before winning election to the House in 1966; he replaced Representative Smith, the former chairman of the Rules Committee, who had lost in the Democratic primary. Representatives Gude of Montgomery County and Hervey G. Machen (D), a former State legislator from Prince George's County who had won election in 1964, participated from Maryland.

When Representative Broyhill asked General Mathe what Congress could do for the District, the engineer commissioner replied that the District needed the air rights and parking authority bills. The use of air rights over freeways was vitally important, as was, for example, the ability to set aside land at L'Enfant Plaza for parking to match the crowds expected at the aquarium planned for East Potomac Park. He said, "It's improvident for a city this size not to have authority to do what needs to be done."

General Mathe also expressed frustration with NCPD's delaying actions. He recalled the Policy Advisory Committee's agreement in May 1966 that resolved the freeway disputes. "But we haven't gotten any action out of the planning commission – that's where the delays come from."

The latest delaying tactic was to have decisions “pushed upward” to the new Department of Transportation, as had happened with NCPC’s request to Secretary Boyd for a decision on the Three Sisters Bridge. He also cited the Potomac River Freeway tunnel under the Georgetown waterfront and the Palisades Parkway as examples of projects stalled by NCPC’s procedures.

Representative Broyhill replied, “We’ll do that [approve the two bills] and I’m going to propose we have some members from the suburbs [on NCPC] – this may prevent some of these delays.”

General Mathe endorsed legislation to allow WMATA to join NCPC. A few days earlier, the White House had cleared a bill introduced by Senator Bible to add WMATA representation to NCPC when NCTA went out of business on September 30, 1967.

The director of engineering for the Virginia Highway Department, A. K. Hunsberger, provided the good news that plans were moving forward to untangle the “Mixing Bowl” where I-95 and Capital Beltway traffic mixed in a confusing set of interchange ramps. Final design of the revised interchange would be completed within 10 months and construction would take 18 to 24 months. Motorists would enjoy the results within 3 years.

In contrast to Hunsberger’s good news, Wolff reported that right-of-way costs were increasing for the proposed Outer Beltway. The State Roads Commission had paid \$2.2 million thus far for land needed to preserve the corridor and expected the remaining protective acquisitions to cost \$8 million. “We’ve very simply taken the position that we won’t do anything until we lay this before the legislature,” he said. He added that he was not pushing BPR for a quick decision on the North-Central Freeway. [Flor, Lee, “Broyhill Urges Voice For Suburbs on NCPC,” *The Evening Star*, August 8, 1967; “Planners Shirk Roads Duty, Mathe Says,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 8, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Subway Builders to Get Seat on Planning Board,” *The Sunday Star*, August 6, 1967]

In a meeting with the Montgomery County officials, Wolff said right-of-way costs for the Outer Beltway were 1,000 percent above estimates. He had ordered a halt to acquisition because the money was coming from the construction budget. He was not certain when he would allow acquisition to resume:

Wolff . . . indicated there was little likelihood of immediate improvement in the financial condition of the over-all road program.

Costs for the six-year program from 1965 through 1970 are running about 60 percent above estimates throughout the state, he said, while in Montgomery they are 73 percent above. The approved program for Montgomery was estimated at \$29.5 million, but revised estimates put the total at \$51 million, Wolff said.

The State had expended all but \$6 million of the original estimate; the county would have to make up the difference if it wanted the work to continue as planned. (Costs in Prince George’s County had increased from an estimated \$25 million to \$36 million.)

According to Joseph C. Kordella, the county’s public works director, about 70 percent of the right-of-way for the Outer Beltway had been acquired. He said the remaining 30 percent,

between Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike, would be extremely expensive. [Feuerzeig, Henry, "Costs Halt Buying For Outer Beltway," *The Evening Star*, August 12, 1967]

Secretary Boyd's Perspective

On January 1, 1967, President Johnson announced that he had accepted Rex Whitton's resignation as Federal Highway Administrator. His acceptance letter told the outgoing Administrator, "the American highway system is unequaled in the world and your share in the credit for it is large."

Whitton told a reporter, "The job has been rewarding, exciting and challenging, and only occasionally depressing. But now at 68, I want to get out while I am still winning—or at least I think I am still winning." He had bought a home in Independence, Missouri, at 4320 Montclair Avenue, not far from the office where he would begin his new position with the consultant firm of Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendof. He had recently tested his commute, which took only 16 minutes in an off-peak hour.

When he had taken office in 1961, Interstate construction was under attack. Funding from the Highway Trust Fund was inadequate to complete the network on schedule. Allegations of corruption in the right-of-way and construction phases were undermining public and congressional confidence in the program. And the attacks on segments in cities were leading to calls for a moratorium on the urban Interstates. A penny added to the gas tax helped with the funding problem. He established an investigative unit to look into the allegations and worked with a congressional committee set up for the same purpose.

The 3C planning process, which went into effect in 1965, helped with urban issues, but did not solve them. The urban Interstate routes had been designated a decade earlier, for the most part, when their general alignment was set. Many of the problems that highway officials in the District of Columbia were experiencing were universal. Every big city was battling opposition, often with officials suggesting tunneling and air rights as a way to reduce impacts. Finding answers had not been easy. Whitton, like many road builders, initially thought the answer was public relations to tell people how much the completed urban freeway system in their city would benefit them.

By the time he left office at the end of 1966, he had helped pull BPR and the State highway agencies toward the new environmental movement. Changes in the urban freeway plans were needed, not just explanations. In his dealings with NCPC, NPS, and officials in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, he had a direct role in trying to get freeways off the drawing board and onto the ground, but he had tried to resolve similar disputes in cities around the country.

As Whitton left his Federal post, he predicted that greater coordination among Federal, State, and local officials would be needed to complete the urban network. "I don't see an end to highway building. People like to drive their automobiles. They like the freedom and independence of movement." Going forward, "we're in a state of humanizing highways." By this, Whitton meant that the highway builder's responsibility was not only to design roads and lay pavement but to

consider the impacts on people, parks, fish and wildlife, historic sites and the myriad factors which make life so complex.

Transportation was vital to any city, he said, and could not be separated from a city's future. "Just as urban development will determine the demands on the efficiency of highway facilities, the planning and location of such facilities will shape urban development and affect the lives of generations of urban dwellers."

Highway officials had to accept that "there is little usable space left in most of our cities." Using that space efficiently was the key:

As freeways move close to or through the downtown areas of the larger cities, they take land which till the day the demolition crews move in has some other vital use as part of a city's life.

It doesn't matter that the houses are small and mean, the people crowded, the industries unattractive. Neither does it matter that the highway will bring stability and renaissance to a tired old area. As the right-of-way is cleared, the highway is a disruptive force on community life. Ironically, the older and more crowded the neighborhood, the more it warranted demolition or renewal, the more disruptive is the new highway.

He said that joint development, a form of air rights, responded to this demand:

A city could acquire entire blocks or wider areas on the route of a planned freeway. The highway department would need only a permanent three-dimensional easement – an air tunnel for the freeway. The community would then have available a valuable assembly of land for a fraction of the cost of acquiring it in separate steps.

For example, the typical rowhouse or tenement housing of blighted suburban areas could be replaced, under a joint development program, with an equal number of comparable-cost housing units on one-third the land area with modern buildings. The remaining land could be used for parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, schools or public and private buildings.

[Brandt, Raymond P., "Whitton's Views on Road Issues," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 18, 1966; Coyne, Joseph R., "Whitton Foresees New Era in Roads," *St. Louis Leader-Press*, January 1, 1967; Cauley, John R., "Whitton Happy to End Career," *Kansas City Star*, January 2, 1967; "Rex Whitton To Firm Here," *Kansas City Star*, January 6, 1967]

As the old road builder returned to Missouri, the new Department of Transportation was taking shape in Washington.

Secretary Boyd, in a presentation on February 13, 1967, to the National Press Club in Washington, said the Department's number one problem was urban congestion. "There is obviously a limit to the concentration of people that can be put in any one area." As demands of population grew "by several orders of magnitude" in coming decades, citizens were "going to have to suffer some constraints on their personal freedom of action." The problem could not be

solved within the confines of the city. He predicted a proliferation of “new towns” to disperse the urban population. [Reddig, William, Jr., “‘New Towns’ Seen As Relief Need For Urban Jams,” *The Evening Star*, February 14, 1967; Porter, Frank C., “Further Restraints Seen As Transit Needs Grow,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 14, 1967]

During an April appearance in Richmond, Virginia, he said, “Your situation is like that all over the country”:

The pure economics of expressway building force these things through the areas of lowest right-of-way cost, so it is usually the low-income citizens who suffer.

Right now we are studying and using entirely new concepts in dealing with urban highway rights-of-way. Joint land use – that’s the answer. You put the roads in, but use the air rights and right-of-way excess for community improvements.

Before a highway is built at all, you build an apartment complex for the people you are displacing. You leapfrog from the highway route, alleviating the social problems before construction of the roadway begins.

He did not see an end to the automobile. “American society is dependent on the pneumatic wheel.” Rail rapid transit could help solve urban traffic problems in larger cities, but could not provide the mobility Americans had come to expect. Bus transit on reversible lanes during peak periods would, he thought, would contribute to the solution. [Sauder, Bill, “U.S. Relocation Problems Cited,” *Richmond News Leader*, April 26, 1967]

On April 28, he announced creation of an Office of Traffic Operations in BPR to oversee two major programs. It would administer the new Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety (TOPICS) and the 3-year old Safety Spot Improvement Program. The office also would administer safety standards issued by the National Highway Safety Bureau, promote the use of uniform traffic control devices and other traffic engineering technology, help compile and analyze traffic and crash data, and encourage cooperation between State and local traffic engineers.

The goal of TOPICS was to increase the capacity of Federal-aid primary roads in areas of 5,000 population or more by employing techniques such as channelization of intersections, construction of grade separations to relieve bottlenecks, installation of electronic traffic controls, and other techniques that did not require major disruption.

The Safety Spot Improvement Program focused on remedying high-crash locations on the Federal-aid primary and secondary highway systems. In the 3 years since the program had begun, States had programmed 2,424 projects correcting high-hazard locations at a total cost of \$430 million.

Secretary Boyd said:

The establishment of the Office of Traffic Operations reflects a broadening of the Federal interest in improving our highway transportation system. The Federal Government has

for many years assisted the states in construction and major improvements of our principal roads and streets. But there has been a growing recognition that more must be done to make our existing highway network safer and more efficient. This need is especially apparent in our rapidly expanding urban areas, where traffic congestion has become an acute problem. [“DOT Office Attacks Problem Of Urban Highway Traffic,” *Transport Topics*, May 1, 1967; “Transport Secretary Announces New Traffic Operations Office,” News Release, Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation, April 28, 1967]

In a speech in Miami, he said that freeways that slice mercilessly through neighborhoods hurt cities even if they improved traffic flow. The *Miami Herald* reported:

Present federal standards route expressways based primarily on safety and economy. It is time, Boyd said, that highway planners start caring about the neighborhoods they disrupt, the people they leave without housing and the aesthetic and cultural aspects which they destroy with the new expressways.

“They largely ignore the environmental factors that can – in the long run – prove far more important to the future of a city,” Boyd said. “As a result, we all too often tend to select the route that will give us the straightest and safest possible line at the lowest possible cost. We must begin to take a far more comprehensive approach.” [Reno, Robert, “Let’s ‘Humanize’ X-ways—Boyd,” *Miami Herald*, June 4, 1967]

Appearing on ABC television network’s Sunday morning interview program, “Issues and Answers,” on July 9, he was asked, “What is your major problem, our major problem in transportation and what do you plan to do about it?” He replied:

It’s urban congestion. No question about that. We’re an urban society now and a great society and we have great problems. So the department of Transportation is going to work on an integrated basis to provide the kinds of transportation . . . a balanced system of transportation within, to and through the cities of our country.

He was asked if Highway Trust Fund revenue should be diverted, as many suggested, to rail rapid transit after the Interstate System is completed:

This is a sort of a straw-man argument which the highway community has thrown up out of their normal fears that everybody is trying to “get into our money.” It’s one of those fruitless things which makes life miserable for everybody and doesn’t have any substance to it.

My own feeling is that with the increase in the number of motor vehicles in this country, we’ve got to continue building and rebuilding our highway system at a rate which is going to take more money than is in the Highway Trust Fund now.

He added that, “there has got to be provision for mass transit in our larger cities.” [“Boyd Calls Anti-Diversion Idea ‘Straw Man Type of Argument,’” *Transport Topics*, July 10, 1967]

In September, he told the Transportation Task Force of California that the Department was going to revise procedures for obtaining Federal approval of highway plans. “We intend to require in the future that state highway departments get the views of all interested departments in city, state, and federal governments before highway routings are submitted to the Bureau of Public Roads for approval.” The routings must reflect the will of the public. The new procedures would recognize that “the best judges of routes and designs are the people who will have to live with them”:

If there are objections to a proposed route, we will want to know what they are, in detail, and we will want a well-documented case from the highway department when it believes a route must be approved despite the objections.

The procedures would call for two public hearings:

The first hearing would concern itself with the broad highway corridor. The second would involve the specific highway alignment within that corridor. The two-hearing procedure will permit objections to a route to be voiced before costly commitments are made – while change is still practical.

The goal was to settle the controversies before they reach Washington. This could be done if “route selections reflect local desires and are consistent with local goals and objectives.”

He would take one additional step on disputed routes. “I will ask the governor of the state in which the conflict exists to become personally involved in the case.”

In the end, the goal was “an effective, balanced and safe system of transportation.” [“Boyd Bares New Road Route Procedures,” *Transport Topics*, September 11, 1967]

On September 20, Secretary Boyd addressed the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. He began:

A few years ago, it was the fashion to think in terms of a day when every commuter would own a helicopter and our traffic problems would vanish. You don’t hear that much anymore, but the period left some lasting impressions

We have outgrown the single-family helicopter phase, but I am afraid too many people have gone on searching for other quick and easy solutions And the first thing you know, there you are – like Walter Mitty [James Thurber’s mild-mannered character who daydreams heroic adventures] – looking down at a drawing board which has the complete plans for a system that will wipe out traffic jams and – in its spare time – create the parks we forgot to make room for and blow away the smog.

But I am afraid that sort of wishful thinking just makes an already enormously difficult job even harder to do.

Unfortunately, all of the work that must be done to improve transportation in America’s cities must be done the hard way. And anything that encourages us to grasp at the first

straw that goes by with wheels on it will just make us more impatient with a job that already requires more patience.

In “a handful of metropolitan areas, new or expanded rail rapid transit systems can offset serious congestion, particularly where highways cannot handle peak-hour traffic. But for the majority of American cities and towns, rail mass transit is not yet economically feasible.” A balance would be ideal, but “for now, the highway must be the basic tool for most cities.” Accepting that premise does not mean we are “forced to commit ourselves to our present methods of using it.” Similarly, we were not “by any means committed to the methods we have used in the past for choosing the routes over which we build the highways.”

“Given the present state of our research, economy and technology, highways are in the cities not only to stay but to spread.” The highway debate had “stirred some powerful emotions and strong language.” One faction believed that “all highway engineers should be ridden out of town on a rail – a monorail, if one is available.” Highway engineers “insist – and rightly – that they gave us – to the extent that we made our wishes explicit – what we asked for: An efficient highway system to serve travelers and commerce at the lowest cost.” They could not be accused of failing to follow a metropolitan plan “because we seldom – if ever – gave them one to work from”:

But the time has come to change the order, to include social values which cannot be measured by any standard economic formula in the design of our future urban highways.

He discussed the new two-hearing procedures the Department of Transportation was developing for approving highway routes. “And in order to provide the greatest possible leeway, we are developing methods for measuring the resource values that go beyond the standard cost/benefit analyses.”

Highways were “remarkably versatile,” but their full potential had yet to be tapped. However, the automobile was “not designed with the efficient movement of peak-hour volumes of commuters in mind.”

He suggested that buses, perhaps operating on exclusive lanes, might be a way to tap highway potential. Would that prompt commuters to leave their cars behind? “We don’t know the answer.” FHWA was trying to promote exclusive bus lanes on freeways. “And I intend to see that our efforts in this direction are expanded in the future.”

He discussed TOPICS as another example of making highways more versatile. “In some cases, these relatively minor adjustments will increase the capacity of the system by as much as 25 per cent.”

“We tend to talk in terms of the urban transportation problem, but there are, in fact, many problems.” Urban areas were not uniform. The problems of the suburban commuter are “far different from that of the man in the ghetto.” The poor were in desperate need of good alternatives to the automobile. “As the report on Watts stated, inadequate public transportation is one of the public deficiencies that handcuffs the man in the ghetto in his search for jobs, for education, for recreation.” The Department was studying whether free public transportation

“would make a significant contribution toward relieving rush-hour congestion in the cities [and] help people in the ghetto find jobs and hold onto them.”

“Finally, we come to the fourth dimension of transportation – the way it affects the quality of the environment in a city while it moves people and goods.” The impact of transportation on the environment in a city is hard to measure, but the impact “is there and it will be given a high priority in decisions on transportation policy.” Some of the problems, such as air pollution, may require new technology, but others could be solved “with present technology, common sense and cooperation.”

As an example, he cited “the way we buy land for urban freeways.” According to studies, the cost of buying land “for a variety of uses” could be done “at little more than the cost of buying the right-of-way for the freeway alone”:

Under joint development, entire city blocks could be acquired along freeway routes for housing, parking and playgrounds at a fraction of what the land might otherwise cost. Such joint development could help create new housing for people in poverty areas who are disposed [sic] by highways. The construction of residential communities, complete with shopping and recreational facilities, over or adjacent to, highways, pose [sic] only limited legal and engineering difficulties.

The concept already was in use “in planning and building municipal centers, schools and other public buildings,” but offered even more dramatic possibilities for freeways. Joint development, for example, was happening in Washington where the city was studying “the possibility of building apartments over a portion of the Inner Loop.”

He cited another example of innovation:

And in Baltimore, urban, social, economic and transportation planners are preparing to work together as a team to use Interstate 95 as a catalyst for achieving broader community goals in the areas of Baltimore it will pass through.

The catalog of possible solutions to urban transportation problems “is easier to read than to implement”:

The effort will put new strains on such contending interests as the central business district and the satellite city; the government plan and the operation of free enterprise. Perhaps the most difficult part of implementation will be the matter of timing. It will not make much sense to develop attractive new neighborhoods in a city if the school remains second-rate. A smooth-flowing traffic pattern cannot be considered real progress if the air is still filled with smog.

It would not be easy to find solutions, but two new elements were present. First, on November 11, 1966, President Johnson had called on Federal agencies to engage in “creative federalism,” which he said meant cooperation. For Federal, State, and local governments to achieve their goals, “more is needed than money alone.” Programs must be carried out jointly, worked out and planned “in a cooperative spirit with those chief officials of State, county and

local governments who are answerable to their citizens.” He wanted officials to give chief executives of State and local governments “the opportunity to advise and consult in the development and execution of programs which directly affect the conduct of State and local affairs.”

The goal was “to make certain that vital new assistance programs are made workable at the point of impact.” Secretary Boyd’s plan to involve Governors in decisions on contested freeway an example of creative federalism.

As for the second item, he recalled the President’s words at the signing ceremony on September 9, 1965, for the legislation creating HUD:

The other is the President’s insistence that we have no real alternative. As he reminds us: “We must seek, and we must find the ways to preserve and to perpetuate in the city, the individual, the human dignity, the respect for human rights – that has been part of the American character and the strength of the American system.”

Secretary Boyd concluded:

The Department of Transportation is not an end to our transportation problems; it is a beginning in the search for new solutions. But it gives us, for the first time a logical framework for seeking those solutions.

Secretary Boyd followed up on his reference to Baltimore by announcing on September 24 that a \$4.8 million contract had been awarded with the city that “may well set a pattern for designing urban highways across the nation.” A team of highway, traffic, and safety engineers would work with city planners, sociologists, economists, and others on the routing and design of a section of I-95:

For the first time in any major city, all of the environmental skills will be brought to bear on the design of a highway from the very beginning. It will give Baltimore a unique opportunity to use the highway program to help it reach other developmental goals; to help it become the kind of city it wants to be.

With early planning consideration of the highway’s social, economic, historic and functional impact, this will become not just a road through a city but an integral part of the city.

The contract had been under consideration for a year. With FHWA’s approval, the contract was eligible for the 90-10 matching ratio of the Interstate System. The Maryland State Roads Commission established a special office, the Interstate Division for Baltimore City, to help in the work, while BPR assigned a full-time representative to the project.

The Interstate Design Concept Team would cover the following categories:

1. Design criteria – Establishing the controls, conditions and treatment for various roadways and structures and translating permissible standards into specific details for use in the design process.
2. Urban design – Determination of the characteristics of neighborhoods through which the highways pass and the formulation of opportunities and recommendations by which the road can be blended with the area traversed.
3. Study design – Consolidation of prior studies, up-dating these studies, and the preliminary engineering design of the roadway, including type, size and location of structures. [News Release, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation, DOT – 8367, September 24, 1967]

The team, which was expected to take 2 years, included the J. E. Greiner Company; Skidmore, Owings and Merrill; Wilbur Smith and Associates; and Parson, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas. Nathaniel A. Owings, the San Francisco architect who was involved in several activities in Washington, headed the team. Author Earl Swift said of Owings:

The interstate system, he wrote, had “raised more problems than it solved,” had “cut through neighborhoods, parks and historic areas” in cities throughout the country. “Part of the tragedy,” he added, “is that the cities themselves have rushed with a strange sense of urgency to cooperate in their own mutilation.”

Swift quoted James D. Dilts, a *Baltimore Sun* reporter who covered the city’s freeway battles, as describing the challenges facing the Interstate Design Concept Team by saying:

“Blending” a six- or eight-lane highway into the fabric of Baltimore is about as promising an assignment as “blending” a buzz saw into a Persian rug. [Swift, page 275]

In the *Post*, Von Eckardt referred to the contract as “a revolutionary first step to adjust freeways to cities rather than tear up cities to let the freeways through The move may end a ten-year conflict over freeways in Baltimore and promises to resolve similar hassles in major cities.” He quoted an unnamed Department of Transportation spokesman as saying that the cheapest way to build an urban freeway “is just to go crashing through,” but adding that it would cost more, socially and otherwise, in the long run. The design team approach was under consideration for other cities, including Washington, possibly for the North-Central Freeway. [Von Eckardt, Wolf, “New Freeway Theory Tested,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 24, 1967]

On September 26, Secretary Boyd addressed the Washington Board of Trade at the Mayflower Hotel. “The concern over the condition of transportation,” he said, “is not a new one.” Planners, engineers, community organizations, and the industry had been working for years “to improve one element or another – working harder in recent years as growth increases the strain on our transportation network.” Now, for the first time, with creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation, “a balanced system of transportation is a national goal, backed with national resources.” This new approach had a “unique application here in Washington,” which had already undertaken a “great deal of the planning that is needed to develop a model metropolitan system of transportation.”

The planned “83-mile rail rapid transit system” would link Washington and its suburbs. In addition:

For the year 2000, the Regional Planning Council is considering a network of nine radial freeways, three circumferential freeways and an Inner Loop System. Planners have recommended five general aviation airports to accommodate the upsurge of private aviation which they anticipate in the area. Helicopter airbus service to link the city and the three regional airports which serve the National Capital Region is under consideration.

That, as the planners say, will give Washington a transportation system fit for a showcase. And it certainly sounds like a welcome change from what many of us experience today.

Still, solutions were years off. Roads were crowded, the subways not yet underground, air lanes were crowded, Union Station was under-used, and bus terminals were falling behind demand. Parking in downtown was “a growing cause of irritation for those who live and work and shop in the heart of the city.”

All these frustrations aside, Washington’s business community remained healthy, with forecasts of “more jobs, more construction, more money in circulation, and more people.”

The city had prepared for growth. Groundbreaking for the subway was expected in the summer of 1968, with limited operations beginning in 1972. “New construction will add many miles of highways and freeways” that would “make it easier for many residents of the Capital region to get downtown and to other parts of metropolitan Washington.” For now, these new transportation services were “no more than dotted lines on maps” that would relieve the traffic jams “in five or six years or certainly no later than the turn of the century.”

He summarized, “For Washington, then, as for many American cities, the transportation crisis involves short-range answers as well as long-range planning. The problem is what to do until the subway arrives.” The twin goals were to improve operation of the current transportation system while planning for the future.

The highway system was the “obvious place to start.” The automobile, Secretary Boyd said, could not be “the only answer to Washington’s transportation needs.” They simply take up too much space – in other cities, an average of 28 percent of space is devoted to the automobile, but that figure is more than 30 percent in Washington. “In 1964, Washington had more freeway mileage per square mile and per capita than any other large urban area in the Nation” and twice as much freeway mileage per million population as Los Angeles.

He cited urban critic and author Lewis Mumford’s 1961 book, *The City in History*, as saying of the city:

Washington has proved a classic testing station for the question of whether a city dedicated whole-heartedly to traffic could sufficiently survive for other purposes The assumed right of the private motor car to go any place in the city and park anywhere is nothing less than a license to destroy the city.

Secretary Boyd was not proposing that people abandon their automobiles. “I am saying that the city and the community should make sure that they get full benefit from their streets and highways.” The city would not receive the greatest return on investment “if the community tries to resolve today’s problems by the simple expedients of more automobiles, more freeways, and more parking lots” (the same phrase he used years later in an interview with Schrag, cited earlier). Alternatives, some untested, included “wider use of a flexible system of bus transit,” exclusive lanes for express buses, a benefit for bus riders comparable to “Park and Shop” tickets that merchants issue to shoppers, and “simple steps” under TOPICS to improve traffic flow, such as better patterns of traffic light timing:

Some of these ideas might prove to be infeasible or uneconomical or even illegal. You will never know unless you try them. And it is possible to change the law when a need is demonstrated.

Boyd said, “Washington’s transportation problems are – in one form or another – a microcosm of our Nation’s transportation problems.” He did not “intend to try to dictate the terms of the transportation system in Washington or in any other city.” His Department could help in “the search for better ways to give the American traveler variety, comfort, efficiency and safety.”

The business leaders he was addressing must join with the community’s leaders and Federal officials to pursue short- and long-range alternatives that “might resolve the community’s transportation needs until such a day as the Federal City has become a true showcase for America’s cities, in transportation as well as in other categories.” He concluded:

We look to the day when the availability of the best will make it possible to forego the consideration of alternatives which are merely good.

That day has not yet come.

After his speech, Boyd answered questions from board members, including questions about the status of the review NCPC had asked him to conduct on the Three Sisters Bridge. He told the board that he did not know the answer. “I hate to be evasive. Three Sisters is being studied.” The *Post* summarized the resulting exchange:

Boyd has been under considerable pressure to give the go-ahead on Three Sisters, much of the pressure originating from highway lobbyists.

Pressure was apparent yesterday. During a question-and-answer period, Board member Harold Wirth gave an emotional speech in which he said that the facts presented by Boyd regarding Washington’s highway system were false and that Boyd was jeopardizing the development of transportation facilities by delaying his decision.

Wirth is an official of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. His comments drew applause from the Board of Trade.

Boyd was unperturbed. “If I were prepared to give you an answer,” Boyd said, “I would have done so.”

He defended his statistics, denied that Washington's transportation was in jeopardy and added:

“You fellows seem to think there is some sort of conspiracy to wreck the freeway program. There isn't We have Three Sisters under study.” [Severo, Richard, “Boyd Asks D.C. to test Express Buses,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 27, 1967]

During the speech, Secretary Boyd had supported express bus service on freeways. He thought Washington would be an ideal place for an experiment but after the speech, he acknowledged that his staff was not working on a specific proposal. However, as Lee Flor put it, Boyd had, in effect, given “local transportation officials the broadest hint possible, indicating he would be glad to provide help if they want it. [“Boyd Invites Plans to Aid Street Transit,” *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1967]

As explained in a September 1 press release, FHWA Administrator Bridwell had urged State highway officials to consider using reserved bus lanes on freeways at peak traffic hours:

With the increasing demands on highway budgets and the stronger focusing on problems of the metropolitan areas, it is imperative that highway officials at all levels of government take advantage of every opportunity to increase the productivity of our highway system as measured in terms of movement of people and goods.

Federal-aid highway funds could be used for the extra cost to create reserved lanes for buses, but heavy use of the lanes would have to be achieved to justify public acceptance. FHWA set the optimum range of usage at 120 to 180 buses per hour. In areas where that usage could not be achieved, FHWA suggested “preferential use,” which would permit vehicles other than buses to use the lanes. The number of other vehicles using the preferential lanes could be controlled at access ramps or by metering the flow with control devices. These guidelines aside, Bridwell said, “Each case will be considered on its merits.”

The lanes, between 3 and 5 miles long with no stops for passengers, should be reserved on a schedule covering the morning and evening rush hours. “The concept could be employed for special events such as football games and the like.” However, “reservation periods of less than an hour could hardly be justified.”

As for design:

The FHWA said reserved lanes could best be accomplished by using the reversible lanes in the center of the freeways where they exist. Where reversible lanes do not exist, the lane nearest the median could be used. Access and egress would be by special ramps, and Federal-aid funds would be eligible for design and construction of such ramps and other needed structures.

To be eligible for Federal-aid funding, the lanes must meet certain criteria:

To justify such design and construction funds, the FHWA noted, the number of bus passengers anticipated would have to be based on findings of the continuing comprehensive transportation planning process which communities of 50,000 population and over must carry on in order to receive Federal-aid highway funds. Transit operators also must give adequate assurance of the availability of buses and agree to maintain satisfactory levels of service in terms of comfort, convenience and fare structures. It must also be shown that reserved or preferential use of lanes ties in with the overall comprehensive development and transportation plans of the urban area involved.

By mid-October, Washington area transportation officials were ready to take the hint. They were studying plans for express bus service on reversible lanes planned for the I-95/Shirley Highway corridor. Buses from Alexandria and eastern Fairfax County would pick up passengers on city and county streets, then use special ramps to access the lanes at about 60 miles an hour. They would cross the 14th Street Bridge and cross into downtown Washington on the 11th Street expressway. At present, Shirley Highway had two northbound and two southbound lanes. Virginia highway officials were planning to add two reversible lanes to operate in the peak hour direction. To limit them to express buses, decisions would have to be made quickly. [Flor, Lee, "Shirley Highway Reversible Lanes Sought for Buses Only," *The Sunday Star*, October 15, 1967]

(Secretary Boyd had quoted Lewis Mumford, who was a long-time critic of the automobile, the freeway, and their dominance of the urban landscape. In the book cited, *The City in History*, Mumford praised Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant's original design for the new capital of the United States. It was a "bold conception" that was "brutally massacred." Despite having "planned superbly," he had "overlooked the fact that he himself could not build the city he had planned." Over time, his plan had been "visually disrupted by a wide scattering of unkempt and irrelevant buildings. Even to this day, the area immediately around the Capitol is spotted by an outbreak of urban eczema"

(Mumford praised Alexander Robey Shepherd, also known as Boss Shepherd, for "a series of major improvements after the Civil War." Shepherd "had the proper dictatorial qualifications for carrying out a baroque plan." He had "enough imagination to undertake, at last, the planting of the wide streets and avenues with trees, as L'Enfant had specified":

The other fact that redeemed L'Enfant's original plan, though it did not add to its beauty, was the filling up of the overload of wide streets with sufficient wheeled traffic to justify their existence: this came in only with the motor car. Though motor traffic has now caught up with the plan, clogging the most extravagant arteries, and hiding the verdure behind a metallic wall of parked cars.

(Secretary Boyd quoted the next passage about Washington proving to be a classic testing station for the assumed right of motor cars, with the two sentences separated by ellipsis (. . .). The sentence he did not read to the highway supporters he was addressing is:

Already it is plain in Washington – and will become plainer as the city receives the inundation of new expressways, which recklessly spoil every view and defile every approach to its finest urban prospects – that when traffic takes precedence over all other

urban functions, it can no longer perform its own role, that of facilitating meeting and intercourse.

(In a later section of the book, Mumford wrote:

Under the present dispensation we have sold our urban birthright for a sorry mess of motor cars. As poor a bargain as Esau's pottage. Future generations will perhaps wonder at our willingness, indeed our eagerness, to sacrifice the education of our children, the care of the ill and the aged, the development of the arts, to say nothing of ready access to nature, for the lopsided system of mono-transportation, going through low density areas at sixty miles an hour, but reduced in high density areas to a bare six. But our descendants will perhaps understand our curious willingness to expend billions of dollars to shoot a sacrificial victim into planetary orbit, if they realize that our cities are being destroyed for the same superstitious religious ritual: the worship of speed and empty space. Lacking sufficient municipal budgets to deal adequately with all of life's requirements that can be concentrated in the city, we have settled for a single function, transportation, or rather a single part of an adequate transportation system, locomotion by private motor car.

By allowing mass transportation to deteriorate and by building expressways out of the city and parking garages within, in order to encourage the maximum use of the private car, our highway engineers and city planners have helped to destroy the living tissue of the city and to limit the possibilities of creating a larger urban organism on a regional scale.

(By discouraging pedestrians and failing to extend and perfect mass transportation, municipal officials and highway engineers had "created a situation that calls for extremely low residential densities." Agents of mass suburbia had fostered the "absurd belief that space and rapid locomotion are the chief ingredients of a good life." Los Angeles was the "*reductio ad absurdum* of this myth":

Los Angeles has now become an undifferentiated mass of houses, walled off into sectors by many-laned expressways, with ramps and viaducts that create special bottlenecks of their own. These expressways move but a small fraction of the traffic per hour once carried by public transportation, at a much lower rate of speed, in an environment befouled by smog, itself produced by the lethal exhausts of the technologically backward motor cars.

(The sprawling suburbs and expressways, Mumford wrote, were sapping the life out of cities:

This is ruinous both to urban living and to leisured recreation; for the attempt to service the distant areas with expressways will not merely sterilize more and more of the land, but will scatter social facilities that should be concentrated in new cities, organized so as to diffuse and amplify the central facilities. [Mumford, Lewis, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*, A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., 1968: "The Lessons of Washington," pages 403-408, and "Mass Suburbia as Anti-City," pages 509-511])

Reorganizing the District

On September 6, 1967, President Johnson announced that he had selected Walter E. Washington to serve as Commissioner of the District of Columbia under Reorganization Plan No. 3. After considering “literally hundreds of names and records,” the President said, the search came “to a happy end.” In Walter Washington, “we have found a man who can provide the leadership, the vision, the understanding, and the talent to move the Capital City forward – steadily and surely. We have found a man who will be a strong and authentic voice for the people of the District.”

Washington, a 52-year-old African American, was a native of Dawson, Georgia, who grew up in Jamestown, New York. He had spent much of his adult life in Washington. He graduated from Howard University in the District and secured a law degree from the university as well. He had taken sociology and public administration courses at American University. He joined the National Capital Housing Authority in 1941, rising through the ranks to become its director in 1961. After 5 years, he left the city to become chairman of the New York City Housing Authority where his salary was \$35,000. In returning to the District of Columbia less than a year later, he would take a salary cut to \$28,500.

He met his wife Bennetta at Howard University. They had retained their home at 408 T Street, NW., in the District’s LeDroit Park section near the university. The *Post*’s Robert Asher described their home as “a rambling, Victorian place owned by the prominent family of his wife.” Bennetta Washington had been the principal of Cardozo High School in the city before leaving the school system 3 years earlier to launch the Jobs Corps Program for women. When her husband took the job in New York City, she accepted a professorship in education at City College in that city.

President Johnson also announced that he had selected 43-year-old Thomas W. Fletcher to be Assistant to the Commissioner, calling him “an expert fiscal planner.” Fletcher, who was white, had been a city administrator for 15 years, most recently in San Diego, California, where his slogan was “City in Motion.”

A native of Portland, Oregon, Fletcher had graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1950 before taking graduate work in public administration. After a brief period in the private sector following his service in San Diego, he moved to Washington to become Deputy Assistant Secretary of HUD for renewal and housing assistance on July 10, 1967. His new salary would be \$26,500. He and his wife Margerie and two of their three children lived in an apartment at the new Van Ness Apartment building at 3001 Veazey Terrace, NW., off Connecticut Avenue in the District’s Forest Hills neighborhood.

The *Star* and *Post* commented on what the *Star* called “an unusually brief announcement” of the two important nominees. They speculated that the President was upset that the *Post* had reported 2 weeks earlier that Washington was the front runner for the position. The *Post* added, “The President was miffed at the disclosure, and there was doubt until this week that he would go ahead with the appointment.”

Reaction to the announcement was positive, as reflected in a comment by Joseph Rauh. "I can die happy now. I've seen this city go from iron-clad segregation to a Negro mayor-commissioner fully qualified for the job."

[Millius, Peter, "Washington Named D.C. 'Mayor,'" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 7, 1967; "Washington Named D.C. 'Mayor,'" *The Evening Star*, September 6, 1967; James, Betty, "Washington," *The Evening Star*, September 6, 1967; "Fletcher," *The Evening Star*, September 6, 1967; Asher, Robert L., "Walter Washington: Back Home," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 7, 1967; Kaiser, Robert G., "Fletcher, City's New No. 2 Man, a 'Top Administrator,'" *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 7, 1967]

According to Professor Lewis, Chairman McMillan did not share the enthusiasm for Walter Washington:

The appointment incensed Congressman Johnny McMillan. When Walter Washington sent his first budget up to Congress for approval, Johnny Mac sent the mayor a truckload of watermelons. [Lewis, page 402]

Following quick Senate confirmation, President Johnson attended the swearing in ceremony for Washington and Fletcher in the East Room of the White House on September 28. He said:

We celebrate a new era for the Capital City as we meet here to swear in Walter Washington as Washington's first mayor, and Thomas Fletcher as his deputy.

The citizens of the District have waited almost a century for this day to come, and all that it symbolizes.

This is the day – and this is the year – that the District emerges into the world of the 20th century government.

With the recent reorganization plan, the Nation's Capital was liberated from the outworn practices of past years. That reorganization plan equips the city with new machinery to let its government service the needs of its people.

Referring to Washington as "Mr. Mayor," President Johnson told him, "your walk will be long and arduous, but I believe it will be rewarding."

Justice Abe Fortas of the Supreme Court administered the oath to the two men while more than 200 people looked on.

After they took the oath of office, President Johnson said, "Mr. Mayor and Mr. Fletcher, you won't be walking alone." He then announced his choices for the city council. The *Star* subheadline reported: "Five Negroes Selected for 9-Man Panel." The choices were:

Max M. Kampelman (white), a 46-year-old Washington attorney, was named council chairman;

The Reverend Walter E. Fauntroy (African-American), the 34-year old pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, would be vice chairman.

Stanley J. Anderson (African-American), 40, was director of the Recreation Department's Neighborhood Centers Division.

Margaret A. Haywood (African-American), 53, was an attorney active in civil rights work.

John Nevius (white), 47, an attorney who fought for better housing, was a leader in the city's Head Start program.

William Thompson (African-American), 55, was president of the Washington Urban League and a past president of the National Bar Association.

J. C. Turner (white), 51, president of the Greater Washington Central Labor Council of the AFL-CIO, had been active in civil rights and other issues affecting the working man.

Polly Shackleton (white) of the Democratic National Committee for the District of Columbia.

Joseph Yeldell (African-American), 35, had been a teacher but was currently a marketing executive with IBM Corporation.

All were present for the announcement except Shackleton, who was in Montreal for the World's Fair, Expo 67, and could not get back in time for the hastily arranged announcement. She was, the President joked, "observing conditions in Montreal as a background to what she's going to be doing here." As the *Post* pointed out, "That as many as eight of the nominees did appear was remarkable, for many were told of their nominations only an hour or so beforehand."

Although the normal terms of service would be 3 years, the initial group had been given staggered terms. The terms of Haywood, Turner, and Yeldell would expire on February 1, 1968. Kampelman, Nevius, and Fauntroy would serve until their terms expired in 1969. Anderson, Thompson, and Shackleton would serve full 3-year terms ending on February 1, 1970.

The three District commissioners under the old government were moving on. President Johnson had nominated Walter N. Tobriner to be Ambassador to Jamaica. John B. Duncan was to become a special assistant to Secretary Udall on metropolitan affairs. General Mathe planned to retire from the U.S. Army at the end of the year.

[“D.C. Emerges Into 20th Century,” *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1967; Concini, Charles, “Johnson Names Council for D.C.,” *The Evening Star*, September 28, 1967; Sarro, Ronald, “Tobriner Picked For Envoy Post,” *The Evening Star*, September 18, 1967; “Asher, Robert L., “President Selects Negro Majority to New District Panel,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 29, 1967]

President Johnson expected the Senate to approve his council nominees quickly, but questions arose about Kampelman. Representative Gross of Iowa charged that Kampelman had been director of a company that obtained \$4 million from the Agency for International Development under questionable circumstances. For background, Representative Gross cited a GAO report regarding the 1962 loan. Kampelman said he would discuss his activities during the confirmation hearing, adding, "I have every confidence that the facts will place the charges in a proper and satisfactory perspective."

On October 11, however, Kampelman indicated that conflict of interest laws would require him to resign from his law firm to become council chairman, and he was not willing to do so. Therefore, he withdrew his name from consideration for the post. ["Kampelman Says Reply Must Await Hearings," *The Evening Star*, October 6, 1967; Concini, Charles, "Kampelman Withdraws From Council," *The Evening Star*, October 11, 1967]

In his place, President Johnson nominated John W. Hechinger to be chairman. The 47-year old businessman was a fourth generation Washingtonian whose name was known throughout the area for the chain of Hechinger's hardware stores. He also had been active in other businesses, civic groups, and charities. He had worked with White House staff to prevent Congress from blocking Reorganization Plan No. 3.

His appointment was so new that when reporters asked him about his duties, he was not certain what they would be. He told reporters, "I was honored to be selected, and accepted the President's offer as a challenge. I hope to be able to do what he has in mind." He added:

I think the reorganization plan is a giant step forward, and that the proposal that has been framed up is so far superior to the mechanics of what we had to work with before that there is a real good chance for progress.

He was looking forward to working with Commissioner Washington:

I am particularly pleased to be working with Walter Washington I have known him and worked with him for many years . . . [he] seems like a man with a mission and will be a great boon to the city.

Like Kampelman, Hechinger was white, thus preserving the 5-4 racial balance of the council. He and his wife June, also active in civic groups and charitable work, lived with their four children at 2838 Chain Bridge Road, NW. [Concini, Charles, "Hechinger Named Council Chief," *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1967; "Hechinger Anxious to Start 'Challenge,'" *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1967]

Following Senate confirmation, the nine members of the new council took their oaths of office in the East Room of the White House at 11:45 a.m., on November 3.

President Johnson was the only speaker on this "very historic day," departing frequently from his text in a 15-minute address to about 350 guests. The goal of the new city government was to make the District of Columbia "the city that every other city in the world would like to copy." He emphasized the need to improve the city's schools and "clean up the crime situation and

make Washington the safest city in the Nation.” These would be the first steps that would unleash “so much encouragement and so much support from all of our people and all of our Congress that we could have the best educational system, we could have the cleanest city, and we could do all these other things that need so much to be done.”

He emphasized that he was not blaming anyone for these problems. In what appears to be one of his extemporaneous comments, he explained:

But I do want to say this to the Congress I want to appeal to them to try to quit treating the District of Columbia – now Senator Morse, I am not talking to you. You just stay seated. I am not going to attack. I want to say to the Washington Post I am not the slightest angry. And I want to say to the fellow the day before, I am not lambasting anybody. I am not attacking.

Now, that is what I am not doing. But what I am doing – I want to say to the Congressmen, of both the House and the Senate, as I said last night, let's don't treat the Nation's Capital as a stepchild.

He added:

I think we are living in a goldfish bowl here in Washington. I think that spotlight is on every one of us and the whole Nation is looking at us, because this is the Nation's city. This is the people's city.

He urged the new members of the council to get out on the streets “and talk to those people in their homes and in their businesses.” He urged them to “work as if you had to run for election every November.”

He praised the three former commissioners and asked them to stand for a round of applause. He praised their “patriotism, dedication and unselfishness,” adding that they had “worked themselves out of a job.” He said he “had never known men who have wanted to do a better job.”

He thanked the former special assistants on District affairs, Charles Horsky, now in private practice, and Stanley Pollak, who was leaving the White House to be a special assistant to Attorney General Ramsey Clark. President Johnson said he would no longer need a special assistant on the District because he would deal directly with Mayor Washington.

After the President's remarks, retired Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark administered the oath. The *Post* reported, “Cameras clicked like crickets as Justice Clark recited the oath from memory.” President Johnson and the new District officials stood in a receiving line, shaking hands with the guests for an hour. [Kaiser, Robert G., “City's New Council Takes Oath,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 4, 1967; Sarro, Ronald, and Delaney, Paul, “New District Council Sworn In,” *The Evening Star*, November 3, 1967]

Three Sisters Bridge Inches Forward

On September 20, the Commission of Fine Arts approved the District's latest design for the six-lane Three Sisters Bridge. Chairman Walton said, "We think this is what a bridge should look like. It will enhance the landscape." The District's fourth official submission of a bridge design involved a 750-foot concrete span, 80 feet high, with only two supports at the river's edge. Airis said that his idea was that for a bridge at this location, it had to be "a Michelangelo."

Von Eckardt reported:

Fine Arts Commission objections to the previous steel structure designs finally prompted Airis to overcome his misgivings and try concrete and a new consulting engineer, Paul Weidlinger, of Cambridge, Mass. That turned the trick.

Concrete made it possible to design the bridge as one, elegant sculptural form stretching from abutment to abutment without disturbing the shores. To be built of prestressed, hollow box girders, it would be the longest span of its kind in the world, according to the engineers.

The bridge posed an unusual engineering challenge because it had to be high enough to permit river traffic under it while fitting under Spout Run Parkway on the Virginia shore. Weidlinger said, "It was a tricky geometric problem."

During the same meeting, the commission again rejected the District's plan for a tunneled South Leg Freeway skirting the Lincoln Memorial and tunneling under the Tidal Basin. The commission argued that the tunnel would destroy too many trees. Airis explained that preserving the 50 or so trees would add \$6 million to the cost of the project. Moreover, the tunnel would change the water table; the additional cost, therefore, would not ensure the survival of the trees:

But the Fine Arts commission would not have "a huge scar across the most important landscape of the city," Walton said. He suggested that the freeway alignment be relocated to run under the Munitions Building on Constitution Avenue and then cut across the Mall under one of the existing cross roads. [Von Eckardt, Wolf, "Mall Tunnel Blocked By Fine Arts Panel," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 21, 1967]

(The Munitions and Main Navy Buildings were located on Constitution Avenue between 17th and 21st Streets in the approximate location of today's Constitution Gardens and a portion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.)

Airis called the commission's approval of the bridge "a gigantic step forward." City officials, however, had to await Secretary Boyd's response to NCPC regarding whether the bridge was needed, as well as the outcome of the pending court challenge.

Star editors took the approval in stride. "If every vote of approval this bridge has received over the years could have been traded for a foot of actual construction, it would have crossed the Potomac long ago." As for NCPC's request to Secretary Boyd, it had "rested in the bosom of

Boyd's new agency for an inordinate period of time." The editors urged Secretary Boyd to "get with it":

The decision's not that tough. Indeed, the only legitimate reason we can think of for taking this much time is that the Secretary may be trying to read *all* of the previous studies which have demonstrated the need for this bridge. We hope not, however. That could take years. ["Approved Again," *The Evening Star*, September 26, 1967; italics in original]

On October 15, Richard Severo of the *Post* reported on the departure of Engineer Commissioner Mathe from his office after 11 months:

Mathe was quite possibly the most outspoken, boat-rocking engineer commissioner in District history. And as it is with outspoken people, he was not universally loved, either in the District Building or in the multitude of agencies that promulgate, authorize, speculate, legislate and fluctuate, thus producing what passes for government in the Federal City.

His many supporters "cite his tireless energy, his emphasis on action rather than interminable planning, his support of public works, especially highways, and his candor in criticizing District thinkers who produce grand schemes but little else." His many critics "say he de-emphasized thinking a little too much, that he preferred premature action rather than thoughtful planning, and that he was more interested in keeping his highway planners busy than he was in preserving residential areas from the onslaught of the freeway."

He always wanted to see "tangible results." However, city problems were "not his first love." He said, "If I had my druthers, I would be in water resources development." His critics wished he had his druthers, and some of those critics were on NCPC where he "became locked in a battle he was unable to resolve: The Three Sisters Bridge":

The NCPC's public meetings frequently produced their share of fur-pulling, but the fight over Three Sisters has become a parliamentary nightmare.

Severo recounted NCPC's vote in March to approve the site for the bridge, the decision in April to postpone consideration, and the decision in May to approve the bridge only if Secretary Boyd said it was needed:

Thus far, Boyd hasn't said much about Three Sisters. But Mathe has said quite a bit about Three Sisters. Like the session of the NCPC when, sitting at the Board table in his characteristic pose, rocking back and forth, rubbing hands together and striking his jaw, Mathe said:

I take exception to the conduct of the chairman in not allowing Three Sisters on the agenda.

There was a brief argument, Mathe frowned, Mrs. Row was restrained, a few members of the NCPC staff coughed, but Three Sisters stayed off the agenda.

An unidentified member of NCPC told Severo, “Unfortunately, Mathe see his role as custodian of the Highway Department . . . he is more dedicated than his predecessors . . . more inflexible on highway issues.” A “more zealous anti-highway fighter,” also unidentified, said, “Bob Mathe is really hard to take. At least [former Engineer Commissioner] Duke was a gentleman. But this guy uses the sledgehammer approach.”

General Mathe said all he wanted was a “skeletal” freeway system that he considered the minimum to meet the area’s needs.

Severo concluded with an assessment of General Mathe’s short tenure:

And so now, a scant 11 months after he started, Mathe – who came through both World War II and a tour as assistant engineer commissioner unscathed – finds himself a casualty of government reorganization

But even Mathe’s critics must admit he gave an air of excitement to an office that all too seldom lacked it. His presence was a steel mallet on the machinery of District government. He made it move.

As for his next assignment, he said, “I stay in the Army as long as I am on the first team. As long as I continue to receive the assignments I think I deserve. If and when that stops, I get out.” [Severo, Richard, “Boat-Rocking Mathe Leaves City Post,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 15, 1967]

General Mathe made his retirement official on October 20. In view of his comments about staying in the Army, he added:

In announcing my retirement I would like to make it very clear I am doing it for personal and family reasons and that it has nothing to do with assignments that have been offered me.

He had not yet decided on his next job, but planned to stay in the Washington area with his family. [Sarro, Ronald, “Gen. Mathe To Retire From Army,” *The Evening Star*, October 20, 1967]

He accepted a position as a partner of HOK Associates, described in the *Star* as an engineering firm “specializing in urban planning, architecture, civil, mechanical-electrical and structural engineering and construction management.” Mathe headed the firm’s Washington office. (George Hellmuth, Gyo Obata, and George Kassabaum formed the architectural firm in St. Louis in 1955. The first letter of their last names provided the firm’s name.) [“Mathe Heads New Company,” *The Evening Star*, August 20, 1968]

Mayor Washington reorganized some parts of the District government. As for Airis, Professor Schrag explained:

Thomas Airis remained as the head of the Department of Highways – he was so popular on Capitol Hill that Mayor Walter Washington dared not fire him – and he continued to

favor the highways as planned. He dismissed critiques as “innuendo, half truths, threat of violence and amateur engineering” and included Boyd on his list of people “least competent to make a decision” on his highways.

Airis would stay on, but the reorganized leadership affected his ability to move forward:

Airis now got his orders from a civilian council [instead of an engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers]. The new council’s transportation man, John Nevius, knew little about highways, but he was impressed by Craig’s research and equally unimpressed by Airis and his staff, whom he found cynical and insincere. [Schag, page 127]

On November 6, Mayor Washington made his first official statement since the ceremony installing the city council. He announced that he had called on 21 national experts to study District problems and report to him on their suggestions for remedies. They would form five task forces to provide “action-oriented” reports on, economic development, environmental protection, housing and community development, human resources, and transportation.

President Johnson had asked the new government to transform the city into a model community. Mayor Washington said:

As a step in that direction, we are being given the services of top men in the nation in the critical urban problem fields. These experts will consider approaches that may be adopted here to attack these big city ailments.

He would make their suggestions available for public review:

The suggestions of the urban affairs experts will provide a framework for community reaction and participation. The ideas ultimately adopted, therefore, will represent a combination of technical expertise and experience and of citizens suggestions and involvements. [sic]

Asked why the city was going outside the District for expertise, Mayor Washington replied, “We want a fresh, objective look to see if we could get the advantages of other approaches. Let us see if this is applicable or has relevance Some of it may not.”

The members of the transportation task force were:

- George L. Dement, chairman, Chicago Transit Authority;
- Alger F. Malo, director, Detroit Streets Department;
- Edward M. Hall, Street Improvement Administrator, Phoenix, Arizona;
- Edward Haefele, Resources for the Future, Washington.

The *Star* reported on the topic areas for the transportation task force:

This group will look into all areas of transportation including highways, local and interstate carriers and airports.

Some suggestions are the displacement of people for highway construction, building on air rights over freeways, helicopter service, taxi and bus regulations and parking difficulties. [Concini, Charles, "21 City Experts Called to Attack D.C. Problems," *The Evening Star*, November 6, 1967]

Advancing Rail Rapid Transit

As 1966 came to an end, NCTA Administrator Walter J. McCarter admitted he was looking forward to retiring after his agency ceased operations after September 30, 1967. Some supporters hoped he would stay as general manager when WMATA took over the network. After leaving the Chicago Transit Authority in 1964 at the age of 65, he intended to retire with his wife to their home on St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. He was pulled out of that retirement to take the NCTA job. Now, asked about staying on in Washington, he replied, "I certainly am not going to take a full-time job after September 30, 1967." ["Transit Chief Looks to '67 Retirement," *The Evening Star*, November 16, 1966]

On January 25, 1967, when President Johnson released his message on the District of Columbia's FY 1968 budget, he indicated that, "The budget reflects substantial progress toward an ultimate solution of the transportation program that was made during the past year." He cited approval of the compact creating WMATA "with power to plan, finance and operate a regional system," as well as initiatives in Maryland, Virginia, and the District to fund operation of WMATA in 1967 and steps to continue budgeting in 1968.

Moreover, NCTA had funds for preliminary engineering and construction on the rail rapid transit system. He did not plan to request any additional construction funds for FY 1968. Lee Flor reminded readers of the plans for the system at the time Congress authorized it in 1965 with the expectation that the 25-mile network would be completed in 1972:

The construction schedule called for spending \$17 million in fiscal 1966, \$53 million in fiscal 1967, and \$85.2 million in fiscal 1968

However, the District and federal government so far have appropriated \$6.5 million in District funds and \$13 million in federal funds in fiscal 1966 and 1967. Around \$15 million of this is unspent, so the subway builders will be able to use this construction money during fiscal 1968.

The net effect, however, is a two-year delay in the subway schedule, in a period when inflation increases basic subway costs by around 5 percent every year. The subway was originally supposed to cost around \$431 million, and the loss of two years could add around \$43 million in inflation costs.

Flor added that the budget did not contain funds for the proposed Independence Avenue subway line. "This means the Bureau of the Budget has made no decision yet on whether to build the Independence line, which would be the second subway for downtown Washington."

The budget did allow for "contingencies" in case construction funds were needed later in the fiscal year.

President Johnson's message said the May 1966 agreement on the freeway system and enactment of the District's revenue act "made it possible to provide adequate funds so that the entire freeway program can go forward." He planned to ask for \$127.7 million in construction funds for FY 1968, much of it (\$109,750,000) from the Federal-aid highway program. [Flor, Lee, "Budget Omits Subway, Plans Face 2-Year Snag," *The Evening Star*, January 24, 1967; Flor, Lee, "District Requests \$127.7 Million For Road Building," *The Evening Star*, January 25, 1967]

WMATA had begun planning for a financing mechanism, beyond the farebox, to pay for the rail rapid transit system. Encouraged by former Representative Sickles, WMATA planned to hire a special consultant to study financing options. One option was to levy special assessments against real estate values that were expected to increase in the vicinity of stations. Other options were special excise, income, and sales taxes. WMATA also established a citizens financial advisory committee consisting of representatives of area corporations and the AFL-CIO. [Flor, Lee, "New Regional Taxes Studied To Pay for Transit System," *The Evening Star*, January 27, 1967]

NCTA was trying to solve an operational problem resulting from the scaled down network shaped primarily to secure congressional approval. Professor Schrag described the problem:

[As] a means of moving commuters, it suffered from its reliance on a single trunk line between Farragut Square (at the west end of downtown) and Union Station (at the east). Every train originating at each of the five spur lines would pass through three stations: G and 12th, G and 8th, and Judiciary Square, causing tight scheduling, and potentially catastrophic backups. This bottleneck would only worsen as the five radial lines were extended out into the suburbs. One consultant suggested that the planned trunk's anticipated volume would require two subway tubes, one on top of the other. Moreover, each branching would require the construction of an underground junction, very difficult to build in a crowded city.

The single trunk also denied direct service to the enormous federal office buildings being built in the redeveloped Southwest. These buildings were expected to house 85,000 workers in the departments of Housing and Urban Development; Health, Education, and Welfare; and the new Department of Transportation, as well as the Department of Agriculture, long headquartered on Independence Avenue. The 1965 plan would require these workers to walk or take a bus three-quarters of a mile. Given that many riders would have begun their commute with a trip by car or bus to the rail station, an additional bus or long walk at the end was too much to ask.

A second trunk line along Independence Avenue was the solution. It had been dropped from the bobtail plan in 1963, but NCTA staff resumed planning it in September 1966.

To compensate for the additional cost of a second downtown trunk line, NCTA planned to delete the Columbia Heights spur off of the Connecticut Avenue line. The Independence Avenue line would generate sufficient revenue from the Federal workers to pay for itself, but the Columbia Heights spur served a primarily residential area of low-income neighborhoods that would not generate enough revenue at the farebox to justify the cost. Professor Schrag added:

Moreover, with only 16 percent of inner-city workers using cars to get to work, an inner-city line would be less effective at reducing the number of cars on the road. Although NCTA's critics, then and later, saw the agency's emphasis on fare-box revenues and its desire to delete the spur as callousness toward the poor city workers, in fact the real decision was not so much *whether* to serve Columbia Heights and adjacent neighborhoods, but *how*. Even as they erased the Columbia Heights spur, NCTA planners were penciling in a third trunk line that would serve the same general area.

This third mid-city line would be along 7th Street and its continuation along Georgia Avenue into Montgomery County. The line had been suggested and rejected in 1962, but NCTA revived the idea in 1966. [Schrag, pages 104-106, italics in original]

On February 9, McCarter announced that NCTA was ready to move forward with the subway line along Independence Avenue, SW. NCTA's studies demonstrated that the line would pay for itself through revenue from passengers. The new line would increase the cost of the downtown subway system from \$107 million to \$203 million. However, NCTA was abandoning the line to Columbia Heights, thus reducing costs by \$55 million. As a result, the cost of the downtown subway, including the Independence Avenue line, would be only \$41 million higher than previous estimates.

The same day, NCTA and NCPC agreed that the system's Connecticut Avenue subway would be built in a tunnel under Rock Creek Park, as suggested by Chairman Rowe. The decision ended consideration of crossing the park on a separate bridge or through the supports of Taft Memorial Bridge. McCarter advised that the tunnel would require the Woodley Avenue station on Connecticut Avenue to be only 12 feet deeper than planned without the tunnel. ["2 Agencies OK Subway For Rock Creek Park," *The Evening Star*, February 10, 1967]

O. Roy Chalk had been seeking the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission's approval of a fare increase. In October 1966, D.C. Transit System had sought to increase the price of a token from 21¼ cents to 25 cents, with suburban fares increased by an average of 12 cents per trip. The change would eliminate the discount for tokens; a token cost 25 cents, but four tokens could be bought for 85 cents, leading to the cost of 21¼ cents.) He also wanted to charge a nickel for transfers from one bus to another. If approved, the increases would add nearly 38 cents per week for the average rider in the city. The area's other bus lines also were seeking fare increases.

With SNCC's Marion Barry promising to fight the increase, attorney Bebhick was in court with fresh arguments for rolling back the 1963 fare increase. He argued that D.C. Transit System's unfair profits made as a result of the increase should be put in a special transit fund for the use of bus riders to fight the latest proposal for a higher fare.

On January 12, 1967, the commission granted a temporary increase in bus fare of about 2.5 cents per ride. Flor calculated that the interim increase gave D.C. Transit System about two-thirds of the added revenue it had sought. The commission planned to hold additional public hearings before making a final decision. The increase was to be discontinued on March 15 if the commission had not decided on a permanent fare by then.

Within days, SNCC and other civil rights groups went to court seeking an injunction against the interim fare increase. By the end of the month, courts had ruled that the commission did not have sufficient justification for the increase. The interim fare ended after 2 weeks.

On March 13, the commission approved an increase in the price of four tokens to 98 cents, with increases for Maryland riders as well. According to Lee Flor, the increase gave D.C. Transit System \$900,000 less than Chalk had asked for. He called the decision “disheartening and disappointing.” The approved increase “neither satisfied nor solves the serious problems of the transit system and it neither satisfies nor solves the problems of the riding public.” He saw no alternative but to appeal to Congress for an immediate hearing on a subsidy “in the same manner as is done for other large American cities.” (In other cities, State and local tax revenue provided the subsidies. The Federal Government could not provide funds to subsidize transit services.)

The next day, Chalk said he would pursue another alternative. At a news conference he said, “It’s my firm intention to sell the transit system.” He said he had paid \$25 million for the company in 1956; that was the “bottom price” for the company at this time. He hoped to complete the sale within 60-90 days.

“I don’t think I should continue with the bus company, for a variety of reasons.” Under the 1956 Act of Congress, he was entitled to a fair profit. He pointed out that businesses such as the downtown department stores were not hated because they earned a reasonable profit, “but a transit operator is a different animal. Eventually it will develop that the people of Washington will dislike me in ever-increasing amounts.” He was aware of several offers for the company, but suggested that WMATA acquire it. Chairman Tobriner of WMATA said the idea was interesting and promised the agency would consider it.

On March 30, Chalk met with WMATA to discuss purchase of the bus company. A WMATA spokesman said Chalk “reiterated his desire to sell” the company for about \$25 million. A committee established to consider the issue did not make a counteroffer.

Chalk also approached Congress about the possibility of a subsidy. At Chalk’s request, Chairman McMillan introduced a subsidy bill and attended a hearing held by a House District subcommittee chaired by Representative Dowdy on May 23. Chalk told the subcommittee that his company was caught between rising costs (up 60 percent in 11 years) and pressure to keep fares low (increased only 25 percent during that same time). The bill would assure the company a profit of 6.5 percent of operating revenue or the total of all bus and charter revenue. Chalk said he would keep the company if the bill became law.

Chairman McMillan told Chalk, “I think it is only fair for Congress to see you receive what Congress intended in 1956.” A bill of this type should have been approved 5 or 6 years earlier. “I hope we can do something to help you. It would be disastrous to let the federal government take over the bus company.”

Toward the end of the hearing, Thomas F. Moyer, the District’s assistant corporation counsel, appeared to introduce a letter from the District commissioners objecting to the bill, with White House support, because it would be a “cost-plus” arrangement that would require the District to

make up the difference between Chalk's profit and the 6.5 percent. The commissioners joined with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Commission in opposing the bill because of the way the rate of return would be calculated. The bill based the subsidy on gross expenses without reference to investment. They were concerned that the bill would penalize District taxpayers for service that extended into the suburbs.

At the end of May, the company announced a deficit of \$1 million in 1966, largely due to increased costs. In 1965, the company had lost \$339,692. The company expected to show a profit in 1967 because of the recently approved fare increases.

[Flor, Lee, "D.C. Transit Seeks End of Cut Rate on Tokens," *The Evening Star*, October 18, 1966; Still, Larry A., "Barry Hits Crime Bill, Bus Fare Rise Request," *The Evening Star*, October 22, 1966; "Transit Fare Rollback Suit Data Is Filed," *The Evening Star*, November 14, 1966; Flor, Lee, "Bus Tokens to Go Up 2½ Cents," *The Evening Star*, January 12, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Rights Groups To Sue Over Bus Fare Rise," *The Sunday Star*, January 15, 1967; "Court Asked To bar Rise In Bus Fare," *The Evening Star*, January 19, 1967; "Bus Fare Upset May Help Speed Final Decision," *The Evening Star*, January 28, 1967; "Who Gets Extra Money? Bus Fare Rise Foes Ask," *The Sunday Star*, January 29, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Bus Token Rise Is Granted to D.C. Transit," *The Evening Star*, March 13, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Chalk Says He Will Sell Bus Firm," *The Evening Star*, March 14, 1967; Flor, Lee, "D.C. Leaders Oppose Subsidized Transit Profit," *The Evening Star*, May 23, 1967; "Chalk's Bid to Get Transit Subsidy Hits Opposition," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, May 24, 1967; "D.C. Transit Posts Deficit Of \$1 Million," *The Evening Star*, May 31, 1967]

Meet General Jackson Graham

On March 17, WMATA announced the selection of General Jackson Graham as general manager of the regional transit agency. The 52-year old Graham, recently retired after 30 years in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, took the oath of office shortly after the WMATA directors selected him. After the brief ceremony, he said that rapid transit "is the only practical way to solve the problem of the terrible surface congestion in this area." For the system to pay its own way as Congress wished, the system would have to be functional and comfortable to lure people out of their automobiles. He pledged to do his best to provide such a system.

One of the lessons he had learned as the U.S. Army moved him around the world was the value of taking advantage of "the know-how and continuity" of permanent staff. Referring to NCTA staff, he said, "I certainly hope 95 percent of these people make the transition with us" when NCTA closed at the end of September.

Graham had been born in Mosier, Oregon, in 1915. He graduated from Oregon State College in 1936 with a degree in civil engineering. He joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, serving in Europe during World War II, rising to the temporary rank of Colonel just before the end of the war. He was the Corps' Chief of Personnel in Washington, a sensitive position that gave him contact with high-ranking officials. Professor Schrag added:

In 1960 Graham almost became engineer commissioner for the District of Columbia. Instead Frederick Clarke got that job, and Graham – now a brigadier general – was sent to Cincinnati to command the Ohio River Division. From there, in 1963, he earned promotion to major general and the post of director of civil works, commanding 30,000 troops and civilians engaged on corps navigation and flood control projects nationwide.

In thirty-three years in the army, Graham had never missed a day of work. But the demands of the new job, coupled with lingering damage from a childhood case of rheumatic fever, wore out Graham's aortic valve. In 1966 he underwent open-heart surgery to replace the valve, suffering a heart attack as a complication. Although he recovered, he retired from the army on full disability.

General Graham and his wife planned to enjoy a peaceful retirement in a motor home. However, General Mathe, heading the WMATA committee charged with finding a general manager, contacted General Graham to ask about his interest in the position. At first, General Graham was not interested. He changed his mind because of his first-hand experience with “the terrible surface congestion” local commuters faced. He also attended a March 2 meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, as Lee Flor recounted, “sitting quietly in the background.” He was impressed. “These are my bosses now,” he said.

One concern was that General Graham's military career might be a liability because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was “a favorite target of conservationists and civic groups.” Flor offered some reasons why that would not be problem:

Graham, however, is a soft-spoken individual with a broad sense of humor.

During his Army career, Graham was “non-West point,” but he still rose to one of the highest posts in the Corps. During his tours of duty here in the United States, he always lived off-post, among civilians.

His personal hobby is a most unmilitary one – tinkering with a model railroad set with 400 feet of track, which he built with his son. Now, at age 52, Jackson Graham is starting a new career, combining his lifelong passion for building things with his personal interest in transportation.

Writing for his 2006 book, Professor Schrag described General Graham from the perspective of a time long after his full career at WMATA was known:

Graham's manner remained so soldierly that his staff called him “General” and a reporter was reduced to describing him in military clichés: “ramrod straight . . . broad shouldered . . . square jawed . . . his hair so closely cropped that he looks bald.” He stood six feet tall, stayed slim, and wore broad suits as the closest civilian equivalent to his old army uniforms He was used to exerting authority and being obeyed. Having run the Corps of Engineers' entire civil works program, he was used to the scale of the project, able to think in billion-dollar terms Graham admired men who, in his words, “got

things done,” including generals Patton and MacArthur and the somewhat dictatorial planner Robert Moses. He too wanted to get things done.

Yet Graham was more complex than these stereotypes suggest. He had come up in the corps through personnel, and therefore had more personal skills than the average general. Before meeting the NCTA’s top staff, for example, he memorized not only all their names but also the names of their children. Although his weakened heart prevented him from fully participating in the Authority softball team, he would occasionally take a turn at bat, leaving his wife, Mabel Lee, to run the bases. Architects found Graham cultured and able to discuss color theory and graphic design. More significantly, he could work with politicians. As Graham himself later put it, “the reason I was hired . . . was not because I was a master builder or a manager of public works, but because I’d been successful at getting over \$1 billion a year out of Congress for the civil works program.” And he recognized “the social and cultural aspects” of large public works projects, telling a reporter “the days when there can be a Robert Moses shaping a community to his own vision are over.”

He could see the overall goal of WMATA, but also the engineering, architectural, construction, and public relations aspects of the project:

Yet he refused to let his holistic understanding insulate him from the details. He would constantly astonish his subordinates with his knowledge of their particular duties. And he awed them with his example. He slept five hours a night and spent six days a week in the office, using Sundays to tour Metro construction sites. As tunnels progressed, Graham roared through them on his Yamaha dirt bike, often with Mabel Lee clinging behind him. On Monday morning he would summon to his office any contractor in whose section he had spotted a flaw. Yet if he found a problem with a subordinate’s work, he would always try to correct the mistake and shield the errant staffer from the board of directors’ questions, rather than demoting or embarrassing him. Unsurprisingly, his deputies responded with intense loyalty.

His work would officially begin on October 1, 1967. In the meantime, General Graham intended to visit cities such as Montreal and San Francisco that had or were planning subways.

General Graham and Mabel Lee lived at 2836 Fort Scott Drive in Arlington, Virginia. The home, built in 1950, was off South Eads Drive. The main road in the area was U.S. 1/Jefferson Davis Highway across the Potomac River from Washington National Airport. [Schrag, pages 144-145; Flor, Lee, “New Transit Head Hopes To Keep NCTA Staff,” *The Evening Star*, March 18, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Transit Aide Started Young,” *The Evening Star*, March 20, 1967]

Deleting the Columbia Heights Spur

When Chairman Natcher’s District appropriations subcommittee held hearing in March 1967 to discuss the city’s FY 1968 budget, Airis reported that the cost of completing the District’s Interstate network had increased by about \$160 million. Instead of \$550 million (\$489 million in Federal 90-percent funds), as previously reported, the system would cost \$639 in Interstate

construction funds, matched by \$60 million in District funds. Airis said the 31-percent increase was due to three factors. Two factors related to NCPC, namely delays caused in part by policy disputes with NCPC and design changes dictated by NCPC, such as extensive tunneling. However, Airis said the main cause of the increase was “the yearly escalation in land and construction costs” as the District awaited approvals.

Policy disputes with NCPC had taken their toll on the cost and schedule, but Airis thought the city could meet the October 1973 deadline for completing the Interstate System, “provided, of course, that planning decisions continue to be made and that further cutbacks or freezing of [Federal] program funds are not imposed.”

General Mathe described the problem posed by NCPC:

It has . . . been my observation that we are not out of the woods yet on this program; that each decision made at the Planning Commission is almost a forced decision; and that we still have . . . many difficult decisions to obtain from the Planning Commission.

He said that NCPC “keeps going back to the controversy of freeways versus no freeways, and therefore each decision is made only after we re-travel some of the same area over and over again.”

Chairman Natcher made clear that “on this committee, we have believed sincerely for a number of years that there is a place in our Capital City for the freeway system . . . along with a rapid transit system.” He was not happy about the progress of the balanced transportation system. The May 1966 Policy Advisory Committee agreement was a promising development but now, NPS had voted in NCPC to block the Three Sisters Bridge. Chairman Natcher warned Airis:

Now, if at any time in the future, Mr. Airis, they attempt to proceed as they have done in the past, we will take the same action that we took last year, and I say that to you frankly . . . we are not going to let them do this to you. [Flor, Lee, “Natcher Warns District On Freeways, Subway,” *The Evening Star*, April 11, 1967; “D.C. Freeway Cost Estimate Is Increased by \$160 Million,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, April 11, 1967]

NCTA was facing questions around this time as the Department of the Interior appropriations subcommittee considered its request for \$400,000 to cover expenses before it went out of business 3 months into FY 1968 on September 30. The subcommittee was critical of NCTA. Representative Julia Hansen told McCarter, “I see no greater proximity to a transit operation here today than I saw five years ago The committee is getting a little unhappy.” Referring to the deleted Columbia Heights line, she told him:

It seems to me that every time I pick up the paper there is a proposed change in a routing or a change in a station Your agency has spent thousands of dollars in studies for the routing of this line prior to the enactment of your authorizing legislation. Now it appears these expenditures were not particularly productive.

McCarter explained that NCTA had eliminated the Columbia Heights line in a cost-cutting move as it began developing a rail rapid transit system beyond the 25-mile shortened system Congress had approved.

Representative Hansen also criticized Maryland and Virginia officials for not developing a financing plan for needed extensions into the suburbs. She warned that she would not be receptive if WMATA came back to Capitol Hill for more money to extend the system. McCarter told her, "I suspect they will have to come back to the federal government for more money." He added that WMATA's directors would "have the most difficult job of any transit board that I have ever known." [Flor, Lee, "Subway Plan Slowness Criticized in Congress," *The Evening Star*, April 13, 1967]

Professor Schrag explained the challenge facing WMATA:

Whereas the NCTA had been responsible primarily to Congress, WMATA had to please its eight constituent jurisdictions as well. Rather than sticking to thrifty plans that Whitener could sell to his fellow representatives, the new Authority was tempted to think big in an effort to please as many people in as many places as it could.

Knowing that NCTA would cease to exist on September 30, 1967, the agency and the authority began coordinating early:

The transition began in the fall of 1966. The NCTA Advisory Board dissolved, replaced by the new WMATA board, but the NCTA staff remained, and for most of 1967 this WMATA-NCTA hybrid made key decisions about route planning, as well as the architectural decisions With the Advisory Board gone, the transition was cordial and gradual. McCarter was happy to return to his interrupted retirement, though he did agree to continue as administrator until the NCTA was fully phased out.

NCTA and WMATA shared office space, and about 50 percent of NCTA employees, including Deputy Administrator Quenstedt, transferred to WMATA. The first outside employee hired was Delmer Ison, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission official who had been critical of Stolzenbach's 1962 report. [Schrag, page 104]

As the hybrid organization began considering where to expand the rail rapid transit system, the decision to delete the Columbia Heights spur would resurface throughout the year. A mid-city line along 7th Street and its Maryland extension as Georgia Avenue emerged in late 1966. It would blend with an effort led by the Reverend Fauntroy to renew Shaw, a neighborhood between North Capitol and 15th Streets, NW. The line also would serve the downtown department stores and Howard University.

Dr. Edwards, the Howard University professor who also held seats on NCPC and the NCTA Advisory Board, encouraged NCTA to support the line, as Professor Schrag wrote:

In early 1967 he asked McCarter, "Walter, if you eliminate the Columbia Heights Line, do you propose a substitution or some modification along the Georgia [sic] Corridor?"

McCarter had little choice but to answer that yes, if funds were available, a third trunk line would be desirable.

With the mid-city line in the plan, the District commissioners and NCPC endorsed deleting the Columbia Heights spur:

Although both the NCTA and WMATA regarded service to the inner city as a lower priority than long-distance commuting, neither agency ever proposed abandoning the inner city entirely. [Schrag, pages 106-108]

As Chairman Whitener's subcommittee held a hearing on the change to the 7th Street corridor, McCarter said the proposal emerged from heavy lobbying by Cabinet officials. As he told reporters after the hearing, Federal Aviation Administrator William F. McKee approached NCTA about service for employees in FAA headquarters on Independence Avenue at 7th Street, SW. (The FAA is housed in its own building, not in the Department of Transportation headquarters that would be located at 400 7th Street, SW., or more recently at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.) McKee formed a committee that included Secretary Boyd, HUD Secretary Weaver, and representatives of the Departments of Defense and Treasury, the Smithsonian Institution, and others, all with offices in the new southwest quadrant. The committee concluded that 85,000 people would be working in the area by 1985 and urged NCTA to provide a rail rapid transit line for them. McCarter said:

The first responsibility of the subway is to get people to jobs, and the modification is the way to do it. Without the subway, the freeways won't be able to handle that flow.

He pointed out that the Independence Avenue line would provide far more revenue than the four-station Columbia Heights line. He added that even without the lobbying, he would have recommended the change. [Hoagland, Jim, "Lobbying Is Cited In Subway Change," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, July 27, 1967]

Civic and business leaders formed a committee in early August to lobby for retention of the Columbia Heights branch line. Ruth R. Webster, president of the anti-poverty group CHANGE, Inc., headed the group. She said the line would serve 500,000 people [sic], many of whom were without a car. "The subway plans call for fancy stations and facilities. What is needed is a good basic subway system . . . the frosting, in the form of fancy stations, could come later." She accused McCarter of "giving way to lobby pressures by federal agencies."

With elimination of the spur, the rapid rail system would serve mainly suburbanites, "depriving people in the city's poorest and most densely populated section of mass transit." Another committee member said that without the spur, the result would be a "lily-white" suburban line along Connecticut Avenue. The committee argued that the spur line would serve as many commuters as the proposed Independence Avenue line because many area residents commuted during off-peak hours, compared with the 9-to-5 workers the Independence Avenue line would serve. ["Panel Formed To Fight for Subway Link," *The Evening Star*, August 7, 1967; Gregory, John, "Loss of Subway Fought By Columbia Heights," *The Evening Star*, August 10, 1967]

On August 23, the ad hoc Columbia Heights committee testified before Chairman Whitener's subcommittee. McCarter had testified earlier that the Columbia Heights spur was not practical. Studies pointed out that people would use the system only if transfers from buses or cars to subway saved considerable time. The Columbia Heights line would not save enough time to attract riders.

Webster replied to that claim by pointing out that Maryland and northern Virginia needed construction workers, clerks, maids, and other workers who could not reach the area without transit:

A subway system that serves Columbia Heights will allow such workers to easily reach these Virginia and Maryland jobs. This will benefit the employers and other suburban residents while reducing welfare and unemployment in Columbia Heights.

She said that "to remove the Columbia Heights line would be to break faith with the 500,000 low income residents of the city."

Reed Scott, president of the Columbia Heights Businessmen's Association, warned that deleting the line would "create a large 'Watts' area in the center of our capital city by encircling it with this ultramodern rapid rail system and denying the use of that system to the very people who need it most." ["Columbia Heights Need For Subway Debated," *The Evening Star*, August 23, 1967]

Despite these arguments, the House District Committee approved the bill on October 5. The House took up the bill on a Monday District day, October 9. The bill was adopted without floor debate, but the committee report and extended remarks were added to the record. [Amend the National Capital Transportation Act of 1965, *Congressional Record-House*, October 9, 1967, pages 28152-28156]

As the Senate District Committee considered the bill, George F. Bason, Jr., Professor of Law at American University, testified that "a credibility gap" existed between WMATA and "the people who live in the inner city." The problem was that the passenger studies justifying deletion of the Columbia Heights spur were based on peak period usage during weekdays. The studies did not consider off-peak or weekend usage. "Simply as a matter of common sense, it is very puzzling that the most heavily traveled and most profitable bus line in the entire transit system would become the least heavily traveled and least profitable subway line." Professor Bason argued that if these trips were taken into account, WMATA's argument in favor of deleting the line would be in error.

General Graham expressed confidence in the study. He believed that the 7th Street line, planned for construction after the initial District system was completed, would better serve the Columbia Heights area than the spur.

John Immer, president of the Federation of Citizens' Associations, wrote to urge the committee to delay a vote until the new city government had time to review the issue. Immer indicated that Mayor Washington was "obviously upset that the Senate has been given incorrect information" by Assistant Corporation Counsel Kneipp. The mayor, Immer said, also was upset that he had

not been asked to testify. [“Route Shift For Subway Challenged,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 16, 1967; “Error Hinted in Survey For Subway,” *The Evening Star*, November 16, 1967]

On November 27, Mayor Washington supported the change in a letter to Committee Chairman Bible. Mayor Washington said he had been asked to testify, but declined because he had not yet had time to review WMATA’s report on the issue. He relied on action by the former Board of Commissioners in endorsing the change because of the importance of expediting construction of “this urgently needed mass transit service.” He said he had asked WMATA to study mass transit needs in the Columbia Heights area and along the 14th Street corridor, among several areas. In addition, he expected WMATA to proceed “as expeditiously as may be possible” on the 7th Street corridor line. [“SW Subway Line Favored by Mayor,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 28, 1967; “Mayor Backs New Plan For Subway,” *The Evening Star*, November 28, 1967]

The Senate District Committee delayed action until Mayor Washington offered support of the bill. Assured of his support and that the 7th Street line was part of the regional system, the committee approved the House bill and took it to the Senate floor on District Monday, December 11. As in the House, the Senate approved the bill without discussion as well as directing a reprinting of the committee report. [Transit Development Program for the District of Columbia, *Congressional Record-Senate*, December 11, 1967, pages 35660-35663]

President Johnson signed the act on December 20, 1967 (P.L. 90-220).

(Ultimately, Columbia Heights would secure a Metro station on the Green and Yellow lines.)

Creating a System

While the Columbia Heights issue moved toward resolution, NCTA/WMATA was advancing the 25-mile District system that Congress had approved. It also was planning extensions in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs.

As early as April 14, McCarter warned WMATA that estimates for the original system were low because he had not been allowed to anticipate inflation. Federal agencies such as NCTA were prohibited from estimating inflation or escalation of costs, but subway systems in other cities were experiencing inflation of about 5 percent a year in construction costs. NCTA’s estimates, as a result, were about 15 percent too low.

General Graham told the board that the first subway line would be along the G Street corridor, not Connecticut Avenue as previously stated. According to the *Post*, the switch was made after talks with McCarter:

Graham and McCarter agreed that it makes more sense to construct G Street ahead of Connecticut Avenue, since the G Street line is pivotal for the entire area rapid transit system. The impetus behind the change was provided by the WMATA’s vice chair, James Gleason.

Harry Weese, who was in charge of architectural design, displayed subway design concepts.

Born in 1915, Weese had graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Before World War II, he was employed as an architect by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, but after the war, he established his own practice in 1947, Harry Weese and Associates. His attitude about city development was:

Urban life must be maintained, improved, and made attractive again. But this cannot happen if each generation knocks everything down and starts over.

As noted earlier, Weese had been part of the team brought in by William Zeckendorf during redevelopment of the District's southwest quadrant. Among other things, Weese designed Arena Stage, the quadrant's theater. Professor Schrag said of Weese:

As befitted a banker's son, Weese had a reputation for thrift Most important, as it turned out, was his experience with prototype design, such as his work on a chain of dealerships for Cummins Engines and supermarkets for Purity Foods. Weese had even designed a prototype skyscraper for corporations that could not afford a flashy signature design. This was just the sort of thinking needed by an agency hoping to build dozens of transit stations quickly and cheaply.

When NCTA invited him to submit a proposal for the design contract, his experience with prototypes proved critical:

Whereas other finalists came into the interview eager to talk about the latest developments in concrete, Weese focused on the people who would ride the system. Moreover, his supermarket experience showed that he knew how to design spaces for people in motion.

NCTA hired him on March 10, 1966. He worked with NCTA's engineering consultant, De Leuw, Cather and Company, to adapt his ideas to the unique circumstances of the Washington area.

The *Post* described some of his early ideas:

Weese emphasized that the Washington subway would be a "rugged, basic, simple thing." He said that in some stations, no facing would be used on the natural stone found below ground to emphasize the subway's link with nature.

WMATA member Frederick Babson said that unadorned rock far below the surface might be natural for cave men, "but there are not many of them left around here."

"There are none left in Maryland," Gleason said.

With Gleason expressing concern about the delay in the start of construction, Weese stated that he would complete final designs within 2 months for the stations at Union Station and Judiciary Square. [Severo, Richard, "G Street Line to Be First In City's Subway System," *The Washington*

Post and Times Herald, April 15, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Subway Figure Appears 15% Too Low Already,” *The Evening Star*, April 14, 1967; Schrag, pages 74-78]

On June 21, Weese presented detailed architectural designs to the Commission of Fine Arts for the subway station at Judiciary Square. The station would be beneath 3rd, 4th, D, and E Streets. NW. The design was intended to establish a pattern for all stations, but a NCTA spokesman said:

Each station will be different from the others, but all will have certain unifying resemblances based on similarities or harmonies in design, materials, lighting and principles of use.

As soon as we have obtained approval of design concepts for these basic matters, contracts can be let for design of all 29 stations.

The prototype contained several common features, including use of natural or nonsynthetic materials, such as granite and bronze where possible; bridge mezzanines over the tracks and open to the station; brilliant floodlighting of ceilings and walls from recessed and free-standing fixtures; escalators from below-surface stations to the street; high-ceilinged spacious station interiors; and sound-absorbent surfacing of track beds. Platforms would be 600 feet long. As a safety and efficiency factor, ticket sales would not take place on the platforms but on a different level. [Lewis, Robert J., “Board Gets Subway Station Plan,” *The Evening Star*, June 21, 1967]

The 1966 legislation approving the interstate compact authority gave it responsibility for developing a regional system similar to NCTA’s 1962 proposal. The new map would have to be sufficient to encourage jurisdictions outside the District of Columbia to issue bonds or find some other means of financing extensions. Professor Schrag explained:

Such a map had to be, in the words of NCTA veteran Tom Deen, “big, bold, glamorous, fast, extensive, and, above all, [had to appear] to serve as much of the affected area as possible from the day the system first opens.” Given these requirements, Deen observed, “it’s easier to sell a billion dollar project than a hundred million dollar project.”

With a start on construction virtually assured, the rail rapid transit system took on a reality that it had not possessed when NCTA Administrator Stolzenbach unveiled his proposal in 1962. As Professor Schrag put it, “planners began to consider real routes in every direction”:

On the other hand, the staff had to keep some check on suburban appetites. One Capitol Hill observer noted, “WMATA members from each suburban jurisdiction will be under political pressure to nail down extensive facilities in their own jurisdictions for the home folks who help foot the bill Thus there arises a two-fold pressure, opposing forces which political leadership must resolve: Building and maintaining support for the system – and the tax money to pay for it – and resisting pressures to expand it beyond what’s practical. If WMATA log-rolling leads to a vastly overblown system requiring an unreasonable request to Congress, we could be in trouble.”

Because most of the funding for construction would come from bonds, planners sought lines that would carry the most passengers and, therefore, generate sufficient revenue to retire the bonds:

Moreover, the focus on bonds required planners to maximize projected patronage for 1990, though a subway tunnel would last far longer. But planners work with the political realities of their day, and they were apt to strike any segment that was not projected to pay for itself from the fare box within a few decades. Similarly, while planners acknowledged the desirability of serving employment centers, they concluded that service to the urban core would attract more riders and therefore had to be a greater priority.

Like their counterparts in 1962, planners saw existing rail lines, such as the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Union Station to Rockville), as a way to reduce costs by including ground level or elevated trains. Other attractive possibilities included the railroad's Washington Branch (to Baltimore via College Park and Greenbelt), the Pennsylvania Railroad line to Bowie via Landover in Maryland; and several lines in Virginia (the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac line to Colchester via Washington National Airport and Old Town Alexandria; and the Washington and Old Dominion line from Alexandria to Herndon near Dulles International Airport).

Another option was to use freeway right-of-way to reduce the cost of land acquisition. A potential example was I-66 in Virginia, but the planned median within the Capital Beltway was too narrow for the rail rapid transit service. [Schrag, pages 108-111]

To bring jurisdictions and planners together, WMATA met with local officials on July 28-30, 1967, including the Maryland and Virginia transit commissions, at Airlie House, a conference center in Warrenton, Virginia. Staff presented several versions of the system, with ridership and cost projections shown. After much discussion, the participants "pulled together elements from the two rapid transit alternatives to produce a single, consensus system," as Professor Schrag put it.

The system dropped destinations such as Laurel, Maryland, and Centreville, Virginia, that appeared too far away from downtown to be financially practical. As a compromise, the Capital Beltway became the practical limit for the end stations that would be busy intermodal transportation hubs serving buses and commuter rail lines. The Capital Beltway would provide access to parking garages at the terminal stations. The system included lines through Alexandria, Silver Spring, and other built-up suburbs.

Gleason told reporters that the Airlie House meeting did not result in final maps. WMATA planned to return to Airlie House in early September to develop the map for a regional transit system and a financial program that could be presented to the public in the fall. Babson added that WMATA was still studying proposals for commuter railroad facilities along existing railroad lines. [Schrag, page 112; Flor, Lee, "Rapid Transit Lines Plan Delayed Till September," *The Evening Star*, August 1, 1967]

While these discussions were underway, WMATA found that NCPC would pose obstacles to rail rapid transit plans. The directors said they were amazed that NCPC had not approved a rapid

transit station at Rhode Island Avenue, NE., and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks. NCPC wanted to see a model of the station and some members indicated they would prefer the line to be underground instead of elevated in the vicinity of Rhode Island Avenue, a move that would add \$14 million in construction costs.

WMATA's general counsel, John R. Kennedy, argued that the authority was not legally subject to NCPC and could bypass its decisions. On that basis, Gleason did not see why WMATA should pay for a scale model of the station. According to the *Star*:

Gleason said that the transit authority "wants the advice of the planning commission," but he went on to say that the agency was going to do everything it could to avoid bottlenecks.

"The B&O says it's ready to sit down and negotiate, but the project is faced with procrastination by the planning commission," Gleason said. "The planning commission is supposed to consider the transit station at its September meeting, and the transit authority may decide after that meeting how it will deal with the planning commission's requests for models and postponements for transit stations." ["Subway Panel in Hurry, May Ignore Planners," *The Evening Star*, August 4, 1967]

As noted earlier, legislation was under consideration, with White House support, to put WMATA's general manager, General Graham, on NCPC to replace the NCTA Administrator when the agency went out of business.

(Lee Flor, reporting on the legislation, added that Representative Harsha, the highway booster on the Public Works Committee, had introduced legislation to abolish NCPC. The legislation would transfer the "functions, powers and duties" of NCPC to the District commissioners.) [Flor, Lee, "Subway Builders to Get Seat on Planning Board," *The Sunday Star*, August 6, 1967]

On August 22, WMATA held a ceremony to award the first design contract for the rail rapid transit system to Ammann and Whitney of New York. In cooperation with the architectural firm of Kent Cooper and Associates, the design firm would produce blueprints for Weese's concept of the station at Judiciary Square. The contract, for \$979,500, was the last step before construction could begin. Commissioner Tobriner, still a member of the WMATA board, said, "We've hit the last lap before we get a shovel into the ground." ["Contract Let On Design for Subway Here," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, August 23, 1967]

Plans for a return to Airlie House in early September had to be scrapped because WMATA and Virginia officials were unable to resolve issues, particularly involving whether the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad should be abandoned. WMATA wanted to build rail rapid transit for northern Virginia, but the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission wanted commuter rail service that could be instituted almost immediately along existing commuter rail lines. Babson, who was running for chairman of the Fairfax Board of Supervisors, also wanted time to consider a line along Columbia Pike, parallel to Shirley Highway, with a branch to Landmark Shopping Center (on Duke Street just off Shirley Highway) and one ending in Annandale. [Flor,

Lee, "Delay of Transit Talk May Bear on W&OD," *The Evening Star*, August 30, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Metro, Virginia Units Head for Transit Clash," *The Evening Star*, September 6, 1967]

These developments surprised some members of the WMATA board who thought officials had agreed on the map at the initial Airlie House conference. They had asked staff to develop cost estimates for the routes on that map.

Despite the uncertainty about northern Virginia, WMATA unveiled a 90-mile regional transit system on September 7, 1967. The system consisted of 80 miles of rail rapid transit and 10 miles of existing commuter railroads on the Washington and Old Dominion line. Much of the mileage outside of downtown would be above ground.

The District of Columbia's segment would include the north-south route in the 7th street corridor, subject to congressional approval. Deletion of the Columbia Heights line was not certain, but WMATA did not include it on the map. WMATA estimated that the proposed system would cost between \$1.5 billion and \$2.2 billion.

Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland each would have 25 miles of rail rapid transit. Maryland termini in the vicinity of the Capital Beltway for the lines were St. Barnabas Road, Branch Avenue, Largo, Greenbelt Road, Glenmont, and Nicholson Lane.

In Virginia, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was still in discussion with WMATA in support of the commuter rail lines. WMATA argued that the existing tracks were poorly located and would take commuters on slow, roundabout trips before reaching rail rapid transit stations, thus undercutting use of the system. Relying on commuter rail might reduce costs in the short run, but would be more costly in the long run. [Flor, Lee, "Rapid Transit Ideas Unveiled," *The Evening Star*, September 7, 1967; "Network of 80 Miles With Suburban Ties Planned for Subway," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 8, 1967]

Officials met on October 20-21 to approve a final map of the Proposed Regional System (PRS). The result was a 95.6-mile rail rapid transit system, with 82 stations. WMATA's 39-page report on the PRS, released in December 1967, stated that the 82 stations would include 49 stations built underground, 29 stations at surface level, and 4 on elevated structures:

Platforms of all stations except those on the W&OD Shuttle Route [from Gallows Road to Herndon in the railroad right-of-way] will be 600 feet long to accommodate eight-car trains. The W&OD stations will have 300-foot platforms. The great majority of stations will have side platforms rather than center platforms. Every subway station will have a mezzanine level providing for centralized fare collection.

Stations will be attractive, well-lighted and air-conditioned for passenger comfort. In keeping with the Washington area, midtown stations will follow a basic design concept that is monumental and dignified. Outlying stations will be related to the area in which located. [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, *Proposed Regional Rapid Rail Transit Plan & Program*, December 1967, page 17]

WMATA would complete construction by 1981. Although engineering of the full network had not reached the point where WMATA could predict the staging of construction for all segments, the report did state:

Construction on the first segment in the downtown area is expected to begin in October, 1968. Service will be first provided on the segment from Dupont Circle, along G Street, Union Station, and the B&O Railroad to Rhode Island Avenue. [page 18]

WMATA estimated that 280 dwelling units and 160 business establishments would be displaced by construction of the full system. [page 17]

The system would cost an estimated \$2.4 billion, excluding bond interest. WMATA pointed out that the estimates of capital costs “were developed mainly as an economic tool for route and system comparison purposes”:

Thus, the estimates of cost shown are of an order of magnitude and not on an authoritative engineering cost basis. The estimated costs, however, are based on considerable experience and study accumulated by NCTA – the predecessor agency. [pages 15, 18]

Revenue estimates were based on a zoned fare structure and estimates of total yearly passengers reaching 281 million in 1990. The fare would be “calculated at 25 cents for the first zone and 10 cents for each additional zone.” Because the District of Columbia (defined as being within its original 10-mile square, including the portion that was returned to Virginia in 1846), had only two zones, the maximum fare for trips entirely within the city would be 35 cents. Outside the District line, the fare would increase in 10-cent increments as the train passed through each zone (shown as a series of concentric circles). [pages 25-27]

The report estimated that “revenues will be sufficient to cover all operating expenses and to repay approximately one-third of the costs of construction, equipment, and financing.” Revenue would come mainly from passenger fares, but would include advertising, concession leases, and other activities that would generate up to 2 percent of the gross farebox revenue. [pages 29, 31]

The balance, \$1.6 billion, would “have to be provided by the Federal and participating local governments.” WMATA had not made any firm decisions or even firm recommendations on how to finance this amount. “However, in order to provide some order of magnitude data for possible local obligations, the Authority has assumed at this stage of planning that the Federal government will supply two-thirds of the net project cost” or about \$1.1 billion. This two-thirds assumption was based on the normal matching ratio for the HUD transit program under the Urban Mass Transportation Act:

Assuming a Federal contribution of this magnitude, \$535 million would have to be supplied by the District of Columbia, and the local Virginia and Maryland jurisdictions.

Because trips would be multi-jurisdictional, allocating costs among these jurisdictions would require a formula that took into account construction costs, operating costs, ridership, and population, all in 1990, for the District, Maryland, and Virginia. Taking these figures into

account, WMATA allocated 35.2 percent of costs to the District (\$188 million), 37.4 percent to Maryland (\$200 million), and 27.4 percent (\$147 million) to Virginia, adding up to the one-third share of \$535 million. [pages 31-33]

Anticipated revenues after expenses would support \$810 million in revenue bonds. The bonds would be secured by a pledge of the gross revenue of the system and by long-term service contracts entered into with suburban transit commissions or local units of government. Maturity for the bonds would be set at 50 years from the issue date. WMATA assumed an average interest rate of 4 percent based on historical trends even though current rates were higher. [page 34]

Babson had been overruled on his idea of a Columbia Pike line. Staff argued that the line would not pay its own way. Babson, as the *Post* put it, “argued, pleaded and cajoled” for the line, but “to no avail.” In the end, he continued to believe that leaving the Columbia Pike line out of the system was a mistake, “but I want a regional system I won’t vote against it.” Officials decided to put the rail rapid transit line in the median of I-66 instead of routing it along the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad.

In Maryland, officials agreed to extend a line to Rockville instead of stopping it at the Capital Beltway.

Professor Schrag summarized the result:

The PRS had something for everybody. The federal core got service – mostly underground – to the Southwest office complexes as well as the Capitol, White House, Navy Yard, State Department, and Federal Triangle. The District of Columbia got the Mid-City line – a \$300 million investment in the inner city. Montgomery County got two long lines, one from Silver Spring to Glenmont, the other up the Wisconsin Avenue corridor – once slated for the Northwest Freeway – stretching to Rockville. Prince George’s County, which shares a longer border with the District, got four shorter lines, all of them ending roughly at the Beltway. Overall, 55 percent of the Maryland lines would be aboveground. Virginia got two long lines. By relying on the median strip of Interstate 66 in Vienna and on the RF&P and Southern Railway rights-of-way through Alexandria to Springfield, WMATA was able to project that 77 percent of the Virginia lines would be aboveground.

To mollify disappointed area officials, the PRS included “several thick, dashed lines indicating ‘future extensions,’ including the Columbia Pike line and extensions of the proposed lines far beyond the Beltway.” Lobbyist John Warrington declared that they “meant absolutely nothing,” but would help build political support for the PRS. [Schrag, page 112; Flor, Lee, “Views of Citizens, Agencies Asked on Rapid Transit Plan,” *The Sunday Star*, October 22, 1967; Severo, Richard, “Subway Plan Puts Trains Where the Action Is,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 22, 1967]

By the end of the year, WMATA received the good news that the system would not cost as much as expected. Consultants studying traffic projections reported that by 1990, the system would be carrying 281 million riders, about 9 million more than expected. The additional passengers

would provide more farebox revenue than previously forecast to support general obligation bonds. [Severo, Richard, "Bigger Subway to Cost Less, Planners Predict," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 16, 1967]

WMATA made the plan official in March 1968. With some adjustments, the board finalized the Adopted Regional System (ARS). The 98-mile ARS would cost \$1.828 billion in 1968 dollars, but with inflation, the cost was estimated to be \$2.525 billion for expenditure between 1968 and 1980. (Contrary to the usual practice, the actual ARS mileage, 97.2 miles, was rounded up to 98 miles, instead of down to 97 miles.) WMATA projected the Federal share at \$1.151 billion, with local jurisdictions providing \$575 million in matching funds.

By then, the rail rapid transit system finally had an official name. On the morning of February 9, 1968, WMATA's board of directors approved a plan to call the system "Metro" and to use "M" as the symbol at station entrances, underground, and on posters and other printed material. The board also adopted Helvetica typeface for all system signs and written matter, including the "M."

Before the vote, General Graham listed the advantages of naming the system Metro. Calling it a "subway" would have been a misnomer because much of it was going to be above ground. Moreover, Metro "has an international, cosmopolitan flavor and lacks the stigma of 'subway.'" No other system in the United States used the name, but it was widely used "in other great cities of the world, including Montreal, Paris, Milan, Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, Rotterdam and the various Russian systems." The international implication was appropriate because it "suited the international flavor of this city."

Graham said the "M" was chosen because it "obviously stands for 'Metro,'" was unique, and could be read from front or back. He said it was structurally the strongest letter in the alphabet. According to Professor Schrag, a member of Harry Weese's team, Massimo Vignelli, came up with Metro, the symbolic M, and the Helvetica typeface. Professor Schrag wrote that with Vignelli's help, "Metro had raised its banner." ["Planners Vote for 'Metro' To Avoid Subway Stigma," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 10, 1968; "Rapid Transit To Be Known As 'Metro,'" *The Evening Star*, February 9, 1968; Schrag, page 118]

Making Connections

On September 12, 1967, the District's United Planning Organization (UPO) conducted its usual business meeting. Then citizens pleaded for UPO's support of a routing they had developed for the center section of the North Leg Freeway. It would be built in a tunnel along New York Avenue, NW., linking the Center Leg and North Central Freeways. The tunnel, from Mt. Vernon Place to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks, would not displace any families, the citizens said. Mrs. Vivian Alsbrook said citizens did not object to needed freeways, but they needed their homes. "We don't know where we're going. I'm out here to beg you. Leave us our homes." The UPO approved the routing. [James, Betty, "Antipoverty Board Endorses Alternate Freeway Route," *The Evening Star*, September 13, 1967]

UPO had no authority over the routing of freeways, but Director Airis did examine the proposal. In a speech to the Mid-City Housing Alliance, he said, "The rub is that not all of this section can

be tunneled, and some homes will probably be torn down on the north side of New York because an eight-lane freeway is wider than the avenue.” [“Airis Cites ‘Rub’ in Loop Tunnel Plan,” *The Evening Star*, October 6, 1967]

During NCPC’s September 15 meeting, members gave final clearance for the District to build an eight-lane bridge over Rhode Island Avenue for an interchange at the south end of the North-Central Freeway east of the railroad tracks near 10th Street, NW. The interchange would connect the North-Central Freeway to two other freeways. Opponents opposed bridge construction because they feared that the District would argue that the millions spent on the structure would be wasted if they did not build the rest of the freeway from Rhode Island Avenue to Silver Spring.

During the meeting, General Mathe attempted to secure NCPC approval of the Three Sisters Bridge. “We ought to stop playing around with the highway projects.” His motion to add the bridge to the agenda was defeated, 5 to 5. The tie was possible because James Shotwell, representing Federal Highway Administrator Bridwell, abstained, citing Secretary Boyd’s review of the bridge question. [Flor, Lee, “Freeway Span Gets Okay,” *The Evening Star*, September 16, 1967]

Shotwell’s abstention prompted Representative Gude to send a letter to Secretary Boyd. Shotwell’s action was “a severe setback . . . which further extends the seven year delay in construction of the Three Sisters Bridge.” The bridge “has been studied and restudied by consultants, and approved, disapproved, and reapproved by the planning commission, subject to the findings by your department”:

Failure of the Department of Transportation to produce a decision, failure of its spokesman to suggest at a recent meeting of four congressmen when such a decision might be forthcoming, and failure of your representative on the planning commission to vote even for renewed consideration, prompts me to conclude that the Department has become bogged down in the same sort of indecision that has plagued highway construction in the District for years.

He urged Secretary Boyd to personally “intervene in your department’s deliberations, to end the impasse and to clear the way for construction of the bridge.” [“Transportation Dept. Hit For Bridge Indecision,” *The Sunday Star*, September 17, 1967; “Gude Blasts Delay on Bridge,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 17, 1967]

A blue-ribbon task force of architects reported their findings to Secretary Udall on September 17, 1967, regarding Potomac River restoration. The report called for a 5-year, \$250 million program for a model Potomac River. The group called for rejuvenation of the Georgetown waterfront, including replacement of the Whitehurst Freeway and the industrial feel of the present waterfront. In their place, the task force called for an esplanade “strongly defined by a waterside development of consistent heights and harmonious design, composed of apartment houses and compatible commercial buildings.”

The task force also rejected the Three Sisters Bridge. The architects favored “stopping the practice of treating the river and the open riverside as property freely available for exploitation by highway departments”:

The River’s environs are sacrificed to highways. Ill-considered bridges are placed athwart the River, with overbearing mazes of ramps and roads, and others, similarly out of keeping, are projected.

Secretary Udall, who had asked the task force for an independent analysis, called it “a very bold, very creative, very far-sighted report—it’s just what we wanted.” He did not, however, endorse the recommendations pending the work of the Department of the Interior’s interdepartmental task force on the issue. [Hornig, Roberta, “5-Year, \$250 Million Plan Urged for Model Potomac,” *The Sunday Star*, September 17, 1967; Wentworth, Eric, “Curbs Urged On Potomac Construction,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, September 17, 1967]

On September 29, Mayor Washington addressed the annual meeting of the Federal City Council, his first formal speech since taking the oath of office. He discussed a number of topics, but on transportation, said he supported a balance of roads and rail rapid transit. Orderly development, he said, must include freeways as well as the subway, but he emphasized the importance of housing.

His suggestion that the city must take a fresh look at how to meet its transportation needs prompted ECTC to issue a statement accusing him of being a highway-lobby “puppet” who supported displacing people for freeways. The *Post* reported:

Apprised of the Committee statement, Washington promptly contacted Sam Abbott, the group’s publicity director, explained that he had in no way endorsed the city’s present highway program and invited the group to confer with him.

“I merely made the observation that we as a community are going to have to live with these things,” said Washington, “but that at the same time, people’s needs must be kept in perspective.”

After the telephone call, ECTC issued a second statement recognizing that Mayor Washington was willing to meet with all groups before making decisions. “We therefore are accepting his invitation and will meet with him this weekend.”

Mayor Washington said he hoped the conversation conveyed the idea of “the open door. I want to hear from people if they have complaints. We can meet and talk things over.” [“Freeway Critics Reassured,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 1, 1967]

The Pooks Hill interchange of I-70S with the Capital Beltway had not worked efficiently since the opening of the circumferential in 1964. The interchange included two ramps, but not ramps connecting westbound motorists on the Capital Beltway who wanted to turn south onto Wisconsin Avenue. Motorists northbound on Wisconsin Avenue could not turn east onto the Capital Beltway. The missing ramps had been deleted in an economy move, but their absence resulted in motorists moving out-of-direction to continue their desired trips.

“Continuing confusion and complaints by commuters and traffic authorities,” the *Star* reported, “prompted Maryland Gov. Spiro T. Agnew to approve spending of \$400,000 from state roads emergency funds last May.” The Maryland State Roads Commission awarded the contract, with FHWA approval, in mid-October 1967. The State predicted the ramps would open in June 1968. [Christmas, Anne, “Beltway Ramps Due At Pooks Hill in June,” *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1967]

Montgomery County officials were concerned about their residents’ link to the District via MacArthur Boulevard parallel to the Potomac River. In the absence of the Three Sisters Bridge and a link via the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland side of the river, officials were looking for a solution in case the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers followed through on its threat to close the boulevard to protect the 100-year old pipes that gave the road its original name, Conduit Road. Army officials said traffic was “squashing” the conduit.

The parkway, if completed, would provide the needed alternative that would allow the closing of the boulevard but NPS had no plans to do so pending a final decision on the Three Sisters Bridge, which was to provide the southern connection.

On October 9, Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, and State officials met for the first time with Mayor Washington and Deputy Mayor Fletcher. The meeting covered a range of topics in addition to transportation. The *Star* described the meeting as “congenial but nothing specific was resolved.”

Back in Rockville, the Montgomery County Council approved a resolution calling for approval of the Three Sisters Bridge. The resolution, addressed to President Johnson, stated that adequate transportation was vital to the “orderly growth and development” of the county. The Three Sisters Bridge was a key element of the regional highway network. NCPC “has been requested to end more than seven years of discussion surrounding the proposed bridge and to approve its construction.” The county council endorsed the bridge and urged NCPC and the Department of Transportation “to take all measures necessary to assure prompt completion of this much-needed facility and related elements of the interstate highway system for the National Capital area.” [Christmas, Anne, “County Seeks Mayor’s Aid,” *The Evening Star*, October 10, 1967; Rovner Sandy, “‘Squeeze’ Is On Montgomery Road,” *The Baltimore Sun*, October 11, 1967; Winterble, Peter, “County Set For Fight Over Road,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 11, 1967]

NCPC unanimously agreed on October 12 to enlarge a central city urban renewal area. The proposal by the District’s RLA, with support of the District Department of Highways and Traffic, added 21 acres to the 95-acre Northwest No. 1 Urban Renewal Area. NCPC also approved construction of low- and moderate-income housing on a deck over the Center Leg Freeway.

The RLA would acquire the land and give some of it to the highway department that would build a double deck of concrete above the freeway between H, K, 2d and 3d Streets, NW., for 327 federally subsidized housing units on the top deck for families displaced by freeway construction along with an acre of recreation area. The bottom deck would contain parking spaces. One

possible advantage of the plan was that by advancing it under urban renewal, the District would not have to wait for Congress to complete work on air-rights legislation.

(On December 14, the Senate approved, without debate or a recorded vote, two air-rights bills introduced by Senator Tydings. One would allow the District to lease space above or below freeways for housing, offices, commercial buildings, or other purposes. The second bill would allow similar authority on city streets. House action was still needed before the District would have air-rights authority. [“2 D.C. Air Rights Bills Approved by Senate,” *The Evening Star*, December 14, 1967; “Air Rights, Pollution Bills Backed,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 15, 1967; Lease of Airspace, *Congressional Record-Senate*, December 14, 1967, pages 36670-36675])

The plan also affected the proposal to tunnel the North Leg Freeway under K Street, as the *Post* reported:

The decision will also affect the alignment of the east section of the K Street tunnel. The tunnel would have linked the Center Leg, which will terminate at New York Avenue, and the North Central Freeway, which will end at Rhode Island Avenue.

Highway Department engineers said yesterday that the only feasible route for the tunnel now is under New York Avenue, surfacing near Florida Avenue and going over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks to Rhode Island Avenue. [Hoagland, Jim, “Planners Approve Air-Right Housing,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 13, 1967; Lewis, Robert J., “Planners Approve Houses Over Road,” *The Evening Star*, October 12, 1967]

Representative Gude drove his own car to the end of Maryland’s George Washington Memorial Parkway on October 13. His car bounded over the last paved section. From there, he walked 1,000 feet of dirt roadway to Chain Bridge. There he watched traffic on both sides of the river as reported by the *Star*:

“Ridiculous situation,” was his comment as he stood near a picturesque 12-foot waterfall within sight of the bridge and viewed the early-morning rush hour at its peak on the Virginia side and the sharply contrasting county dirt road in Maryland.

Occasionally a southbound motorist followed the same path that Gude had taken—down the \$10 million “highway to nowhere” on the Maryland side of the river to the end of the cement ribbon and then over the edge, with a dump, to the dirt section

Commuters with sufficient derring-do to reach the lower end of the 1,000-foot unpaved roadway then met another major problem – a seemingly unending stream of traffic rushing in both directions across Chain Bridge.

At the entrance to the bridge each workday morning, Virginia-bound traffic travels north on Canal Road and makes a sharp left turn onto the bridge. If it kept straight instead of tuning left, it would wind up on the dirt roadway that has been frustrating Maryland motorists ever since paved portions of the parkway were built.

While Virginia-bound traffic moves over Chain Bridge from Washington, two lanes of Washington-bound automobiles are proceeding into sharp right turns, to head south on Canal Road. The screech of their tires drowns out the sound of the tumbling waterfall nearby.

The *Star* explained that construction of the parkway was linked to construction of the Three Sisters Bridge and I-266. However, above Chain Bridge, the rights-of-way were “so narrow they form a potential hazard to traffic.” District officials were trying to convince NPS to complete design of the extension so it would be ready for construction when the bridge was approved. “Until these matters are unraveled, the District refused to give permission to take the parkway onto Canal Road, which would require extensive rebuilding because of the monumental traffic congestion at Chain Bridge.”

Representative Gude said, “There simply has to be a solution to this, and it makes me even more keenly aware of the necessity for expediting the Three Sisters Bridge as the final link of the parkway in Georgetown.” He was thinking of meeting with Representative Broyhill, whose district began on the Virginia side of Chain Bridge, and Director Airis. He would argue that even if Three Sisters Bridge were approved, construction would take years. “We plan to ask the District Highway Department to look into a temporary redesign of this section, so that George Washington Memorial Parkway on the Maryland side can be used to relieve congestion on MacArthur Boulevard and other commuter routes.” He acknowledged the concern about Three Sisters Bridge destroying the beauty of the river, but pointed out that “the old Cabin John Bridge, which carries MacArthur Boulevard over the parkway, proves that bridges can be beautiful.” [Christmas, Anne, “Gude Inspects Montgomery’s Road to Nowhere,” *The Evening Star*, October 13, 1967]

The Court Rulings

Judge Alexander Holtzoff of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia heard arguments on October 17, in the civil suit brought by District citizens groups seeking to halt four freeway projects: North-Central Freeway, East Leg of the Inner Loop, Three Sisters Bridge, and Missouri Avenue Expressway. Roberts B. Owen, representing the groups, argued that Judge Holtzoff should halt the projects because the District had developed them in violation of the Highway Extension Act of 1893. As noted earlier, the 1893 Act required the compiling and public filing of a detailed map of the highway; public hearings for affected property owners; and limitation of new highways to 160 feet in width. The District must submit the map to NCPC for approval, after which it must be filed with the D.C. Surveyor’s office.

Owen presented a map to Judge Holtzoff, arguing that it was the only map of the proposed freeways. The District, Owen said, did not have “an official map of these four monster highways.”

Assistant Corporation Counsel Patrick O’Donnell told the court that the 1893 Act applied only to local highways, not Interstate highways. The District had to meet only the requirements of the Federal-Aid Highway Acts authorizing the freeways, which typically were about 250-foot wide. “The Federal interstate system cannot conform to local requirements all over the country.”

Plaintiffs also challenged NCPC votes in support of freeway projects where alternate attendees voted for the principals. Owen's co-counsel, Gerald P. Norton, argued that NCPC was bound by a resolution adopted in 1929 barring alternates from voting. O'Donnell responded that the 1929 resolution was "abrogated" because NCPC had never observed it.

A third issue was whether citizens have the right to sue to block a municipal government from spending tax revenue, in this case for freeways.

At one point, Judge Holtzoff asked Owen:

You're asking me to interfere with the building of the Three Sisters Bridge? It's nearly impossible to get a bridge built across the Potomac into Washington. It took years before they decided to build the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, and we were lacking a bridge all that time. [Basham, William, "4 D.C. Road Plans Attacked in Court," *The Evening Star*, October 17, 1967; Hoagland, Jim, "Citizens Challenge Freeway Projects," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 18, 1967]

(Judge Holtzoff lived in the Broadmoor Co-Op Apartments at 3601 Connecticut Avenue, NW., in Cleveland Park.)

On October 18, Judge Holtzoff ruled from the bench. He agreed with the government that because the freeways were part of the Interstate System, they did not have to comply with the requirements in the 1893 District law for local roads.

He also found that citizens organizations, property owners, and park system users did not have standing to sue NCPC, which is a Federal entity. Individual taxpayers may sue the city if they believe tax money is being spent illegally. He was particularly critical of the District Democratic Central Committee's inclusion among the plaintiffs. "It was extremely inappropriate . . . to bring what seems to be political consideration into the courtroom. The Committee should not have lent its name to this suit."

He also found that voting by NCPC alternates was proper. "Ex-officio members have numerous other activities . . . and cannot devote their entire time to this work." He added that former Engineer Commissioner Duke and NPS Director Hartzog had reached an agreement that bound them, or their alternates, to vote for the projects when they were presented to NCPC.

The court scheduled a hearing for additional arguments on October 23. [Basham, William, "Freeway Challenge Refused by Judge," *The Evening Star*, October 18, 1967; "U.S. Judge Dismisses Bid To Block Freeway Projects," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 19, 1967]

Prior to further court action, Representative Broyhill wrote to Secretary Boyd. He was reacting to an October 13 letter that General Mathe had sent to the Secretary indicating that the Department of Transportation had not consulted District highway officials about the Three Sisters Bridge. Representative Broyhill's letter, pointing out that a decision had been pending since May, stated that he had urged Secretary Boyd in July to take quick action on whether the bridge was needed. The Secretary had replied that he "was fully aware of the urgency of

reaching decisions” on the bridge. In view of General Mathe’s letter, Representative Broyhill accused the Transportation Department of “trepidation” that was holding up 11 urgent highway projects that were dependent on construction of the bridge:

Surely there has been immediately available to you every possible bit of engineering data you could have needed for your decision.

We need only a simple yes or no from you in order to move forward in solving the rapidly increasing traffic congestion problem in the Washington area. [“Broyhill Pushes For Span,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, October 23, 1967; “Broyhill Prods Boyd for Decision,” *The Evening Star*, October 23, 1967]

When court convened on October 23, Owen narrowed plaintiffs’ arguments in view of Judge Holtzoff’s rulings the previous week. Owen challenged the District’s proposed use of parkland, citing a 1903 District law requiring congressional consent for construction of structures on parkland. The freeways (and their use of parklands) were: North-Central Freeway (13 acres of Fort Totten Park and Fort Drive); East Leg Freeway (100 acres of Anacostia Park); Three Sisters Bridge (part of Glover-Archbold Park); and Missouri Avenue Expressway (1 acre of Fort Drive).

He also argued that the Three Sisters Bridge could not use a portion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal property without approval of the railroad company that owned it. Moreover, the District’s plan for a viaduct carrying the East Leg over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks leading into Union Station violated a 1935 law prohibiting the opening of streets or avenues across railroad tracks leading into Union Station.

Judge Holtzoff issued a ruling on October 24. He began with the claim that the District did not have authority to construct bridges:

This seems to be an astounding proposition, when the Court contemplates the numerous bridges throughout the limits of the District of Columbia. For example, there is a large number of bridges, large and small, across Rock Creek, a beautiful, serpentine stream that serenely and leisurely winds its way through the entire length of Washington. There are bridges over parks, depressed highways and railroad tracks.

Some bridges were simply parts of a highway. He cited Section 101(a) of Title 23, United States Code, which defined “highway” as including roads, streets and parkways, including right-of-way and bridges.

Beyond Section 101, NCPC was expressly authorized to include highways, streets, bridges, viaducts, parkways, thoroughfares, and other means of handling traffic in its plans:

Naturally the Commission would not have been authorized to develop plans for bridges unless, by implication, the District of Columbia was given authority to build them. The Court, therefore, concludes that there can be no doubt that the District of Columbia has power to build bridges.

The argument that approaches to the Three Sisters Bridge would require a portion of Glover-Archbold Park, conveyed to the city to be dedicated as a park, “need receive no further consideration.” The corporation counsel stated “that it is not intended to use any part of the land so dedicated for the approaches to the bridge, and his statement has not been denied or questioned.”

He agreed with plaintiffs that a contract for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal approved on August 6, 1938, required railroad consent for use of land “for the conveyance of freight or passengers by land.” Judge Holtzoff pointed out that if the District planned to build a bridge approach on the land, the railroad “may maintain an appropriate action in this court.” Taxpayers who are not party to the contract may not do so:

The fact that the contract is with the United States and not with the District of Columbia, makes this contention all the more remote. It has not been suggested that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad will refuse to consent to the project or has threatened or indicated that it will bring suit to secure the performance of the contract. The Court overrules that objection.

He also considered the claim that bridge approaches would affect the Potomac Palisades, which the United States had acquired for park purposes. Congress, in approving the relevant District code (Section 8-115) in 1932 authorized the District and the United States to transfer jurisdiction of property “for purposes of administration and maintenance under such conditions as may be mutually agreed upon.” As a result, “the Court reaches the conclusion that Section 8-115 authorizes the transfer of park lands for use in connection with the construction of the projects involved in this litigation.”

Section 8-115 also addressed the question raised about a 1912 law (Section 8-133) requiring congressional consent for erection of any building or structure on “any reservation, park or public grounds of the United States within the District of Columbia.” The 1932 law, Section 8-115, prevails over the earlier law addressing the same issue. “In other words, if land of the United States is transferred to the District of Columbia for a use different than that to which it was being put, Section 133 would not apply.”

These findings also applied to the use of parkland for the other freeways. “Therefore, this objection is deemed to be without merit and is overruled.”

As for the law regarding Union Station, the intent of the 1935 Act was “to prevent any further grade crossings” and cannot be construed “as prohibiting the construction of a viaduct over railroad tracks.” The court found, therefore, that “this Act is not applicable and does not bar the construction of a viaduct over the tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.”

Having disposed of all the plaintiffs’ arguments, Judge Holtzoff concluded:

The complaint is dismissed for lack of standing to sue as against those defendants who are officers of the United States. It is dismissed as against those defendants who are officials of the District of Columbia as to all of the plaintiffs except those who are suing

as taxpayers of the District of Columbia. The action may be maintained as against the District of Columbia officials by those plaintiffs – and those plaintiffs only – who sue as taxpayers of the municipality. The plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment is denied.

The cross-motion of the District of Columbia defendants for summary judgment is granted as against the plaintiffs who have standing to sue. The action is dismissed as to the other plaintiffs. [*D.C. Federal of Civic Associations, Inc., v. Thomas F. Airis*, 275 F.Supp. 540 (1967), U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, Civ. A No. 3174-66, October 24, 1967]

Owen indicated that the plaintiffs would appeal Judge Holtzoff’s rulings to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Judge Holtzoff retired at the end of 1967 and would not be involved in further rulings on the freeway issues.

Secretary Boyd’s Position

By late October, newspapers began reporting rumors of Secretary Boyd’s decision on the Three Sisters Bridge.

On October 29, Flor reported that Norman R. Weiss, manager of AAA’s District division, said he had learned that Secretary Boyd planned to reject the bridge “on grounds that it is not needed.” Claiming he had a “reliable source” in the department, Weiss said, “Boyd’s apparent rejection of the bridge proposal will cripple the Washington area freeway system and set planning back 10 years.” He added that the decision was “based on sheer emotion, catering to a small but vocal anti-freeway group and guided by freeway critics within his office, not on the desires of a vast majority of Washington area residents.”

Federal Highway Administrator Bridwell responded that Secretary Boyd had not made a decision on the bridge, which was still under study.

At the same time, Flor reported, the department was developing an ICE that was due to Congress in January. With the estimate up since the 1965 ICE, the department was looking for ways to cut costs. Flor reported:

DOT has 23 crucial freeway segments which are being opposed in major cities across the nation. There have been many rumors that the department was preparing to eliminate the controversial segments from the national system of interstate defense highways. This would eliminate the 90 percent federal financing and would effectively scuttle the controversial highway projects.

The North-Central Freeway was one of the 23 segments. “DOT is making a major review of the North Central Freeway, and this also is in questionable status.” [Flor, Lee, “U.S. Denies AAA Claim It Has Vetoed Bridge,” *The Sunday Star*, October 29, 1967]

The delayed decision on the Three Sisters Bridge was affecting planning for inclusion of rail rapid transit in the I-66 right-of-way in Virginia. WMATA was planning to put a line in the median from Fairfax Drive in Arlington County past the Capital Beltway to Gallows Road. In addition to delays while waiting for a decision on the bridge, Virginia officials said their schedule was delayed because of plans to use a portion of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad right-of-way for the highway. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, which owned the unprofitable commuter line, wanted to abandon it and sell the right-of-way, but the ICC had not yet ruled. [Flor, Lee, "Terms Reached For Route 66 Rapid Transit," *The Evening Star*, November 2, 1967]

While speculation continued on Secretary Boyd's decision, Alan M. Voorhees and Associates completed a study for WMATA. Based on plans for a 96-mile rail rapid transit system, the Voorhees study assumed that the system would be expanded to 150 miles by 1990. The consultant then studied the freeway network that NCPC had approved in May 1966. Computer estimates suggested that 141,000 people would use the 150-mile rail rapid transit system daily in 1990 while another 25,000 people would use buses. However, 453,000 people would use only their automobiles for peak hour trips. The 14th Street Bridges would be congested and unable to handle any overflow from the Three Sisters Bridge.

This prediction was interpreted as support for the bridge. It also was seen as rejection of the idea that NCPC Chairman Rowe and others favored, namely not building the bridge and instead diverting traffic in the corridor to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and to the 14th Street Bridge. [Flor, Lee, "New Study Favors 3 Sisters Bridge," *The Sunday Star*, November 5, 1967]

On November 7, Flor reported that a department source was saying that Secretary Boyd was planning to let the new city government decide on the bridge. Secretary Boyd said, "All I can say is that we expect to have something out by the middle of the month in the way of recommendations":

In the past few months, Boyd has made a personal inspection of several cities which are having trouble making decisions on freeway and bridge construction.

Boyd has told these city officials he wants local people to get into the decision-making process so any final decision on freeway location will be supported, the Transportation Department source reported.

Secretary Boyd was aware that Mayor Washington had appointed a transportation task force of outside experts to study the city's transportation needs. If Secretary Boyd announced his decisions in mid-November, he would prejudice the task force's work. Therefore, the source indicated the Secretary might give the city several alternatives, then let the Mayor and city council "go to their drawing boards" to decide which they wanted to pursue. [Flor, Lee, "Boyd May Let D.C. Decide on Bridge," *The Evening Star*, November 7, 1967]

On November 8, the *Star* and *Post* reported that the Department of Transportation had given tentative proposals to the city for review, subject to Secretary Boyd's final decisions. In the *Post*, Wolf Von Eckardt, began an article on Secretary Boyd's pending decision based on comments by aides:

The Three Sisters Bridge is out.

Although Secretary Boyd had told NCPC a bridge was preferable to a tunnel, his staff had concluded that with elimination of the intermediate loop through Glover-Archbold Park and plans for rail rapid transit, the bridge was not needed:

The long-alleged Virginia commuter demand for a river crossing at this point, Boyd's aides say, will not materialize until 1980. By that time, they hope, the proposed area rapid transit system should be completed and meet Virginia commuter needs. If a bridge is later needed, Boyd's aides feel, it probably should be built upstream from Three Sisters.

As for the trucks that were to use the bridge, they could cross the Potomac River on the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge (pending congressional approval in view of the restriction imposed at President Eisenhower's suggestion).

On the Maryland side, the Secretary hoped that NPS would allow trucks on its parkway between the Capital Beltway and the District line so it could carry the I-70S designation. Secretary Udall "seems amenable to the idea":

The Department of Transportation wants to build the Potomac Parkway in a hurry to provide a link between Route 70S in Maryland and downtown Washington. And the Department wants to move on that Parkway in a hurry so as not to stall all freeway projects here for another year.

With I-70S shifted to an alignment along the river, funds designated for I-70S/North Central Freeway north of the I-95 interchange could pay for interchanges for the Georgetown link with the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and the Potomac River Freeway.

The plan's disadvantage was that more land would be needed along the Georgetown waterfront to bring cars and trucks into the inner city:

The Department of Transportation hopes to assist with "a satisfactory solution" to both the highway and aesthetic problems of the waterfront, informed sources say. No one quite knows whether this means the elevated Whitehurst Freeway will be added to, torn down or whether a new depressed or tunneled highway will be built.

As the *Star* pointed out:

The suggestion that a parkway-type road along the Potomac River should serve as western Maryland's major traffic artery to the city revives a proposal first advanced under the Eisenhower administration in 1955, and later discarded as inadequate.

Secretary Boyd, according to Von Eckardt, also was thinking about canceling the South and North Legs of the Inner Loop:

Instead of these two controversial legs, the new plan would complete the loop by carrying traffic through one or more underground expressways to connect with the North-Central Freeway. One of them is likely to be tunneled under E Street and the Ellipse [south of the White House] in accordance with the Pennsylvania Avenue Commission's plan. Other possibilities are tunneling under K Street or along Independence Avenue and under the Washington Monument grounds.

The hope is that this connector can be consolidated with part of the proposed subway so downtown won't have to be dug up twice.

The fact that the initial 25-mile rail rapid transit network did not include a link in the general area of this freeway proposal would "have to be resolved."

That was only one issue about the not-yet-announced plan. The biggest problem was "whether the new proposal will settle the long freeway dispute or start it all over again." Pro-highway forces would see the plan as a betrayal of the longstanding plans for the freeway network. However, the planners advising Secretary Boyd argued that the plans were blocked anyway by "adamant citizen opposition expressed not only in public hearings but also by the so-called "citizen members" of the National Capital Planning Commission:

The new plan, its proponents say, would at last get the essential elements of the freeway system moving and at the same time give this community sound transportation with a minimum of displacement and disruption.

How this dilemma would be resolved remained to be seen. In the end, the Department of Transportation would have "the big say in what highways will be built" because its FHWA was paying 90 percent for the Interstate freeways – wherever they ended up. [Von Eckardt, Wolf, "Boyd Rejects Three Sisters Span," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 8, 1967; "U.S. Seeks to Abandon Bridge, Inner Loop Plan," *The Evening Star*, November 8, 1967]

Reaction to these unofficial preliminary ideas was swift. In a November 8 editorial called "Highway Robbery," the *Post* said these proposals would tear apart the "precarious 'treaty'" worked out in May 1966. A "notable shortcoming" in the proposals was "the failure to make any provision for limited access routes into the city from the North. Instead, there would be no main artery in the whole section from Interstate 95 in Maryland, westward to George Washington Parkway." The editorial concluded:

At the moment it looks as though the Transportation Department had gone almost all the way back to the Stolzenbach plan, which quite frankly contemplated substituting mass transit for the freeway system. It seems to have embraced very conservative estimates of future traffic requirements, particularly with reference to [the] need for Potomac crossings.

The Transportation Department ought to take its proposals back to the drawing boards. It cannot stop the growth of the area, arrest the rising demands of traffic or enforce an order compelling all citizens to ride a transit system not yet built.

Chairman Natcher warned that if the proposals to abandon a balanced transportation system, including freeways, were adopted, funds for the rail rapid transit would again be in jeopardy:

Once before we refused to authorize rapid transit funds. And on a roll-call vote in the House, members voted 320 to 3 when the District of Columbia budget was presented on final passage.

Our committee is still of the opinion we must have a balanced transportation system and any move to destroy the freeways is a serious mistake.

Two weeks earlier, Representatives Gude and Machen of Maryland and Broyhill and Scott of Virginia had requested a meeting with Secretary Boyd regarding the Three Sisters Bridge. Now they received replies declining the meeting because the department was “at work on this matter and will have a decision at the earliest possible date.” As he had said publicly in recent days, “the Department will be prepared to provide advice on the issues presented for its consideration by approximately the middle of November.” He promised to send them copies of the information as soon as it becomes available.

As a result, they did not have an official description of the proposals, but could react to the news reports. Representative Machen took to the House floor on November 9 to discuss “an incredible situation.” On the same day he and his colleagues received Secretary Boyd’s rejection of a meeting, they read in the *Post* that the Three Sisters Bridge was out. He urged Secretary Boyd to take the *Post*’s “sage advice” to take his ideas back to the drawing board. The Congressman thought Secretary Boyd should “start taking some advice from those of us who have more than a vague inkling of the transportation needs of the metropolitan area.” If the *Post* story about “these unilateral decisions” was accurate, “the Secretary is on a dangerous collision course with a number of Members of Congress and I would not predict that he and his plans will prevail.”

Representative Broyhill was next up on the House floor. He was “shocked” at the newspaper reports. If the Secretary had suggested “constructive alternatives, we would have to consider it”:

But to suggest that further highways, freeways, and river crossings are not needed, and that we would have to rely upon rapid transit in lieu of these projects borders upon stupidity, particularly when the construction and completion of area transit is in the distant future.

Study after study had supported the projects, he said, and “all highway engineers with whom I am familiar agree that these projects are needed”:

The only opposition we have had has come from . . . so called conservationists [a term that referred to what were increasingly being called environmentalists] and members of the National Capital Planning Commission. Now they are using him, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, as a fall guy to rubberstamp the proposition that they have been putting forth for many years.

The proposals would “create utter chaos,” requiring the Congress to “step into the picture to do the job that the Planning Commission, the Department of Transportation and others in the executive branch of government obviously are not capable of doing.”

Representative Broyhill thought the decision had been made back in May when NCPC asked Secretary Boyd for his view on the Three Sisters Bridge:

It seems to have been rigged from the beginning for Mr. Boyd to decide to scrap the careful planning of many highway experts in favor of a ridiculous set of “possibilities,” many of which were evaluated years ago and discarded as unworkable.

Surely Secretary Boyd and his advisors were aware that if they did not approve the bridge or other planned freeways, Chairman Natcher would refuse to release District matching funds for rail rapid transit. “As recently as today,” Representative Broyhill said, Chairman Natcher “advised me that his position in this regard has not changed”:

This decision concerns me greatly, because not only is our highway system endangered but the subway is threatened as well.

Mr. Boyd’s ill-conceived decision will result in transportation chaos throughout the Washington area.

He was followed by Representative Gude, who discussed “the incredible performance” of the Federal agencies involved in “stalling transportation in the Washington area.” They deserved “a hard look by this body.” The Department of Transportation’s views should worry every Congressman who represents an urban area:

The administration has pledged to make Washington a “showcase for the world.” I fear it will be a showcase with a wall around it. One wonders whose city will get the showcase treatment next.

The Three Sisters Bridge, which was the original reason NCPC asked Secretary Boyd for his views, had always been a stand-in for the entire freeway system:

Thus it is no coincidence that Secretary Boyd, in recommending against the bridge, took the occasion to call for a cutback in the entire proposed system including one of the most vitally needed facets in the State of Maryland – extension of the North Central Freeway into a densely developed area of Montgomery County.

The idea of extending the George Washington Memorial Parkway into the city “is nothing but a sop; that ought to be done anyway.”

These decisions, as reported in the press, were being made “without due consultation with the District, Maryland, or Virginia officials whose interests are vitally at stake. Regional implications are totally overlooked.” Without needed links to the city, the suburbs would “develop more independently, given greater emphasis to lateral road facilities,” all at the city’s expense:

Secretary Boyd has been recommending greater use of express buses on freeways. In the name of sanity, What freeways, Mr. Boyd?

Representative Gude recalled that Secretary Boyd “has proclaimed himself no enemy of freeways, and he argues persuasively for local solutions to transportation problems.” Therefore, the Congressman could “only conclude that he is acting on the basis of [faulty] information in thinking what can only be described as a totally unrealistic position opposing area freeways.”

Secretary Boyd should “take a long and realistic look at the region’s transportation problems, and genuinely consult with area officials on the regional problems and adopt a more constructive approach.” [Three Sisters Bridge/Shock and Amazement at Plans to Abandon the Three Sisters Bridge/The Incredible Performance of the Federal Agencies Responsible for Stalling Transportation in the Washington Area Deserves a Hard look by This Body, *Congressional Record-House*, November 9, 1967, pages 31920-31922]

Senator William B. Spong, Jr. (D-Va.), an attorney and State legislator who had been elected to the Senate in 1966, issued a statement saying the proposal “would in my opinion compound an already bothersome problem of traffic congestion at the Roosevelt crossing.”

David Scull, the outgoing president of the Montgomery County Council, said he would urge his colleagues to oppose the reported plans. Of the elimination of the North-Central Freeway extension into the county, he said, “we’ve got to have that road.” Traffic projections in the corridor were “hair raising enough,” but State and county officials had spent a great deal of funds for studies of the extension. He did not think State officials would let the proposal “just go down the drain.” The only positive idea was extension, finally, of the parkway along the Potomac River into the city. “At least something is being done, and we may be able to get some real use soon of the George Washington Parkway if they construct the Potomac Freeway link.”

[Hailey, Jean R., “Area Officials Attack U.S. Plan To Omit Bridge, Defer Freeway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 9, 1967; “Three Sisters ‘Decision’ Hit,” *The Evening Star*, November 9, 1967; “Scull To Oppose D.C. Highway Cut,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 11, 1967]

Editors at the *Star* responded to the reported proposals on November 12 in an editorial titled “Boyd’s Nonhighway Plan for Washington.” The editors had thought the new Department of Transportation would “stimulate more effective coordination, economy and innovative thinking among the government’s diversified federal aid programs.” It “sounded like a grand idea –

especially for the Nation’s Capital.” Here, at last, was an agency that would “end the Washington area’s senseless freeway controversy.” Surely such an agency, the editors had thought, “would nurture and support the rational agreement on a balanced program of freeways and rail transit facilities which has been tediously put together over a period of years with the blessings of top-level federal officials”:

Instead, the Department's current intention to recommend a virtual cessation of interstate freeway construction in Washington threatens to devastate that fragile political agreement.

It is our understanding that Secretary Alan S. Boyd is not irrevocably wedded to the destructive proposals which surfaced last week. We hope he is not. For they represent a throwback to the discredited theories of C. Darwin Stolzenbach, who believed that the way to get a rail-transit system built in Washington was simply to stop building roads We believe that Secretary Boyd has been sold a soiled bill of goods by the same little band of anti-highway enthusiasts – some of them members of his present staff – who prompted [sic] Stolzenbach several years ago and who have worked persistently ever since to sabotage the freeway program

Ironically, Secretary Boyd's advice was sought by other federal agencies last May, in terms of the Washington freeway-transit controversy, on a single project – the Three Sisters Bridge. The proposal to shatter the city's entire interstate freeway program was an unsolicited development which emerged at some point during the subsequent six months – and which was kept carefully under cover until the previous District Commissioners, whose antagonism to any such suggestion was fully predictable, had left office.

The editors suggested:

The Transportation Department seems to harbor a mystical conviction that if you stop building freeways, automobiles will simply disappear. It isn't so. We fervently hope that Washington gets a rail-transit system so attractive in convenience and its service that it draws thousands of motorists every day away from their cars. But a great many others who must come into the city every day are going to continue to drive If they don't drive on free-flowing highways they are going to jam into the existing street systems of residential neighborhoods and local business areas – with all the disruptive damage that will entail.

Of course, "it is theoretically possible to make roads so unattractive that many people who don't have to come into the city won't come." If businesses and employees leave, too, "the growth of the central core should begin to atrophy," resulting in "a stagnant city." The editors did not know if the Department of Transportation's "half-baked theories are restricted to Washington or whether it also intends to try to impose similar ideas in other American cities."

Perhaps one of these days, officials will "come up with dramatic technological advances which may make present modes of urban transportation obsolete." Until then, the "limited program of freeways and transit now projected, however, is in quite a different category. This program is needed now." Scrapping it or moving "to a point of starting to plan all over again, would be unconscionable." Congress and the White House should make these points "as forcefully as necessary . . . before the situation gets completely out of hand."

On November 25, members of ECTC and other citizens groups met informally with members of the city council: Vice Chairman Fauntroy, Anderson, Haywood, Nevius, and Thompson. The

groups demanded an end to acquisition of right-of-way for the I-70S/I-95 portion of the North Central Freeway between Rhode Island Avenue, NE., and Buchanan Street, NE., just east of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks. When the Reverend Fauntroy said he could hardly believe the District was buying right-of-way, the citizens showed him the letters warning people they had only 30 days to accept offers for their property or face condemnation proceedings.

Sammie Abbott said ECTC demanded an immediate halt to all freeway construction in the city, a moratorium on condemnation, public hearings on any future freeway plans, and adoption of the Arthur D. Little report to support transit planning. Rail rapid transit, he said, would enable poor Negroes to reach jobs. Doing so would avoid racial violence. "We're not going to let I-95 come into the District of Columbia if we have to lay down in front of the bulldozers with our bodies. There are going to be whites with our black brothers on this."

Chairman Pryor of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association said his home at 906 Hamlin Street, NE., was in the path of the freeway. Flor summarized:

When the Brookland area was first integrated years ago, homes sold to Negroes were sold at prices artificially inflated, Pryor said. Now, the prices being offered by the District would leave owners only enough for a small down payment on much more expensive homes in the suburbs, he added.

The District is putting pressure on homeowners in his immediate area [and many] already have sold out, he said.

"Myself, I'm staying until the bulldozers come through," he vowed.

Simon Cain, president of the Lamond-Riggs Civic Association and vice president of the Federation of D.C. Civic Associations, emphasized that District residents were in large-scale revolt against the freeways. The 25 opponents in attendance represented thousands of outraged citizens. The Reverend James Kennelly of St. Francis de Sales Church on Rhode Island Avenue warned that, "We need help in the near future, not two or three months." The Reverend Joseph Gibson of Nash Methodist Church said, "We can't afford to lose the people who are leaving,"

Councilwoman Haywood said, "The only way I see that the Council can represent the District of Columbia is to know what the District of Columbia wants. And the only way I can know that is if I hear it from you." She added, "Don't come here with a hostile attitude at the very first – give us a chance."

Councilman Nevius said he had not seen an invitation to an earlier public meeting the citizen groups held. Citizens urged him, "Get off the council." When he tried to explain, a member of the crowd shouted "Bull," while others shouted, "Get off, get off."

The Reverend Fauntroy said the meeting had been "useful and productive." However, Abbott told him, "This is no excuse for a public hearing."

According to Flor:

One of the persons who appeared most popular with the crowd was not there. Secretary of Transportation Alan S. Boyd, who has recently decided to recommend against building several District freeways, including part of the North Central Freeway, got a standing ovation when his name was mentioned.

Kenneth Kennedy, a leader of several Northeast Washington civic organizations, said citizens should write to Boyd or try to show in some other way how much they approved of his decision. [Flor, Lee, "D.C. Council Asked to Halt Freeway Land Acquisition," *The Sunday Star*, November 26, 1967; White, Jack, Jr., "Freeway Foes Present Case to Council," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 26, 1967]

Wolf Von Eckardt saw the battle over the Three Sisters Bridge in epic terms:

In the late fall of 1967, the history books are likely to record, the Battle of Three Sisters Bridge in Washington, to settle the question whether American cities should be adjusted to automobile traffic or whether automobile traffic should be adjusted to cities, finally approached its climax.

The new Federal Department of Transportation entered the fray with three entirely new contentions. This shifted a befuddling fracas to new ground and revealed it as a contest of fundamental issues.

On one side were highway engineers aided by the National Highway Users Conference. On the other were "a majority of the voteless citizens of Washington, led by the 'citizen members' of the National Capital Planning Commission."

In May 1966, the six Federal representatives on NCPC had formed a coalition against the citizen members, but in October 1966, President Johnson signed the Department of Transportation Act. BPR, with its billions of dollars in Interstate expressway money, "was now under the DOT and subject to the coordination that DOT was charged to evolve.

Last May, NCPC had asked Secretary Boyd to review the need for the bridge. "The BPR had a letter affirming the need for a bridge on Boyd's desk within 24 hours. But Boyd did not sign the letter." Instead he was expected to announce soon that the bridge was not needed. The decision was based on new factors:

As Boyd's staff advisers see them, they are: (1) a provision in the law that established DOT; (2) recent drastic changes in metropolitan development patterns which made questionable the traffic forecasts on which most of the country's urban freeway plans are based, and (3) new studies that open new ways of handling city automobile traffic without freeways.

The new provision was Section 4(f), which would prevent the use of public land unless there was no feasible and prudent alternative to such use. "The bridge, says DOT, affects five such areas. It would take 53.6 acres of public land and damage the scenic, recreational and historic value of Spout Run Park, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the C & O Canal, Archbold-Glover Park and the Georgetown waterfront. "

The department also doubted the traffic projections. “The D.C. Highway Department forecast in 1959 that traffic from Virginia into the District would increase by 25,000 cars a year over the next eight years. DOT found that it had taken all eight years together for cross-river traffic to increase by that much.” One reason for the “drastic miscalculations” was suburban growth. Homes and jobs were growing in suburban areas, along with department stores, shops, movie theaters, and other facilities that people previously had found only in the city. “This is a national phenomenon that has, according to DOT officials, thrown practically all previous traffic forecasts by America’s city highway departments awry by an average overestimate of at least 25 per cent.”

Of course, rush-hour traffic jams still occurred. People in Montgomery County were not going to be happy that Secretary Boyd wants to delete the I-70S/North-Central Freeway. Von Eckardt noted, parenthetically: “This is being recommended not by antifreeway zealots but by the Bureau of Roads, which feels that \$25 million a mile is simply too expensive for a four-lane highway.” In fact, “Why have a freeway at all?” BPR had published a report in 1962 called “The Wisconsin Avenue Study” showing how traffic flow could be improved by such measures as prohibiting parking, reversible lanes, bus bays and other techniques short of conversion to expressway design. “If the capacity of the other avenues leading to the Maryland suburbs were equally improved, the city could undoubtedly handle any traffic volume likely to come along in the next three decades.”

The National Highway Users Conference was “mobilizing its forces across the Nation for the final Three Sisters battle by warning that ‘DOT’s proposed directive would have far-reaching implications beyond the staggering blow it would strike against the efficient movement of people and goods in the Washington, D.C. area.’”

Von Eckardt concluded:

Secretary Boyd, according to some of his aides, feels that he is striking a blow only against a single-minded technocratic approach and in favor of better cities to live and do business in.

“Freeways run two ways,” one of them said. “The Beltway alone has already lost downtown 10,000 jobs. I don’t think the city can afford to lose any more, not to speak of housing, tax, income and a lot of human values.” [Von Eckardt, Wolf, “Defusing the Capital’s Rush Hours Without a Freeway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 26, 1967]

On November 29, Chairman Fallon of the Committee on Public Works announced that Representative Kluczynski, chairman of the Subcommittee on Roads, would hold hearings on the District’s freeway disputes, beginning December 5. Representative Gude said, “This is the first encouraging news since the freeway dispute was reported early this year. I applaud the committee’s plans to investigate the situation here, and its concern as demonstrated by starting off with Washington, D.C.” [Flor, Lee, “Three-Day Hearing On Area Freeways Set for Next Weeks,” *The Evening Star*, November 29, 1967]

(On November 11, Senator Jennings Randolph, chairman of the Committee on Public Works, announced hearings on freeway disputes and national policy in cities:

Following the urban riots of this summer, investigators seeking the whys and wherefores of these great catastrophes found that highway construction in the core city was a serious point of complaint.

Among those factors which most disturb the residents of the ghetto are urban renewal and freeway construction

(Growing opposition to freeways in major cities suggested that “the laws are inadequate to encourage the full utilization of [city planning] opportunities presented by the highway [Acts] or that the legislative intent to do so is not fully being realized in the highway planning process.”

(The hearings would begin on November 14-16 but continue into 1968 when the Department of Transportation, HUD, and FHWA would testify, but were not focused on the District freeway controversies. [Flor, Lee, “Hearings Set On U.S. Policy On Freeways,” *The Sunday Star*, November 12, 1967])

Major Highway Problems in D.C.

Late in the year, Secretary Boyd asked the department’s General Counsel if the department had the authority to deny Federal funds for the Three Sisters Bridge project. General Counsel Robson responded in a December 4 memorandum that the Secretary had two independent statutory reasons for such a denial. First was Section 109(a) of Title 23, United States Code. It prohibited the Secretary from approving projects if they failed to “adequately meet the existing and probable future traffic needs and conditions in a manner conducive to safety, durability, and economy of maintenance.” The Secretary must reject projects that were not designed or constructed “in accordance with standards best suited to accomplish the foregoing objectives and to conform to the particular needs of each locality.”

Robson wrote:

It is my understanding that the Three Sisters Bridge Proposal in its present form will not adequately meet existing and probable future needs in that its primary effect at the present time will be to transfer a traffic overload from one side of the Potomac to the other without significant reduction in total origin-to-destination time for the great bulk of the peak-hour traffic. Nor has it been established, moreover, that the proposal will “conform to the particular needs of each locality” concerned.

Section 4(f) was the second statutory basis for declining approval:

Under Section 4(f) the Secretary may not approve a project requiring the use of parkland, as the Three Sisters Bridge proposal does, without first determining that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of parkland. As we understand the proceedings to date, no evidence exists upon which the Secretary could base such a determination. Alternative proposals have been made which would appear to be feasible and prudent and

to serve the needs of the communities affected at least as well as would the Bridge proposal. Unless and until such evidence is adduced to demonstrate that such alternatives are not, in fact, feasible and prudent, the Secretary is obliged not to approve the proposal.

The following day, December 5, Secretary Boyd was the first witness before the Subcommittee on Roads hearing on "Major Highway Problems in D.C." Administrator Bridwell accompanied Secretary Boyd.

Secretary Boyd had not yet released a formal statement of his views on the Three Sisters Bridge in response to NCPC's request or on the other freeway issues the department had been considering. Newspaper accounts based on unnamed contacts were the only accounts the public and most officials had of his ideas, whether accurate or not. Thus, Secretary Boyd's testimony was the first time he would go on record expressing his thoughts.

In introducing the hearings, Chairman Kluczynski wanted to clear up "some misinterpretation" of the goal. The chairman, who was from Chicago where he owned a restaurant, a catering business, and a bar called the Syrena, said, "the committee is neither opposed nor in favor of any specific plan, proposal, or suggestion." From the testimony, he hoped to give the three political jurisdictions "a sound base upon which to conduct discussions of potential solutions to the increasingly intolerable traffic conditions in this area." The hearings at this time would be confined to officials, but the committee planned hearings in 1968 to "hear from anyone who wants to be heard." By then, he said, "perhaps some potentially more fruitful and hopefully less controversial proposals will also be before us."

The committee had "no great desire to lay out, block by block, mile by mile, or bridge by bridge, what the highway construction program for the Nation's Capital shall be":

Rather, in holding these hearings the committee hopes to make it clear, first, that delay now must end; second, that no limited interest group will arbitrarily force its own proposals on the area and that by the same token, no one can expect to keep killing off every proposal offered; and finally, that if, by lending the strength of this committee to reasonable and realistic decisions, on the several facts of this problem, final agreement is not reached, the committee will then avail itself of whatever professional counsel it needs to legislate the highway program for this area and be done with it.

He was not interested in pure theory or speculation about a future transit system or a new means of transport. He said, "the problem is here, and it is now. People and commerce and industry and the Nation's Government in this city depend upon automotive transport."

Suburban growth was inevitable. "I do not propose, therefore, to let either apathy or contention or devotion to theory stall essential highway development, thereby forcing the people and the commerce and the industry and the government to the suburbs and in the process killing off the city." He concluded:

The citizens of the United States, *all* of the United States, have a right to expect their Nation's Capital will live and grow, and we intend to see that their expectations are met.

[Major Highway Problems in D.C., Hearings before the Subcommittee on Roads, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 1st Session, Report 90-19, December 5 and 6, 1967, pages 1-2, italics in original]

Secretary Boyd began by summarizing how the Department of Transportation had come to review the city's freeway plans at NCPC's request. He cited Section 4(f) and the similar provision in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966. Taken together, these laws were "a clear indication of public concern as reflected in actions taken by our duly elected officials." Because several of the planned District freeways involved the taking of public land, Section 4(f) and the 1966 Act required Department review.

Although Department reviews prior to requests for formal approval were unusual, he agreed to NCPC's request that he review the proposed Three Sisters Bridge because of the Federal interest in the Potomac River, the uncertainty about implementation of Section 4(f), and his hope "to expedite review of the project." He had asked his staff to review the bridge and its relationship to the freeway program of the District of Columbia. He also had consulted with the Secretary of the Interior:

It is my considered judgment that, even if we resolve the questions related to section 4(f), the present design of the District freeway system, as it related to the Three Sisters Bridge, is inadequate. I could not, therefore, approve the Three Sisters Bridge until several basic questions have been answered.

Administrator Bridwell went through a series of maps showing the evolution of the District's freeway network. He used slides showing the 1950 thoroughfare plan of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the 1952 report by the Regional Highway Planning Committee. A slide showed the 1955 Yellow Book map of Washington, D.C.:

The Interstate System in the Washington metropolitan area as envisioned at that time included the Capital Beltway and the Anacostia Freeway on the east bank of the Anacostia River and up roughly over Route 1, and the Kenilworth Avenue segment with a connection to downtown along 11th Street SE. Interstate 70S, as then envisioned, followed along the east bank of the Potomac River. The system proposed at this time was in general agreement with the thoroughfares included in the 1950 National Capital Regional Plan.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided additional mileage for the Interstate System. With this mileage, plus mileage freed as more direct routing was identified for designated routes, the Secretary of Commerce announced on October 18, 1957, additions around the country, including in the District of Columbia. "Mileage addressed in the Washington metropolitan area included a Potomac River crossing at Key Bridge now identified as Interstate Route 266 and a short section in Maryland at the junction of Interstate 495 with Interstate Routes 70S and 270."

(I-270 was a 2-mile route between I-70S and the Capital Beltway. It carried southbound I-70S traffic to the southbound beltway and northbound beltway traffic to I-70S. Other movements

were carried on the I-70S/Capital Beltway link. When I-70S was renumbered I-270, the original I-270 became known as the I-270 Spur.)

Bridwell discussed the changing locations for I-70S, initially along the Potomac River, then in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor as the Northwest Freeway. After the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 imposed a freeze on freeway and parkway development in the northwest quadrant, NCTA in 1962 proposed combining the North Central and Northeast Freeways as a single route in the railroad corridor. BPR approved revised descriptions for the Interstate System in preparation for the 1965 ICE:

This proposed system included the addition on June 20, 1961, of the southwest leg (I-695) of the inner belt. Similar to the National Capital Transportation Agency proposal a combined routing for I-70S and I-95 in the B. & O. Railroad corridor from the inner loop to Fort Drive was used in computing costs. These are the interstate routes currently approved for the Washington metropolitan area.

When Bridwell concluded his history lesson, Secretary Boyd discussed I-70S/North-Central Freeway, which was now an extension of the North Leg Freeway north of the Capitol. It had been moved from its original Potomac River location to overcome opposition. “The freeway as it is now designed is a tremendously expensive and inadequate artery.” It and the Northeast Freeway (I-95) were six lane freeways that would funnel traffic into the eight lanes of the North Central [Leg] Expressway. “I don’t need to point out to you the congestion, delay, and safety hazard that would be created by this design.”

As for the South Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway, it was to be carried in a six-lane tunnel to join the six-lane section of the Southwest Expressway before it shifted to four lanes:

I should like to point out that the Southwest Expressway was originally designed without taking into account the traffic that would be generated by the south leg tunnel and third 14th Street Bridge, which is now underway. Neither of these facilities was even contemplated when the Southwest Expressway was planned.

Mr. Frank Turner, Director of the Bureau of Public Roads, has characterized this tunnel expressway as a “cannon” which will literally fire three lanes of traffic at three lanes which are already on the expressway.

At a cost of \$100 million for 1 mile of tunnel, “this massive expenditure would obtain only a marginal improvement over the surface streets we already have.” In addition, “it would severely overload the Southwest Expressway.”

Secretary Boyd pointed out that the Three Sisters Bridge was intended to provide a route to the city’s northwest, but “no acceptable agreement” had been reached on how traffic would move from the bridge. The proposed K Street expressway did not provide an acceptable solution because its construction would “severely disrupt commercial activity around this area for at least 3 years; and it will not provide a distribution of cars into the inner city.”

In summary, construction of the Three Sisters Bridge at its present location was “unwise at this time.” It would simply “transfer a growing traffic jam from the Virginia side of the Potomac to the interchange at 26th and K Streets.”

In view of these concerns, he proposed designation of the George Washington Memorial Parkway as I-70S between Chain Bridge and Georgetown, the facility known as the Palisades Parkway. Motorists in Northwest Washington and Montgomery County would be able to use the parkway for downtown trips. “This, in turn, would lessen the demand for a quick and perhaps ill-advised decision on the precise location of another radial to the Northwest.” He intended to talk with highway officials in the three jurisdictions about his ideas.

Summarizing his views, he emphasized “that the Interstate System in the Washington metropolitan area has not, as some have claimed, been hopelessly bogged down in controversy between local and Federal officials.” The Capital Beltway was one of the first circumferentials to be completed and progress had been made in the District on several completed radial corridors and several others were under construction. Still, “there is much work ahead before we can say that Metropolitan Washington has a balanced transportation network”:

There is no doubt in my mind that even with the subway, improved bus service, and expanded capacity of existing streets, the Washington area will need new and better highways in the years ahead.

Our concern is simply that the highways we build be as carefully designed and as relevant to need as possible so that they provide a foundation for growth in future decades, not an obstacle to that growth.” [pages 2-20]

During the question period, Representative Cramer of Florida, asked if the Secretary was familiar with the *Star*'s November 12 editorial “Boyd's Non-Highway Plan for Washington.” Secretary Boyd said he subscribed to the *Star* and was familiar with the editorial:

Mr. Cramer. It was publicized that the Three Sisters span is out, the Maryland Parkway favored; also the highly publicized Northwest Freeway is out. In trying to analyze your statement, are the bridge and freeway in or out?

Mr. Boyd. Insofar as I and the Department are concerned, the Three Sisters Bridge is out at the moment, the North Central is out at the moment, subject to the questions which I raised and which will be taken up in greater detail with the District Highway Department and the City Council and the Governor and State highway engineer in Maryland.

Representative Cramer asked for clarification on whether location was the problem for “this north link.” Secretary Boyd replied:

That is right. I want to be very clear. I am very much concerned about a north leg, and there will be a north leg. There is no question in my mind about that

As to the Three Sisters, what I am saying is at the present time until we get this other matter lined up, I don't think it is advisable to build a Three Sisters. I am not saying there

should be no Three Sisters Bridge, but I think we ought to know where we are going and look at the total package.

Representative Cramer gathered that Secretary Boyd's position was tied into WMATA, HUD's transit program, buses and fringe area parking, and subways. He understood that \$20 million had been spent on planning the freeways during the last 20 years. "When do we build highways? This has been planned almost to death." He asked when Congress can expect an answer on the North-Central Freeway and the Three Sisters Bridge? "I think it is quite evident Congress is getting a little bit impatient"

Secretary Boyd agreed that Congress was getting impatient. "Of course, this is getting to be a normal state with the District freeway system, as I understand it, the way the routing has been changed from time to time." However, he could not give a date when he would be able to say yes or no to either project.

Representative Cramer said the history of the expressways in the Washington area "shows it has been shuffled, reshuffled, juggled and rejuggled about as often as any in the country. It is obvious that the time for decision is imminent." Washington, it was often said, should be a model city, but as far as freeways were concerned, "It is more a model of dissension and indecision and changed position and lack of determination to finish the system." In view of similar concerns in other cities, he continued:

So it seems to me if we do not resolve this problem in the District of Columbia, then we give the city councils and State authorities in other areas – such as New York and Detroit and Boston and Los Angeles – license to fail to make decisions.

The States had agreed to complete their Interstate freeway systems. "So if the District of Columbia can get away with not finished the system, I think it has the effect of destroying the completion of the system in many of these other metropolitan areas, where they, too, are faced with admittedly difficult decisions." He asked the Secretary to expedite the studies to resolve locations soon. "I would hope that notice to the rest of the Nation would be given that there is an agreement to finish the system which is going to be lived up to, not only in the District of Columbia but by other States and metropolitan areas.

Chairman Kluczynski, citing similar problems in his home city of Chicago, agreed with Representative Cramer. "I am willing to give this matter my utmost concern and attention, and the sooner the highway problems are solved, the better." [pages 20-22]

Representative Richard D. McCarthy (D-NY), a journalist and public relations specialist who had won election from a Buffalo district in the 1964 Democratic landslide, asked about the reference to the George Washington Memorial Parkway segment known as the Palisades Parkway. Saying he was familiar with the route, he asked why the parkway stopped suddenly at the edge of a dirt road, "a segment of perhaps 300 or 400 or 500 yards" before reaching Chain Bridge just inside the District line. "Why was it not extended to the Chain Bridge? It could have a lot of utility if that segment had been completed."

Secretary Boyd understood that NPS simply ran out of appropriated funds. Representative McCarthy expressed astonishment. “They just ran out of money? There was no opposition to its extension up to Chain Bridge?” Secretary Boyd replied:

As far as I know. There clearly is a plan which is acceptable to all concerned to build the parkway right into the interchange at 26th and K.

Administrator Bridwell clarified:

The Secretary is correct, that the primary problem is that the Park Service has not had the funds to complete the highway. There are several alternative design plans, so that the design is not finally approved. I think the Park Service has taken the attitude that there will not be any problem in resolving the design, once money is available; so money is a primary problem.

Representative McCarthy asked if he understood correctly that the Secretary was now proposing to designate it as an Interstate highway and that the Department of Transportation would provide the funds. Secretary Boyd replied, “Yes, Sir.” That concluded his testimony. [pages 20-23]

Director Thomas F. Airis was the next witness. He was accompanied by Chief Planning Engineer Lloyd Rivard and Dan Hanson, Deputy for Traffic Engineering and Operations. Airis wanted to present a lengthy statement to the subcommittee, but before doing so, he commented on Secretary Boyd’s testimony:

Mr. Airis. Generally I think the planning he reviewed is in accordance with our own thinking. It evolved over a great many years.

I am most gratified to hear that he intends to cooperate and work with the three highway departments. This is very encouraging, and I hope we can speedily get work underway.

I do have the fear, as I have in the past, that what might happen is more and more planning, and less and less construction. I think that is something all of us must guard against.

Mr. Cramer. If I may interject, the Secretary did say he was going to consult with you, but I gather it is after he has told you what he is not going to do and where it is not going to be located.

Mr. Airis. I understand, sir.

Mr. Cramer. That is some consultation. This is my comment; you do not have to comment.

Airis began his statement by pointing out that the Washington area “has been one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing metropolitan areas in the United States.” With this growth came increasing traffic and congestion on cross-river bridges and local roads. “This is the scope of the problem that the Department I represent has been wrestling with.” The city had a 13-point

program for dealing with traffic, including changes in parking lane restrictions, one-way streets, reversible-flow streets, adoption of left-turn restrictions at important intersections, and removal of streetcar tracks. The highway department used these and other techniques to “obtain greater capacity from its street system.”

The department was not responsible for construction of the rail rapid transit system, but “all prior planning has accepted its ultimate construction as a part of the District’s balanced transportation system need, and the Department actively supports this concept.”

As Secretary Boyd’s and Administrator Bridwell’s testimony demonstrated, the proposed Interstate System for the District “is the logical descendant of all the planning you looked at”:

It is only 29 miles in length; 10 miles are completed and are rendering heavy-duty service, thereby relieving the city streets and helping to remove through-type traffic from residential streets; 5 more miles are under construction, but 14 miles are still in planning stages

When the system is completed, expressways will comprise only 4.5 percent of the street system, and yet we estimate they will carry 35 percent of all traffic

As reflected in the earlier testimony, the history of freeway development in the city “is fraught with delays and problems. The very reason for these hearings being held today is the result of one more step in the line of indecision over the past two decades”:

Strangely enough, it is always some new issue or new line of thought which rears its head. Currently, the “ball” is in the hands of the Department of Transportation.

Thinking back to January 1966, he said, “freeway development had reached its alltime [sic] low in the District of Columbia. Planning decisions had become impossible to obtain and new obstacles were being encountered.” He introduced the Federal City Council’s report, *Freeways in the National Capital Region*, describing it as an examination of the historical aspects of the evolving issues. (As noted earlier, the report was introduced into the record, pages 49-111.)

Rivard summarized the planning activities leading to 1966, then said:

We had been hoping for planning decisions for each year, we had been getting the full appropriations from Congress, released both the District money and the Federal money, but all we could obligate because of these planning indecisions was less and less and less each year, so that by 1966 we were down below almost the \$10 million level, and we would be accumulating money year by year by year, so that in 1966 we had \$172 million in our pocket in projects, for example, all the money for the Three Sisters, ready to spend, but no agreement on the project.

Airis took over the presentation, saying that in his 9 years in the District, “I draw the inference that the District is long on planning in its freeway program and short on construction,” ranked next to last. “Actually, we are greatly indebted to Maryland, because Maryland ranks below us.”

He discussed the Arthur D. Little report released in March 1966. “It was a quick review of assumption, methodology, and adequacy of all previous transportation planning, and it was done at the request of the Commissioners’ Policy Advisory Committee. After reviewing the report’s controversial findings, the Policy Advisory Committee made a near unanimous finding on May 25, 1966, “that the freeway system must proceed substantially in accordance with the system” as approved. The agreement was introduced into the record (pages 129-131.)

NCPC approved all elements of the agreement in June 1966, allowing design and property acquisition to begin, while construction started on the North-Central Freeway in the form of the Taylor Street Bridge project to accommodate the freeway and rail rapid transit line:

The PAC agreement provided for an extensive amount of tunneling of the south leg, depressing the eastbound lanes of the Potomac River Freeway in front of Georgetown and adopting the K Street alignment shown, with certain contingencies. Although these changes decreased displacement of businesses and families, they also increased costs by \$200 million.

The result was that the city was “able to obligate in the past fiscal year 1967 about as much as has been obligated in the previous 4 years”:

So far in fiscal year 1968, we have obligated \$26.1 million, and if we obligated the full scheduled amount shown for fiscal year 1968, we still will have to obligate an additional \$600 million by the current 1973 completion date of the program. With prompt decisions on remaining planning, this will be difficult, but not impossible. Without them it will, of course, be impossible.

If the projects did not proceed, the Interstate funds would lapse and be lost to the city. Further, “it is entirely possible that the Federal Government might require return of 40 percent of the 90-10 funding already advanced, since the system would no longer be interstate.” Having to return the funds would cause “financial chaos” for the District’s highway program that was “too horrible to contemplate.”

The city made reasonably good progress until March 1967 when the city asked NCPC to approve the final geometrics for the Three Sisters Bridge. “This is stage 3 approval,” Airis explained.

Airis recounted NCPC Chairman Rowe request to Secretary Boyd regarding a tunnel and her subsequent request to the Secretary that he determine whether the bridge was needed. He mentioned the Section 4(f) issue, adding that the city did not think “the enabling legislation was intended to cover precisely this situation.” Seven months later, “we have no answer.” Despite recent news reports, “the question remains unresolved in the top echelon of the Department of Transportation.” (Airis was apparently continuing with his prepared statement, written before Secretary Boyd’s testimony regarding his findings – which had not been conveyed formally to the area’s officials or highway agencies.)

He summarized the traffic justification for the Three Sisters Bridge and displayed the 10 study reports, compiled at a cost of nearly \$20 million, that emphasized the need for it, including the

1959 Mass Transportation Survey, the 1964 and 1967 ICEs, studies by Wilbur Smith and Associates (1953 and 1955) and comprehensive plans by NCPC (for the Year 2000, released with National Capital Regional Planning Council in 1960, and the draft Year 1985 Comprehensive Plan released in 1967).

The only study, Airis said, that recommended against building the bridge was NCTA's 1962 report. Subsequent studies refuted NCTA's conclusion, including recent WMATA reviews.

The bridge would not result in the relocation of any families. The Commission of Fine Arts had approved the design of the bridge, which would cost about \$15 million. Because of the connection to the Potomac River Freeway, the bridge was essential to providing a "fast heavy-duty ground transportation link to Dulles Airport" that would allow the airport to compete with Washington National Airport.

Airis concluded his comments by observing:

I want to leave with you the thought that, contrary to some irresponsible charges, the District plan does not call for more freeways than any other city in the Nation, including Los Angeles and possibly even in the world.

Washington ranked "approximately in the middle of the 22 major cities":

Gentlemen, we are not proposing an extensive amount of freeways, nor do we have an extensive amount of freeways. We have what we think is a minimal system, and we are convinced it will prove to be an essential part of the balanced transportation system that is required to keep pace with the growth in the District and, for that matter, the entire metropolitan area. [pages 131-145]

During the question period, Representative Cramer asked Airis to confirm that the city had all the funds it needed for the Three Sisters Bridge. "According to Mr. Boyd," the Congressman said, "it looks like the answer is going to be more planning, more programing, more analysis, more spending for planning." Airis replied

I hope not, sir. Maybe I took an optimistic view of Mr. Boyd's testimony, but I would hope not, sire. I hope we can get things moving.

Representative Cramer pointed out that Secretary Boyd had taken 7 months to look at the issue. "And the only answer you have received, is it not, is the article in the newspaper which came out November 8, indicating the Three Sisters Bridge is out." Airis confirmed that the only information he had was that article in the *Post* (Wolf Von Eckardt's "Boyd Rejects 3 Sisters Span, Favors Parkway") and Secretary Boyd's testimony earlier in the day. At Airis's request, Rivard took exception to some of the statements in that article, particularly involving traffic volumes.

Representative Cramer also introduced the *Star* editorial, "Boyd's Nonhighway Plan for Washington" and Von Eckardt's November 26 article, "Defusing the Capital's Rush Hours Without a Freeway." The Congressman summarized the articles:

Of course, Mr. Von Eckhardt's [sic] basic concept seems to be you can keep people from driving automobiles into town by building fewer highways, by forcing them into the parking lots outside the town, and by forcing them to use mass transit systems.

They discussed the K Street alignment for the North Leg, an idea that was included in the Policy Advisory Committee agreement, subject to contingencies. The city had satisfied itself on some issues (not stated), but had not held a public hearing on the proposal. Airis said, "you cannot go really to a public hearing until you know what the corridor is going to serve." The city did not know if the Three Sisters Bridge was going to be built, or where. It did not know if the George Washington Memorial Parkway would be built to Chain Bridge inside the District line. Will I-70S traffic use the North-Central Freeway or an alignment along the Potomac River. "If we can nail these down, we can get at the K Street alignment or the old alternate alignment, whichever is the proper one."

Representative Cramer asked about Secretary Boyd's comment that the bridge would simply transfer traffic jams from Virginia to the District. Airis did not agree with that statement:

We think that, if the bridge is built, certainly then the Potomac River Freeway would be built, and we can get the traffic on into the city. With some of these things, it is a case of which comes first, the chicken or the egg, and you have to start somewhere. The worst possible alternative is to sit back and do nothing.

The Congressman agreed, saying, "Pointing out there may be some problems by doing something does not solve the problem of doing nothing."

They discussed the ramifications of Section 4(f). Representative Cramer asked how much parkland was involved with the bridge. "There is," Airis replied, "about, we estimate off the cuff, 3 acres by the bridge itself." He clarified that the acreage involved air rights in that the bridge would span the 3 acres. On the Virginia side, Airis did not have specific figures, "but it would be a small amount of additional parkway":

Mr. Cramer. We already have the George Washington Parkway program [in Maryland] for that area, do we not?

Mr. Airis. Yes. That is contemplated even in the comment that Mr. Boyd made and showed on the map, somehow, someday, a parkway would come through that area and would go through the Palisades area. His proposal calls for I-70S to come down that way. We frankly think that would be a mistake.

Mr. Cramer. Using the same reasoning, I suppose we should never have built the 14th Street Bridge, the Memorial Bridge, the Key Bridge. I do not quite get the difference. You have to have transportation. You already have a number of bridges, and you obviously have to consider esthetics, but that cannot be the controlling factor unless you just decide you are not going to build any more bridges.

Mr. Airis. Sir, we frequently point out that the Washington community is on both sides of the river, and there must be communication between the two sides. We frequently

refer to the fact that in Paris there are over 20 bridges, and they have been done in a rather handsome manner, and I think we will do as well here.

Representative Cramer could not understand the aesthetic problem because “you already have a road that goes along the river there,” referring to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. As someone who lived in the Lake Barcroft area of Falls Church, Virginia, he added:

I am concerned about what is going to happen. I have to drive in and out every day, too. I do not know of a place where there is a more muddled situation relating to highways than the serious traffic congestion in the District of Columbia and the surrounding areas. This is where the Nation’s business is supposed to be carried on.

A way must be found to “get away from the quagmire of indecision in which this highway system has bogged down in the District of Columbia.” The Interstate program was 11 years old, but “if these decisions are not made in the very near future, in the next year or so, what is going to happen in the District of Columbia?” He asked, “How can we hold this up as a model city to the Nation?”:

Mr. Airis. We think it should be built, and we should get going with the rest of the system.

Mr. Cramer. I think you point out a very significant factor in your testimony, which I tried to interrogate the Secretary about briefly, and that is that the District, as well as all the States in the Nation, had to agree at the very outset it would finish the system as programed within the metropolitan areas and elsewhere.

Mr. Airis. We are very worried about that.

Mr. Cramer. If this is not done, the District of Columbia is not conforming to the basic law, is it?

Mr. Airis. No, sir.

That exchange concluded Airis’s testimony. [pages 151-160]

Chairman-Director Wolff was the next witness, accompanied by Joseph D. Buscher, special assistant attorney general, Maryland State Roads Commission. Wolff began by pointing out that the Washington area’s freeway problems were similar to those in Baltimore. “Why? Well, because we are a motor-car oriented economy.” It may not be “an irreversible process [but] we can look forward to greater use of the automobile, even with substantial improvements in public transportation. It is of paramount importance that we realize this fact.” Freeways and mass transportation were compatible, “but freeways and expressways must constitute the backbone of a total transportation system.”

When he took office in March 1967, the commission was “in the middle of a roaring controversy concerning the location of the portion of I-70 known as the North Central Freeway” from its junction with the Capital Beltway in Maryland to the I-95 interchange in the District of

Columbia. He summarized the evolution of the dispute before Maryland, the District, and BPR agreed on an alignment along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at a cost of about \$25 million more than the original route. True, the alignment would not provide the required traffic service unless a rail rapid transit line were built in or adjacent to the corridor to induce motorists out of their automobiles. “We feel, however, that this is the best we can now produce to serve the long-felt need for major traffic movement in this corridor.”

Another important issue was the location of I-95 between the Capital Beltway and the District. “Its importance can well be indicated by the fact [that] this proposed portion of I-95 will carry eight lanes of traffic and an ultimate traffic load of 115,300 vehicles per day.” To meet demand, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway/Expressway must be upgraded to expressway standards through its entire length, including additional lanes and reinforced pavement capable of carrying trucks, to divert traffic from I-95.

Wolff also said the Three Sisters Bridge “has long been needed” as a primary link for Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland:

We are convinced that all of these facilities – the Three Sisters Bridge, the North Central Freeway, which is I-70, the eight lane I-95, and the [Baltimore-]Washington Expressway are essential parts of our ultimate freeway network serving the Washington Metropolitan area and constituting the Baltimore-Washington corridor. They are minimum needs, the framework around which a balanced system of mass transportation can be developed.

We should not tolerate further delays in achieving these critical objectives upon which the economic viability of an entire region so heavily depends. We have lost valuable time. We cannot at this late date turn back the hands of the clock. [pages 160-164]

Chairman Kluczynski said he had not intended to hold hearings on this issue in 1967 “but the pressure has been so great on me as chairman of this [sub]committee and also the members of this committee that we felt the situation had reached crisis stage.” He knew that Wolff had heard Secretary Boyd’s testimony. Had Secretary Boyd entered into any agreement with the Maryland State Roads Commission? Wolf replied categorically:

No; we have had no agreement of any kind which might be of a secret nature or confidential nature regarding the entire subject with respect to any part of the freeway and Interstate System.

Representative Cramer asked if Secretary Boyd had consulted with Wolff on the Three Sisters Bridge or North-Central Freeway. Wolff said he had “had no conversation at all” with Secretary Boyd. The roads commission had “attempted through the Bureau of Public Roads to elicit from the Secretary’s office a response to the North Central Freeway,” as it evolved to its present concept. The only response was that the Secretary and his staff were looking at the matter “in the context of the total transportation problem in Washington.” Prior to the newspaper reports in early November on anticipated findings, Maryland had not heard anything about it.

They discussed the traffic deficiencies of the proposed alignment of the North-Central Freeway. Wolff said, "Now, the frailty of this system is that it simply is not adequate to carry the ultimate traffic generation. We confess that that is perfectly true." Asked if BPR had come up with anything better, Wolff replied, "We do not believe anyone has come up with anything better to this point." It has "many problems" but "the most compelling" reason to proceed was that it "minimized utterly the displacement problem."

Wolff failed "to see a cogent reason" for the resistance to the proposal. Representative Cramer suggested, "They just do not want to build a North Central Freeway and they are going to study it to death." Wolff feared the Congressman was right, but hoped he was wrong:

I fail to feel that they are not actually, conscientiously trying to get the best solution. If you are suggesting that there are forces at work which really wish to prevent roads from going in and possibly feel that urban transit by way of rail is the only solution, I can only say, that they have a wish. It is clear to me it will never happen. I hold to the point that I began with, that we are automobile oriented and will remain that way as long as all of those who are in this room remain alive.

It may very well be that we are going to find a way of supplementing the use of the automobile, which to me, represents too typically the end action of America generally. I simply do not see that any of those who would be in favor of rail transit mass transportation as a panacea could hope to see their dreams realized in, let us say a decade or two decades.

Representative Cramer recalled that during debate about the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Congress was told the new Department of Transportation would "result in less cost, less duplication and more action to get the job done." Now that the department is in operation, "what is the excuse that can be used to ditch part of the system or look and study it to death?" As far as he was concerned, the department's job was "to resolve these problems and finish the job of building the Interstate System." He added, "Washington needs to have a team, with all members on the same side, trying to win the same ball game." Instead, the District had "about six teams fighting each other, apparently. And we end up with a tie; nothing is done."

He asked what happened to the Federal-State partnership on the North-Central Freeway. Wolff admitted, "I have not seen any indication that we have a final word on it. And if I understood the Secretary this morning, there is no final word."

Representative Cramer asked what would happen to the Interstate funds if the North-Central Freeway were not built. Maryland, Wolff replied, could conceivably lose the Federal share of the estimated cost of \$63.5 million.

The Congressman returned to a topic he had discussed with Director Airis. The State had an agreement that in return for 90-percent funding, Maryland would complete its designated Interstate System. If, however, the Department of Transportation continued to delay the project, "you will not be able to conform to that agreement," but "might be asked to repay some of the 90 percent of the money if you have not conformed to the agreement."

Under those conditions, Wolff said, Maryland would not be able to finish its network unless something were put into law to explicitly require each segment. [pages 160-170]

After additional discussion seemed to end Wolff's testimony, Buscher asked to add an observation. He talked about the process in Baltimore where the same routes, I-70 and I-95, were controversial, and the Interstate Design Concept Team was at work.

He also commented on Secretary Boyd's concern about impacts on park land. He referred to the long dispute about building the Capital Beltway across Rock Creek Park in Maryland on land acquired under the Capper-Cramton Act as an alternate to the taking of approximately 30 high-priced houses. Working with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the State considered the cost of the alternatives. In the end, the Maryland State Roads Commission paid the commission a portion of the cost of acquiring the homes. The commission "took that money and actually acquired additional land for the park land that we took." Something similar might be the solution to the park issue in the District.

Representative Cramer recalled the dispute. He said, "Parkland was one of the basic problems you had on I-495, the Capital Beltway":

Mr. Wolff. Yes, where we have these poor geometrics.

Mr. Buscher. It is the most dangerous section on the Capital Beltway.

Mr. Cramer. Probably one of the most dangerous on the Interstate System. The conservation of park lands and the necessity of the highway, it all relates to that. And the testimony we had during the safety hearings of the Highway Investigating Subcommittee was that this was one of the most dangerous stretches on the Interstate System.

Mr. Buscher. I am ashamed to say that we have had to reduce the speed to 50 miles per hour.

Representative Cramer did not think "safety ought to be tossed out of the window." He also recalled that the number of lanes had to be reduced to cross the park lands. Wolff replied that was correct. "It is just wrong and we know it now."

The Congressman asked if Maryland, Virginia, and the District had consulted with Secretary Boyd. No, Wolff replied, but he and Airis had met with BPR Director Turner on November 24. Representative James C. Cleveland (R-NH), another highway supporter, joined the dialogue to ask what BPR's thoughts were. Although reluctant to characterize another agency's views, Wolff finally said "they felt that the bridge should be deferred." How long? They did not discuss time.

Representative Cleveland asked about Secretary Boyd's assurance that his office was consulting with State and District officials. Wolff replied "that I do not feel that we have been left out entirely." The State had consulted with Turner on two recent occasions about the problems with I-70 and I-95:

Mr. Cleveland. Both of these consultations postdated decisions that were reported in the papers, that action on the Three Sisters Bridge was deferred. Was that consultation or letting you in on something reported in the paper? Maybe we disagree on what a consultation is.

Mr. Wolff. . . . I must say that I had heard at the time I went in to see Mr. Turner, that through the newspapers that there was very serious consideration being given to deleting it.

Representative Cleveland asked Wolff if he could testify that Maryland was consulted before the irrevocable decision on the Three Sisters Bridge was made. Wolff quibbled with the term “irrevocable decision,” prompting a dialogue with Representative Cramer:

Mr. Wolff. I do not know how irrevocable that was. Let me explain something to you. In dealing with the Bureau, there is an element of creative license, if I can call it that. I do not consider it particularly dangerous if someone says, what would you think if we took this or that out. I respond accordingly.

Mr. Cramer. Creative license is not what this member is concerned with. I am concerned about destructive license. What is the next step for the State of Maryland to do under the circumstances?

Mr. Wolff. To fight like hell to keep it in . . . this location. We want it where we have it.

Mr. Cramer. Which the Secretary this morning said was not satisfactory.

Mr. Wolff. That is correct.

Mr. Cramer. So that is the very point I am getting at. This is destructive license. They have not suggested they will find another location or that there is some other way of resolving these problems. Maryland’s hands are tired at the present time under the present circumstances, are they not?

Wolff said that early on, as troubles mounted, “we were trying to get legislation – where we felt in our hearts – that was probably an executive function.” He did not think the State legislature or Congress should make location decisions that were more properly reserved for highway agencies, he tried to defend Secretary Boyd:

You know, as well as I, that he is caught on the tenterhook, on a number of tenterhooks. He knows that he does not have the answer, and he knows that he had got to consult with us. I do not feel that his consultation is complete by any means I think they have just started talking to us, and I expect they are going to continue. I would be appalled if I would learn today that this was an irrevocable decision.

Representative Cleveland explained the committee’s obligation was to find out if the Secretary was consulting with local government. “This committee is not trying to place roads and place bridges.” Wolff replied, “Please do not do that. I think that would be a terrible thing to try.”

Recalling the first BPR meeting on November 24, after the news reports on the Secretary's decisions, Representative Cleveland said, "I do not call that consultation – to call you in a couple of weeks after the decision has been announced in Washington." He was not interested in legislative action to place bridges, but was concerned about the decisionmaking process. Wolff conceded that the meetings he had cited with BPR regarding the North Central Freeway and I-95 was the total extent of consultation. [pages 171-175]

Chairman Kluczynski recalled Director Airis to the witness table to respond to additional questions from Representative Cramer. He wanted to know if Airis agreed with BPR Director Turner's characterization of the South Leg Freeway as being a "cannon" firing three lanes of traffic onto a crowded Southwest Freeway. "If so, why is it being built that way?"

Airis replied that he did not think Turner meant to make it sound as bad as it seemed. True, the South Leg Freeway from the Lincoln Memorial to the Tidal Basin was a six-lane freeway, but two lanes were linked to Independence Avenue. Thus, only four lanes would connect with the eight-lane Southwest Freeway. Airis thought it would work.

Next, Representative Cramer asked Airis to comment on the North-Central Freeway. Airis agreed with Wolff that the connection would result in "a minimal system" that would require "a lot less displacement." He said, "The design that we had, we think it is one we ought to adopt fully and completely and build."

Representative Cramer asked if Airis agreed with Secretary Boyd that I-70S should be shifted to the Palisades Parkway along the Potomac River. Airis replied:

No, sir. That is the one that I object to. I think the [George Washington Memorial] parkway should be built on into the District of Columbia, but it cannot be built until that Three Sisters Bridge is built in order to get your lane balance in the area. One of the things the Secretary has suggested is to use that for 70-S. I know the folks involved in that Palisades area, and I think that would take more courage than I have to attempt to bring 70-S down the river.

How, Representative Cramer asked, would that affect the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which was not being built to Interstate standards. Airis agreed that it was "not an interstate standard at all, both in the horizontal alignment or in the structural problems."

Representative Cramer summarized that the parkway was "not going to answer the need" for an expressway in the North Central Expressway corridor. Airis agreed, saying, "That is our opinion, sir."

If I-70S were shifted to the Palisades Parkway, Representative Cramer asked, "wouldn't we run into the same problem that Mr. Wolff testified to over to the east, and that is, being a parkway, trucks would not be allowed on it?" Airis, apparently referring to the meeting with Turner that Wolff had mentioned, replied:

That is correct. But there has been some talk. Frankly, when we talked here 2 weeks ago, there was some talk, and I, frankly, don't know how it could be accomplished under the

present regulations to the effect that there would be limited truck traffic placed on the parkway. Now, I don't know how such a thing could be policed, frankly.

The Congressman asked what "limited" meant, but Airis did now know. "It wasn't spelled out, sir, and I, frankly, don't know."

Representative James J. Howard (D-NJ) asked about the South Leg Freeway. If it were not built, what would happen to "the traffic that would be hanging on each end of the roadway?" Airis replied that "this is one of the very, very difficult questions":

The big mosaic shows just exactly the end of that freeway, and it is impossible to take care of the traffic – well, frankly, the traffic does not use the Potomac River Freeway. It cannot.

There are some contemporary connections that we have made to the parkway in the area, but certainly you would not want to funnel through-type traffic right into the Lincoln Memorial parkways there, and we would not recommend it, and I am sure the Park Service would not stand for it.

Representative Cramer summarized:

I suggest that if there was another system in this country serving a metropolitan area that had four dead ends – one, two, three, four – that you have in this system now, in the District of Columbia and Virginia, you would hear howls all the way to Washington about it.

Airis agreed. "I think, sir, they would probably fire the highway engineer":

Mr. Cramer. Yet, this is being perpetrated by the lack of decision by the Department of Transportation itself.

Mr. Airis. I have hopes, as Mr. Wolff, my colleague in Maryland, does, that after this morning things will be broken loose a little bit, I hope anyway. [pages 176-178]

That exchange concluded the first day of the hearing.

News coverage, not surprisingly, focused on Secretary Boyd's comments about his review of the District's freeway plans – he "broke his long silence," as the *Post* put it. The *Post*'s lead paragraph repeated his statement that he thought it would be "unwise at this time to construct the Three Sisters bridge as its planned location." The *Post* and the *Star* went through his testimony about the doubts he had about the bridge, the North-Central Freeway/Northeast Freeway, and the South Leg Freeway tunnel. The reports made clear that he was not ruling any of these projects out, but was calling for more study, as well as completion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the city line and the Palisades Parkway to provide the link to the Georgetown waterfront for a connection with the Potomac River Freeway. [Milius, Peter, "3 Major Road Projects Are Unwise, Boyd Says," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 6, 1967;

Flor, Lee, "Boyd Warns of Dangers In D.C. Freeway Plans," *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1967]

On December 6, State Highway Commissioner Fugate of Virginia was the first witness, accompanied by John Harwood, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer. In coming years, Fugate would be the strongest advocate for I-66 and I-266, and his testimony would reflect his aggressive approach.

He began by reading a letter he had written to Secretary Boyd after reading the November 8 article in the *Post* about the decision that the Three Sisters Bridge was not needed. (The letter mentioned that he had written to the Secretary about the bridge on September 26 but had not received a reply.) "Your decision, if the newspaper article is correct, comes as a distinct surprise to those of us who have been engaged in planning for transportation in the Washington metropolitan area in Virginia for many years."

Fugate's letter questioned the applicability of Section 4(f) to the decision on the bridge. He pointed out that Section 4(f) required cooperation and consultation with the State in developing transportation plans and programs. Virginia had "never been consulted in connection with the studies which the Department of Transportation has apparently made." (This was a reference to the first sentence of Section 4(f) calling for cooperation and consultation. The Secretary would rely on the second sentence, which did not include a clear reference to cooperation or consultation, that prohibited the Secretary from approving projects that did not meet the protective criteria.)

He continued:

We protest in the strongest possible terms the arbitrary removal of an interstate route that has been a part of the planning of the Northern Virginia area for many years and which is included in the transportation plan for the Washington metropolitan area of Virginia.

He believed that Secretary Boyd "subscribed to the philosophy" that decisions on any segment of the transportation system "should be based upon maximum consideration being given to the wishes of the state and the area." As a result, Fugate could not "understand a decision to eliminate this route without consultation with the state of Virginia."

The letter concluded:

If a decision has been reached as indicated in the press, I urge you to reconsider before an official announcement is made.

In response to followup letters from Members of Congress, Secretary Boyd stated in a reply on November 30 that he had agreed to the unusual step of reviewing the bridge prior to the request for final approval only "because of the strong Congressional mandate contained in Section 4(f) I have not yet arrived at a final conclusion."

After seeing these letters, Fugate immediately wrote to Secretary Boyd again. The Secretary's reply to the Congressmen was "the first advice we have received as to the basis of the decision

you were reported by the press to have already made.” Again noting the consultation provision in Section 4(f), Fugate summarized the history of the bridge, dating to June 30, 1960, when I-266 with a bridge across the Potomac River was approved. Everyone knew the bridge would have to cross NPS lands, leading to the agreement on May 25, 1966, with NPS, BPR, and others “for the Spout Run location of the interstate route.” At the time, NPS Director Hartzog approved the agreement because he “apparently did not consider that I-266 was going to do any great damage to the esthetic values of the park lands and the areas of historical significance.”

With the approval of NPS, BPR, and the others, “we had every reason to believe that we were in business,” and proceeded accordingly. The Commission of Fine Arts approved the preliminary bridge design. In addition, Virginia had worked toward the objectives of NPS, which he said wanted to eliminate all but Arlington Cemetery traffic from Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the Defense Department, which wanted to eliminate the connecting loop between the bridge and Jefferson Davis Highway to allow expansion of the cemetery. Traffic projections show clearly that the Roosevelt Bridge could not possibly absorb the commuter traffic which would be forced to move over from Memorial Bridge with elimination of the connecting loop without the added capacity of a Three Sisters Bridge.”

Despite the progress and the State’s cooperation with Federal agencies, “with the creation of the new Department of Transportation, matters suddenly took a change.”

Fugate informed Secretary Boyd that, “These accomplishments appear to us to be adequate compliance with the provisions of Section 4(f).” The letter concluded:

Together with the overwhelming traffic need, which is a matter of record . . . it seems to us there should be no question as to confirming the approval of this route in effect since June 30, 1960.

He agreed with Airis about the urgent need for the bridge:

I think it is particularly noteworthy that the latest traffic study by Alan Voorhees & Associates, made for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority – this was not a highway study, mind you, this was made by the transit people – confirmed the justification for the bridge, which has been so obvious over a period of many years.

Neither former Administrator Whitton nor anyone in a position of authority in BPR had ever questioned the need for the bridge.

The Federal-State partnership had always been the cornerstone of the Federal-aid highway program. In that spirit, Maryland and Virginia had given priority to the Capital Beltway at the start of the Interstate program, “with the enthusiastic approval of the Bureau of Public Roads.” The result was that the Washington area was one of the first metropolitan areas in the Nation “to gain substantial traffic relief from interstate construction.” He added, “facetiously, if the District had been involved, we would probably still be considering whether or not the beltway was needed.”

The “drastic eliminations and changes” under consideration would, “if carried out, have serious and damaging effects on highway transportation throughout the urban areas of Maryland and Virginia.” As a result, he protested the “emasculatation of the District interstate system.” A decision to eliminate I-266 and the Three Sisters Bridge “in the face of the overwhelming traffic need would be an arbitrary action entirely without justification.” He did not believe that “Congress gave any such mandate in enacting section 4(f).” Any view to the contrary was “in my opinion entirely unsupportable.”

He concluded his statement by expressing the hope that Secretary Boyd would “confirm the decision made in 1960, and confirmed many times since, to build the Three Sisters Bridge on the location and in the manner agreed by the three parties at interest on May 25, 1966.” If he did not do so, Fugate recommended that Congress intervene and require construction of I-266, including the Three Sisters Bridge. [pages 179-185]

Representative Cramer asked if the Governor of Virginia and its Congressmen favored deleting the Three Sisters Bridge. No, they did not. Was Virginia consulted prior to the Secretary’s announcements the day before? No, it was not. What about the meeting with BPR? Virginia did not consider that meeting to be consultation. What did you learn at the meeting? Virginia had learned that, as Secretary Boyd had said on the first day of the hearing, “he certainly looked with favor on making these changes and eliminating this bridge.”

Do you believe the Department of Transportation does not intend to build the bridge? “I think the Secretary practically said that yesterday, did he not?” Did BPR suggest an alternative location or request Virginia’s consultation to solve the problem? “No alternative location was mentioned. There were some alternative locations mentioned for the freeway system in the District and it was decided these would be mulled over.” Did they offer any hope that the bridge might be built at a different location? “I gained the impression that the bridge was pretty well out of the picture.”

Representative Cramer read the first section of Section 4(f) about cooperation and consultation, then asked if Secretary Boyd did that. “This is what occasioned our two letters, that we had not been consulted prior to the decision being made.” The Congressman then read the second sentence regarding prudent and feasible alternatives:

Mr. Cramer. You did get the approval, as I understand this agreement . . . of the National Park Service, did you not?

Mr. Fugate. That is correct, yes, sir.

Mr. Cramer. So as to location and as to minimizing harm to the park, the Park Service was satisfied, is that not correct?

Mr. Fugate. Right.

Mr. Cramer. So the second requirement is clearly met as far as you are concerned?

Mr. Fugate. In our view it was.

Mr. Cramer. Now is there a feasible or prudent alternative? I think your answer to that is, "No"; is that correct?

Mr. Fugate: Three locations in the same area have been studied, have been considered by everyone concerned, and the Spout Run location was the location decided upon and confirmed by this agreement.

Mr. Cramer. And this was agreed to by the Park Service, which has jurisdiction over it and is responsible for preservation of the park land, is that correct?

Mr. Fugate. That is correct, yes, sir.

Mr. Cramer. So it appears that both of the requirements have been fully conformed with?

Mr. Fugate. In our view.

Mr. Cramer. In your view. Well, in my view too. And that subsection 4(f) has been fully complied with.

The Congressman said the Secretary was substituting his judgment not only for that of NPS and the Department of the Interior but the State of Virginia, "without even consulting with them, and using this section as the basis for doing so."

If so, Secretary Boyd was "wholly misconstruing the authority that he claims Congress gave him under section 4(f)." As Representative Cramer recalled, the Committee on Public Works had discussed the matter with the Committee on Government Operations while it was preparing the bill for congressional consideration. The Public Works Committee was "given, at least this Member was given, every assurance that this did not add to the Secretary's authority, it gave him no power to act unilaterally, and was consistent with section 15 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966."

(Section 15 declared that, as a matter of national policy, the Secretary "shall use maximum effort" to preserve parklands and historic sites; shall cooperate with the States "in developing highway plans and programs which carry out such policy"; and shall not approve any project that requires the use of such land "unless such program includes all possible planning, including consideration of alternatives to the use of such land, to minimize any harm to such park or site resulting from such use.")

In Representative Cramer's view, "the Secretary is going far beyond what Congress intended him to have in the way of powers." Congress had never intended for him to act unilaterally. As for the facts in this case, "he has, in my opinion, no authority to act as he has under section 4(f)."

He asked if the traffic between Virginia and the District could be handled adequately without the Three Sisters Bridge. No, Harwood replied for Fugate, "I don't think it is possible." Would that be true even with the planned rail rapid transit system in place? Even with the transit system, "there would still be a deficiency [by 1990] in the Potomac River crossings to handle the traffic that would desire to cross."

Representative Cramer concluded his question period with a summary. Despite the agreement by NPS regarding parks and the facts that Virginia and the District support the bridge, the previous Federal Highway Administrator agreed about the need, and the transit system will not make it unnecessary – “despite all this, the Secretary saw fit to act unilaterally in deleting the bridge at the present time.” He recommended that the committee take another look at Section 4(f) if Secretary Boyd is going to misconstrue and misuse it. [pages 188-191]

(Superintendent Jett of the NPS’s National Capital Region denied Fugate’s claims about restricting Arlington Memorial Bridge traffic. “We have never had any idea of closing Memorial Bridge to commuters, and couldn’t if we wanted to. It is just incorrect to say the park service is planning to close Memorial Bridge to commuters.” The *Star*’s article about the denial added that Superintendent Jett planned to retire on January 1, 1968. [Flor, Lee, “Plan to Bar Memorial Bridge To Commuters Is Denied,” *The Evening Star*, December 7, 1967]

Later in the question period, Chairman Kluczynski mentioned the morning’s newspapers carrying reports on Secretary Boyd’s testimony the day before. “Do you think by reading those newspapers that the Three Sisters Bridge and the North Central Freeway are dead?” Fugate replied that based on the articles, “the applecart has been pretty well upset if the Secretary’s decisions hold, and I despair of the bridge being built under this present arrangement.”

The chairman said:

Well, for your information . . . that is wide open. We are going to do everything possible to clear up the chaos in the metropolitan area. This is the first area in the country where we have considered this problem. I know many other places in the country have similar problems, but this is the Capital of the Nation, where people come from my district and from all over the country, to this wonderful city, we are going to try to take care of your problems, and we are going to try to help the people from all over the country.
[pages 193-194]

The remaining witnesses were Members of Congress, beginning with Representative Broyhill. He did not believe that any committee should get into administrative or technical details that belonged in the executive branch. “But the executive branch has failed.” The situation was “ridiculous” and would be “laughable” if it were not so serious. “Of course, what we have here now is a national disgrace insofar as progress on this freeway, highway, and interstate construction is concerned.”

Secretary Boyd had overruled all the studies and surveys “as if they didn’t know what they were doing.” If the Secretary and his advisers were right, Congress ought to “investigate the incompetency that caused the waste of all of these millions of dollars during the past years.”

He did not come before the committee to choose a site for the river crossings; experts had made that decision. His goal was a call to “the people who are responsible [to] get on with the job, construct immediately what has been planned and what has been recommended.”

The issue of the bridge was not the real problem. The real problem was “the contest between the so-called planners or dreamers and highway engineers.” On the one side are the people who are interested only in esthetic values, but “have no regard, no concern whatsoever about the movement of people and goods.” On the other side are “those who have the responsibility of doing something about solving our traffic and transportation problems”:

We have too many people in powerful positions, so to speak, that have a stranglehold over the construction of these facilities that just don't seem to care as to whether we solve this problem or not.

He was in favor of preserving scenic beauty but with so many thousands of people moving about to and from their job, “I don't think we can afford the luxury of just having tree-lined boulevards and walkways and places for the tourists to drive down in complete comfort without any traffic congestion in order to enjoy the beauty of this area.”

He cited the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge as an example. The two sides battled for years because opponents feared it would “destroy the scenic beauty of the Lincoln Memorial. They didn't want to upset the rabbits and reptiles on Theodore Roosevelt Island.” He recalled how the bill passed for the structure, followed by consideration of a tunnel. Congress tried to write additional legislation but “it was really a monstrosity” that was returned to committee:

Now, if the dreamers had prevailed when we were trying to get that Roosevelt Bridge constructed, we would have chaos at the present time, as we are going to have chaos in the future if we don't do something about the Three Sisters Bridge.

Secretary Boyd advocated Interstate designation for the parkway on the Maryland side of the river. “But can we proceed? Because you can't construct the freeway on the other side until you make a final determination as to whether Three Sisters is needed or not needed.” That decision had been made many years ago. “And something should be done about that,” Representative Broyhill said, because of the problem of double-crossers. He did not know if that subject had been raised in the hearings:

But the people of Maryland living out in the Northwest area, or beyond the Northwest area of Washington, find it more feasible to cross the river at Cabin John Bridge, come down the George Washington Memorial Parkway and cross again at the Memorial or 14th Street Bridge.

Certainly that is causing a great deal more, many thousands of additional vehicles crossing back and forth every day that could be eliminated.

He hoped the committee would “issue a mandate if necessary to direct these officials to proceed with construction of these projects forthwith.” [pages 196-200]

Questioning of Representative Broyhill was brief, but Representative Cramer did note Chairman Natcher's threat to withhold District matching funds for rail rapid transit if the freeway network did not advance. Representative Broyhill could not confirm it, but believed that would be the

case. He expected “strong resistance to any appropriation for the construction of the subway as long as this highway or freeway construction is held up.” [page 202]

Representative Machen, the next witness, recounted how just 7 months ago, the freeway system seemed ready to go. “Now, as a result of a unilateral decision it appears that the Three Sisters bridge is still hanging in the balance.” The Secretary wants more study. “If no decision is made soon on this project, it will be dead. It will have been planned and studied to death at a cost of millions of dollars.” What he objected to was “this back-door approach by people not interested in a balanced transportation system”:

I reiterate . . . somewhere, somehow along the line, there is a vested interest group or a group of people who seem to be able to continue to fight a rear guard action, notwithstanding the mandates of the engineering departments of the three jurisdictions, notwithstanding the mandates of the District Committee, notwithstanding the demands of the Appropriations Subcommittee for the District of Columbia.

It is this unilateral decision by the johnny-come-latelies in the transportation program that I object to.

He did not favor only freeways; he did not want the District of Columbia to look like Los Angeles. “But we must have the go-ahead for these interstate highway projects as a prelude to the construction of the rapid transit system and the go-ahead must be given now.” Someone has to say “yes” because the area “cannot afford to let a tragic lack of interstate highways choke this metropolitan area to death.”

Representative Robert V. Denney (R-Ne), an attorney and local official who won election to the House in 1966 and was, therefore, new to the committee, asked if Representative Machen could identify who the vested interests were that were holding up the freeway network. Representative Machen replied, “Well, very frankly, and candidly, I think it comes from the Planning Commission They have always, they have been consistent in fighting this rear-guard action of stopping any of the highway projects.” Referring to I-70S, he said, “They have gradually moved it in and in and in and it keeps everything, everybody off balance.” He did not like to see people dislocated, but “I think we have to think of the common objective of people getting to and from work.”

When Representative Denney suggested “that somewhere there is someone hiding in the woodpile,” Representative Machen agreed. Certain District residents had “convinced the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to bottle up your highway systems.” He wondered, “How could the Bureau of Public Roads, under the Commerce Department, have accepted it 7 months ago, and not now? I think the record is clear.” He hoped Chairman Natcher would follow through on his threat to hold up matching funds for rail rapid transit if the freeway network is delayed. “I hope he does, to be quite frank.”

Representative Cramer referred to a balanced transportation system. He did not agree with those who thought the best idea was to “dry up automobile transportation and use underground mass

transit.” They were, instead, “drying up the city itself” because if people did not want to use transit, they would stay out of the city. “And it seems to me that they are going to end up in suburban shopping centers.” Those who do not want the city to dry up “have got to support or should support a balanced system.” Representative Machen agreed that “they are not going to lick the problem of downtown Washington until they realize they have to have a balanced system.”

Representative Cramer concluded:

It seems to me some master planners are afoot. And maybe they are the ones in the woodpile, the master planners, who feel you can force the vast majority of commuters out of their automobiles and onto the mass transit. I think they are absolutely wrong.
[pages 204-208]

Representative Gude was the final witness. He appreciated the hearing, but said, “I do feel it is pathetic that a committee of Congress has to get involved in worrying about the particular placement of bridges and highways.”

Numerous studies were “virtually unanimous” in supporting the freeway system, including the Three Sisters Bridge, North-Central Freeway, and the Inner Loop. This was a “minimal system,” as reflected in the fact that under it, the North-Central Freeway was the only link between the District of Columbia and Montgomery County. He accepted this minimal system “particularly in view of the utter failure of the Department of Transportation and local freeway opponents to produce anything resembling a credible alternative.”

He said that “a truly impressive degree of regional agreement” exists on transportation needs, and the agreement “reflects the will of the Congress”:

But why bother? Regional transportation plans developed through a comprehensive planning process are unilaterally dismembered by the Department of Transportation.

Representative Gude saw “strong indications of collusion between freeway opponents on the National Capital Planning Commission and advisors to Secretary Boyd in the sequence of events surrounding his review of the Three Sisters Bridge question.” He was not convinced that the intent of Section 4(f) was to give the Secretary of Transportation unilateral authority. His plan to convert a park road into an Interstate highway was “totally inconsistent” with his assertion of a “substantial Federal interest in the Potomac River and its shoreline.”

He clarified that he was referring to the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Maryland, “a road which goes to nowhere at this point.” The Secretary’s solicitude for items protected by Section 4(f) “somehow vanishes” in the case of the parkway “in the interests of avoiding freeways and bridges.” He wondered “what flexible legal interpretations” would allow trucks to use the parkway or how the parkway would meet the legal requirement that Interstate highways be designed to meet projected traffic volumes in 20 years.

He continued:

Antifreeway bias was clearly evident in the Secretary's speech before the Washington Board of Trade [on] September 26, apparently based on misinformation. Thus it was not surprising that the Secretary, in disclosing his disapproval of the bridge, sought to destroy other freeway plans, too.

Von Eckardt's November 26 article ("Defusing the Capital's Rush Hours Without a Freeway") had "exposed the caliber of information being furnished to the Secretary and the public."

Secretary Boyd had denounced the North-Central Freeway as a "tremendously expensive and inadequate artery":

Its expense stems directly from a routing designed to minimize disruption of existing development – presumably one of the enlightened goals of social considerations. The route and its language represent a compromise; its expense should be considered in light of the absence of other interstate facilities.

The Secretary's argument that two Interstate facilities (I-70S and I-95) feeding into one "will cause some congestion is valid," but simply confirms Representative Gude's observation that "the proposed system is indeed minimal and makes no claim to totally eliminate rush-hour congestion."

Although the Secretary discussed traffic management improvements and transit, including exclusive bus lanes, what was most striking was what he did not say:

He made no mention of his repudiation of the Policy Advisory Committee's agreement of last year to end the decades of delay and move ahead with the freeway program. He offered no explanation or defense. Understandably, the deed is indefensible.

Although Secretary Boyd said the department was "consulting and intends to continue consulting" with State and local officials, this statement was "demonstrably not so." The Congressman and others from the area "have found Mr. Boyd's staff and he personally to be totally unwilling to communicate with us on freeway matters."

The hearings thus far had been effective, if only because they "have elicited the first official and specific statement on our freeways to be wrung from the Department of Transportation." He urged the committee to "continue exploring the situation and assure that locally developed transportation plans are brought to function."

He emphasized the need for balanced transportation and referred to his work as a State Senator in securing Maryland's ratification of the interstate compact creating WMATA:

And I think once again this is being made out in some quarters as a battle between the transit system and an expressway system. I think we absolutely have to have both if we are going to have a satisfactory transportation system in the Washington metropolitan area

After commenting on the Voorhees traffic projections, Representative Gude concluded:

These highway and transit plans have been developed over a period of 20 years and they have involved a great deal of planning and political negotiation. You cannot just take these highways on and off the maps and the transit plans on and off the maps the way Alexander the Sixth divided the world back in the middle ages, by just drawing a line on a map. It is not that easy. [pages 208-214]

(Pope Alexander VI helped negotiate a treaty that divided the New World discoveries between Portugal and the Crown of Castille (Spain).)

In the brief question period, Representative Cramer agreed with Representative Gude about the inconsistency of canceling the Three Sisters Bridge to protect parkland while advocating an Interstate freeway instead of a parkway. “So I am hopeful your support and the efforts and actions of this committee will possibly result in doing away with the 4(f) designation on this bridge, that maybe we will get underway and into service.” He added, “We have all kinds of wars, we might as well get underway in the war against traffic congestion.” [page 220]

In closing the hearings, Chairman Kluczynski promised that the committee would study the issues under review and submit recommendations at a later date. However, he added in closing:

With respect to the Three Sisters Bridge, and I-266 as presently planned, however, the Chair announces that the committee will state its recommendations before the Congress adjourns for this session, with the expectation that if the Department of Transportation does not accede to those recommendations on or before December 31, 1967, the committee will take whatever legislative action is required to present its recommendations to the Congress for enactment into law. [page 222]

Awaiting a Mandate

Coverage of the final day of the hearing focused on Chairman Kluczynski’s ultimatum. As Lee Flor reported, the chairman said at the start that he had begun the hearings only for fact finding. “But after listening to Boyd and District, Virginia and Maryland highway officials and congressmen, Kluczynski had made up his mind.” He wanted the Three Sisters Bridge.

The legislation could be a standalone bill or part of national highway legislation. Because 1968 was the year for the next biennial Federal-Aid Highway Act, the Committee on Public Works would have a legislative vehicle if the Department of Transportation did not change its position.

According to the *Post*, aides told reporters the committee members would probably send a similar ultimatum to Secretary Boyd regarding the North-Central Freeway:

But the Congressmen reportedly will tell Boyd that he cannot, as he proposed, turn Montgomery County’s section of the George Washington Parkway into an interstate highway and extend it across the District line and down the Potomac River bank to Georgetown.

The aides did not think a similar ultimatum would be sent regarding the South Leg Freeway.

The subcommittee members were “concerned not just about the District highway impasse, but about the precedent that Boyd’s intervention might set,” in view of similar controversies around the country. “Congressmen do not want Boyd moving into these local disputes, particularly if he is not emphatically pro-freeway.”

Chairman Kluczynski predicted that his proposals would pass the House easily. The *Post* added, “They would then go to the Senate where sentiment is not so clear.” [Flor, Lee, “House Group Will Insist on 3 Sisters Span,” *The Evening Star*, December 6, 1967; Milius, Peter, “Hill to Demand Boyd Approve 3 Sisters Span,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 7, 1967]

Star editors suggested that if the Roads Subcommittee had any doubt about the “unconscionable delays” blocking the Three Sisters Bridge, “they were resolved by two days of testimony from Secretary of Transportation Boyd” and area highway officials and congressional representatives. As for Chairman Kluczynski’s statement that “We want that bridge,” the editors said, “All we can add to these excellent words is that it is high time someone in authority said them.”

Secretary Boyd’s “rambling testimony . . . amounted, insofar as the bridge is concerned, merely to another stall.” He did not “come right out and say” he opposed the freeway system. “But he made it perfectly plain that he is not, of his own volition, about to lend his needed support to such a system – a message which he has been passing along informally to various groups around the city, incidentally, for the last month.”

The hearing had “nailed down” a couple of interesting points. First, virtually every Federal agency in town had been “a party to Three Sisters Bridge agreements which Boyd is now eagerly trying to abrogate.” Second, Secretary Boyd had not met his statutory obligation to consult with local officials “before reaching his half-baked conclusions on freeways in the National Capital Area.”

As Chairman Kluczynski, if not Secretary Boyd, understood, “resolution of the Three Sisters Bridge fight is the local means of beginning to unravel the freeway snarl.” The editors hoped Secretary Boyd would “reconsider the bad advice he has received” and support the bridge:

If he fails to do so, however, Chairman Kluczynski should not hesitate to override the objections and press for a direct congressional authorization. [“Kluczynski’s Mandate,” *The Evening Star*, December 7, 1969]

Post editors indicated that the Secretary’s testimony “reopens the painful highway controversies that were settled before he arrived on the scene.” Although other ways of solving traffic problems might exist, Secretary Boyd had spoken only “vaguely of them.” If he “has a better, cheaper or more effective way to meet District problems,” he should “put concrete proposals on the table” so they could be considered.

He seemed to be proposing that local streets, with minor improvements, could absorb traffic that would best be on an Interstate freeway. “It is to be doubted that his scheme of using the Potomac

parkways will give the city what a new upper Potomac bridge and Highway 66 promised – a 25-minute route from downtown Washington to Dulles Airport.”

When to advance or modify the freeway plan “put together after more than a decade of study and compromise” could be debated. However, the city “should not be asked to junk its plans until someone has presented an alternative program that holds out some prospect of meeting its needs.” [“Junking Highway Plans,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 8, 1967]

The reporters who covered the hearings summarized their meaning in followup articles. In the *Post*, Peter Milius observed that Secretary Boyd had not closed the door completely on the Three Sisters Bridge. “He said he is against construction of the bridge ‘at this time’ and ‘at its planned location.’” He wanted to defer its development “until two questions are answered. One is the location and the design of the so-called Inner Loop, the little beltway that may some day circle downtown. The other is the location and design of ‘a northwest arterial route,’ the big road that may some day run from downtown to Montgomery County.”

His point, “put simply, is: Don’t build the bridge at least until you know where people will be able to go once they get off on the District side.”

The *Star*’s Flor pointed out the contrast between Secretary Boyd’s views and those of the Roads Subcommittee. Flor summarized the disputes on the Three Sisters Bridge, North-Central Freeway, and South Leg Freeway. Regarding the South Leg Freeway, Flor cited Secretary Boyd’s observation that BPR Director Turner considered it a “cannon” sending traffic onto an already congested freeway.

This hurt worst of all. This was the supreme commander-in-chief, using highway design arguments to defeat other highway designers.

[Milius, Peter, “Boyd Leaves Door a Bit Ajar, Seeks More Data on Bridge,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 8, 1967; Flor, Lee, “Boyd Answer on Bridge Clouds Roads Picture,” *The Sunday Star*, December 10, 1967]

The Mandate

While the hearings reflected the continuing freeway debate, Brookland was experiencing the reality. The District’s Real Estate Division had begun earlier in the year to acquire homes for the North-Central Freeway. On December 7, the *Post* reported on the experience in “one of Washington’s few stably integrated communities”:

Brookland is a quiet neighborhood, with older frame and brick one-family houses. Many of its people are older retired families who bought their homes years ago when real estate was cheaper and mortgages not so hard to come by. Almost all would stay now if the Freeway weren’t coming through.

In fact, many whose homes the District did not plan to acquire for the freeway would move anyway. As the Reverend Joe Gipson put it, “Who wants to live next to a freeway? Nobody”:

After fighting the Freeway since 1964 – at the District Building, at hearings before Government agencies, in the courts and in the streets – some Brooklanders have finally given up and moved out. A lucky few have found homes in their old neighborhood, but many more have been forced out of town or into neighborhoods where comparable houses cost twice what the Real Estate Division paid for their old homes.

The average price of the acquired homes was \$15,000.

Recently, RLA opened a relocation assistance office at 2726 10th Street, NE., but “it hasn’t been doing much business.” Brooklanders “trust neither the District government nor the RLA”:

Brookland residents lost faith in RLA when they heard about the Tubman School site at 11th and Kenyon sts. nw. The Tubman school [sic] is being built on what used to be a block of well kept, middle class homes, the only ones in a sea of slum housing.

Brookland residents see many similarities between the two cases. In both, residents fought the planned construction and lost.

Most who had moved because of the freeway had found new homes on their own, asking RLA to pay only moving expenses up to \$200:

And a few just don’t plan to move. They are hopeful that a suit that failed in U.S. District Court will succeed in the Court of Appeals

If the suit fails, there are others prepared to use more extreme measures to resist the Freeway. They are members of the Emergency Committee for the Transportation Crisis and some members of Northeast Group Ministry.

The Reverend Gipson thought the freeway could be stopped by convincing Mayor Washington and the city council to kill it. He agreed with ECTC that a rail rapid transit system could solve the traffic problem:

But if all else fails, “we’re prepared to get down in front of the bulldozers with our bodies,” and stop construction, Mr. Gipson added. [White, Jack, Jr., “Brookland’s Settled Calm Disrupted by Freeway Acquisition,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 7, 1967]

On December 13, Chairman Fallon of the House Committee on Public Roads wrote to Secretary Boyd to demand construction of the Three Sisters Bridge. Chairman Fallon said the committee had been reluctant to get into District highway issues in such detail, but recognized “the undeniable fact that there is apparently no other way to resolve the problems involved.” Without prompt resolution, “there is no hope of ever developing an adequate total transportation system for the District of Columbia metropolitan area.”

The committee, Chairman Fallon wrote, was “unalterably opposed to the designation of any part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the District . . . side of the Potomac as part of the interstate system.” Doing so “might very well be an excellent device by which to make

available to the National Park Service the money needed to complete that portion of the parkway.” The money, however, was not a sufficient reason for designating the parkway an Interstate highway that would not be able to carry the trucks that normally would use a freeway. The proposal also raised aesthetic concerns.

In addition, he recommended that the Secretary direct Administrator Bridwell to consider ways to make maximum use of the proposed I-70S right-of-way of the North-Central Freeway, consider the routing and design of I-95 in the city, and evaluate the option of taking the Baltimore-Washington Parkway out of NPS jurisdiction; Maryland and the District of Columbia would take over the parkway and upgrade it to Interstate standards. Further, in view of Secretary Boyd’s stated concern about the South Leg Freeway, Chairman Fallon suggested that Bridwell work with District highway officials to consider alternatives.

The committee regretted forcing the issue on these segments, but the chairman said it also “seems entirely likely that the committee would be faced with the obligation of proceeding similarly with all of the remaining segments of the highway network here” He added, “the time has long since passed when the developmental well-being of this area can be stalled or even controlled by the wishes of parochial philosophy or single sections of the city.”

Committee members planned to meet with Mayor Washington and the city council before the end of the year “on the assumption that the position of the District government will be favorable.”

Chairman Fallon, despite the committee’s reluctance to get involved in such detail, said:

It may well be that in the end, the Congress will have to bear the brunt of making the “hard, unpopular, political” decisions regarding these matters. If so, so be it. Other possibilities do exist.

The committee invited Secretary Boyd to return to testify in February with the results of these consultations.

During a December 14 press conference, reporters asked Secretary Boyd for reaction to the letter. He said he had received it, but “I have not yet read the letter.” He said, “It would not be appropriate for me to discuss the matter today,” but offered to give a copy of his testimony to the reporters “if you want it.” [Conconi, Charles, “Build Three Sisters Bridge, House Unit Demands of Boyd,” *The Evening Star*, December 14, 1967; “House Unit Insists on 3 Sisters,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 14, 1967]

Star editors called the letter “strong language – but language fully justified by the Department of Transportation’s flagrant failure to support a reasonable freeway network in the Nation’s Capital.” The editors characterized Secretary Boyd’s testimony as consisting of “little more than fuzzy promises of further studies.”

Regarding Secretary Boyd’s concern about how the District would handle traffic crossing the Three Sisters Bridge, the editors pointed out Chairman Fallon’s observation that “ample time” was available to determine how to handle traffic before the bridge is completed – if officials wanted to do so:

Of course he is right. Such problems are not insurmountable. Solutions have not emerged before because freeway opponents within the administration have successfully prevented effective policy decisions from being made.

If Secretary Boyd did not like current proposals, “he has the option, together with the District’s newly-appointed officials, of producing workable alternatives – or leaving the decision to Congress.”

The *Star* editors shared Chairman Fallon’s hope that Secretary Boyd would accept his responsibilities. However, “The chairman has no cause . . . to regret his committee’s forceful intervention.” His conclusion that there was no other way to resolve the dispute “was precisely right.” [“Showdown,” *The Evening Star*, December 19, 1967]

The First Budget

While the hearings were underway, Mayor Washington submitted his first budget proposals to the city council. To address the city’s “fiscal crisis,” his proposed budget of \$580.2 million for FY 1969 included an increase in the sales tax (from 3 cents to 4 cents), an increase in the real estate and personal property levies, and elimination of the sales tax exemption for local telephone service. He also called for legislation that would establish the Federal payment to the city at 25 percent of the District’s local tax revenue. The change would increase the payment from \$68.9 million for the current FY 1968 to \$80.2 million for 1969.

In addition, the FY 1969 budget included funds for the North-Central Freeway and the South Leg Freeway. Reporters asked Deputy Mayor Fletcher if inclusion of this funding in the budget meant Mayor Washington endorsed them. “No, not necessarily,” Fletcher replied. “He may or may not endorse the program later.” He said the budget reflected continuation of the highway program developed by the District commissioners. “No decision has been made to change the previous decision made by the previous District government.” [Sarro, Ronald A. “\$580 Million Budget Asked For Fiscal ’69,” *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1967; “Two Disputed Freeways Included in ’69 Budget,” *The Evening Star*, December 5, 1979]

The city council took up the budget on December 16 with an all-day public hearing. Speakers covered many subjects, including Chairman Hechinger’s proposal that a “commuter tax” be imposed on income earned by Maryland and Virginia residents in the city. Several organizations attacked the proposed tax increases.

However, as the *Post* put it, “freeways and the Council’s legal power to block any further consideration of them, was the principal topic of interest at the District Building hearing.”

Fifteen organizations, described as “from the ghetto and from Georgetown,” demanded an end to construction of the North-Central, South Leg, and Potomac River Freeways, as well as the Three Sisters Bridge. “Comments on freeways went from the serene to the ridiculous, but never included a kind word.” The council heard 26 witnesses, 15 of whom testified on the freeways, “all of them against.”

Dr. Ellis Haworth, budget chairman of the D.C. Federation of Civic Association, said no further development of the North-Central Freeway should take place until all displaced people had not only been compensated, “but have been assured new homes or business facilities comparable to those from which they have been removed. The Committee of 100 on the Federal City’s Kennan pointed out that 30 percent of District land (40,000 acres) is devoted to streets and highways, a trend he said must not continue.

Simon Cain of the Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association and Orville F. Crutchfield of the Le Droit Park Civic Association urged the transfer of the millions of dollars planned for highway construction to meet other “serious needs,” such as restoring funds requested by the school system. Crutchfield warned that residents would “judge the council on how you handle our money” in view of pressure from “vested interests or commuters to the detriment of residents who are supplying the money.”

Grosvenor Chapman of the Georgetown Planning Council warned that the city could not accommodate “any more traffic and pollution . . . without strangulation.” He urged delay of any further action on freeways until Secretary Boyd completed a review of alternatives. He suggested a “motor vehicle parking tax” on commuters who parked 8 hours a day in a commercial establishment.

Sammie Abbott of ECTC received the “only applause of the day” when he called the city’s freeway program “institutional racism” and referred to the men who ran it as “lily-white bureaucrats . . . who live in Maryland and Virginia.”

The *Star* summarized the day:

No one spoke in favor of the freeways Mayor Washington has maintained that his administration has taken no position on the freeways and that their inclusion in the budget was merely to continue what was started by the old city government until a policy is evolved by the new regime. [Kaiser, Robert G., “Freeways Rapped At Budget Forum,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 17, 1967; Sarro, Ronald, “Mayor’s Budget Doesn’t Fill ‘Crisis’ Needs of District, Council Told,” *The Sunday Star*, December 17, 1967]

In view of the overwhelmingly negative testimony on freeways, several freeway advocates rushed to testify before the city council on December 19. “However,” the *Star* reported, “the representatives faced an unsympathetic council as they clashed with several lawmakers during the final hearing this morning.”

Harold Wirth of the Rubber and Tire Manufacturers pointed out that only 10 miles of the District’s 29-mile Interstate System had been completed, compared with 75 percent of Maryland’s Interstate network. He called on the District to end the delays, slowdown, and cutbacks and to include funds in the budget for the Inner Loop, Three Sisters Bridge, North-Central Freeway, and the Potomac River Freeway.

He said that businessmen who had moved their operations to the suburbs had told him they would return to the city if the freeway system were completed. When Councilwoman Hayworth challenged that claim, Wirth replied, "They have moved where the freeways are. You have no freeways here. Build freeways and you'll get them back." Wirth cited the automobile dealers who had left the city (from 118 in 1950 to 35 in 1967), but Councilman Nevius said, "I don't agree with you. The car dealers are following their customers who are moving to the suburbs."

According to the *Star*, the "heavy barrage of questions" for Wirth came from Council members Nevius, Thompson, Turner, Haywood, Shackleton, and Chairman Hechinger. Councilwoman Shackleton reminded Wirth that the city council wanted to be responsive to District residents who overwhelmingly rejected the freeways.

Glenn T. Lashley, director of public relations for AAA's District office, told the council that the District ranked 49th in obligation of highway funds and had opened only 25 percent of its Interstate mileage. He urged rapid construction of the freeways by 1970 in anticipation of the more than 24 million tourists who were expected to visit the city, 80 percent of them by automobile. Already, traffic across the Potomac River had jumped 73 percent between 1956 and 1966. The Three Sisters Bridge was the "only practical means at hand whereby the Georgetown waterfront can be rehabilitated."

After the public hearing, Nicholas Satterlee of the American Institute of Architects spoke during a session in Chairman Hechinger's office. He urged a halt to allocation of funds for the freeways and advised the council to restudy the District's transportation plans with a goal of a balanced system. He said:

Such action on your part would not be hailed as that of obstructionism. Rather, the council would be assuming its intended role of stewardship over the city's transportation system.

We are convinced that the temporary delay and inconvenience encountered by not building a poorly planned system will be more than offset by gains achieved from building an effective one.

Satterlee promised to provide the institute's recommendations on the freeway network.

At an informal press conference on December 19, Mayor Washington made clear that he would include funds in the budget for the North-Central, Center Leg, and South Leg Freeways. It would not include funds for the Three Sisters Bridge. Deputy Mayor Fletcher said the city was concerned that it would lose the 90-percent funds if the city did not ask for them in the budget without irrevocably committing to their construction. "The final decision has not been made until you let the contracts." [Delaney, Paul, "Highway Backers Battle for Funds," *The Evening Star*, December 19, 1967; "Freeway Funds In Budget Vital, Mayor Declares," *The Evening Star*, December 19, 1967; West, Hollie I., "Mayor Asks Funds for Freeways," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 20, 1967]

Star editors stated that Mayor Washington's decision "came at a propitious time," despite the city council's "mixed feelings on the subject." Failing to do so "would constitute an incredible misjudgment of the District's vital stake in gaining a balanced transportation system." Mayor Washington, "who assumed office with little direct exposure to the freeway controversy," was under pressure to curtail freeways, but was wise to insist on "retaining my options," as he put it. In the end, the editors predicted that the facts will result in Mayor Washington's vigorous support for "a reasonable freeway program."

The other fact that freeway critics did not seem to grasp was that there was not the "slightest basis for any belief that local money diverted now from highways might be available for other city needs." District law earmarked revenue from gas and vehicle registration taxes to the Highway Fund to be used for highway expenditures. "They could not be spent for other purposes without a change in the law, and there is no prospect whatever that any such change could win the approval of Congress," which retained approval authority on the District budget and laws. If there was any doubt about that statement, critics needed only consider Chairman Fallon's recent letter to Secretary Boyd or Chairman Natcher's often repeated warning "that he will tolerate no abandonment of the freeway program."

Mayor Washington's explanation "indicates a healthy respect for all these considerations." For the city council to forget that its budgetary recommendations are merely proposals to the White House and to Congress "would place the new city government merely in a position of posturing and most irresponsibly so."

(The editorial did not state that the 90-percent share of funds from the Federal Highway Trust Fund also could not be shifted from Interstate projects to other needs, such as schools. The funds were restricted to use under the Federal-aid highway program.) ["Freeway Funds," *The Evening Star*, December 22, 1967]

On December 20, Chairman Wolff of the Maryland State Roads Commission announced plans to add a fourth lane in each direction to the State's 44-mile portion of the Capital Beltway. He explained that one reason for the project was that Interstate projects in Baltimore were not ready for construction. He was concerned about losing the funds if he did not use them.

A "well-placed source" told the *Post* that the additional beltway lanes across Rock Creek Park might become a factor in the North-Central Freeway battles. Under current plans, that section of the Capital Beltway would carry two numbers, I-495 and I-70S, as a link between I-70S at the Pooks Hill interchange and the I-70S North-Central Freeway interchange.

The source estimated that approval for the additional lanes would be needed from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Montgomery County Planning Board, and NCPC. The Maryland planners were expected to approve the widening, but NCPC's views were harder to predict. Chairman Rowe declined to comment in the absence of a formal proposal, but did point out that NCPC always favored the Capital Beltway because it served as a bypass around the city. The source told the *Post* that the defeat of either the beltway widening or the North-Central Freeway "could doom the other." [Angle, Martha, "Maryland to Widen Beltway," *The*

Evening Star, December 20, 1967; “I-495 Plan May Affect Freeway,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 30, 1967]

Secretary Boyd’s Response

During Mayor Washington’s press conference on December 21, reporters asked about his pending meeting with Secretary Boyd. In view of Chairman Fallon’s letter to Secretary Boyd to legislate construction of the freeways, the threat from Chairman Natcher to withhold the city’s matching funds for rail rapid transit, and support from downtown businesses for the freeways, Mayor Washington was under pressure to find a way out of the impasse. He acknowledged that, “this is a very tense, touchy area.” He added, “I don’t have anything formal before me” that required an immediate answer.

Deputy Mayor Fletcher told reporters that the new city government “is certainly going to assert a position” on the freeways but “we’re not about to be stampeded.” Sooner or later, he explained, “we going to have to say this is what we think is the answer.” He knew, however, that when that day came, “the honeymoon will really be over.” [Milius, Peter, “Mayor, Boyd Will Meet on Freeway Issue,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 22, 1967]

On December 26, Secretary Boyd met with Mayor Washington and Deputy Mayor Fletcher to review the freeway situation. During the nearly 2-hour meeting, they were joined by Secretary Udall, NPS Director Hartzog, former District commissioner Duncan, now a special assistant to Secretary Udall, and Under Secretary Robert Wood of HUD.

After the meeting, participants declined to comment to reporters. However, Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Public Affairs John Sweeney said, “The meeting was held to find those areas of agreement which can be put into words and then reported to the House committee.” He added, “I think we’ve got a pretty good understanding.”

He emphasized that the meeting was not restricted to the Three Sisters Bridge. It concerned the entire freeway question. “I don’t think there is any difference of opinion affecting long-range problems.” He assured reporters that Secretary Boyd would respond to Chairman Fallon by the committee’s deadline. [“Quick Freeway Report Pledged,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 27, 1967; Delaney, Paul, “Decision on ‘3 Sisters’ By Deadline Is Promised,” *The Evening Star*, December 27, 1967]

On December 28, Secretary Boyd replied to Chairman Fallon. The Secretary explained that the decision on the Three Sisters Bridge was “of interest to other officials of the Government who are concerned about the development of a transportation system in the Washington metropolitan area which will serve the total public interest.” He had met with those officials, he said, listing the participants in his December 26 meeting:

All of us have raised questions about the system which is now proposed. We believe these questions must be thoroughly and quickly analyzed prior to making any final decision on any part of the system, including the Three Sisters Bridge.

Therefore, I must reluctantly inform you that I cannot take any steps that would result in the further processing of the construction plans for the Three Sisters Bridge by December 31.

His brief letter concluded:

I believe that when this analysis of all of the questions has been completed we will be in a position to make final decisions that will satisfy the concern which you and your Committee have legitimately expressed. I know I speak for all of those concerned in the Executive Branch when I pledge you a swift completion of this analysis and a quick submission of proposals.

Reporters immediately sought Chairman Fallon's reaction, but he declined, saying he had not yet read the letter. However, Chairman Kluczynski was ready to comment. He was not willing to accept Secretary Boyd's position that more time was needed. The chairman pointed out that the bridge had been studied for 20 years, with 20 consultants' reports backing the project:

What did he do with the reports – throw them in the waste basket? I'll be darned if I'll let them spend more millions in planning. If they don't do anything by Jan. 15, we will take action.

The second session of the 90th Congress would convene on January 15. He was preparing legislation to introduce the following day. "I'm going to poll the whole committee on this. I'm sure the whole committee and everyone in the House will support this legislation." He would begin hearings on the bill on January 22 "and get it on the floor of the House in no time." He added, "There is absolutely no opposition to this bill."

Mayor Washington declined to offer his views on the Three Sisters Bridge or other freeways. He recognized that the segments must somehow link, but acknowledged concerns. He did not want the city to act "until all the views are analyzed," adding, "Anything we do ought to be done expeditiously." [Hoagland, Jim, "Boyd Rejects Three Sisters Bridge Ultimatum," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, December 30, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Kluczynski Gives Ultimatum To Boyd on 3 Sisters Span," *The Evening Star*, December 30, 1967]

The *Star* was not impressed by Secretary Boyd's response to Chairman Fallon:

Boyd's brief response on Friday was just about as unresponsive as his past performance on the issue What "questions" require further analysis? Boyd doesn't say, which is hardly surprising. It is difficult to conceive of any legitimate question on this subject which has not been obvious during all the long months the Department of Transportation has been sitting on its hands.

Perhaps Secretary Boyd's procrastination resulted from "a hope that Mayor Washington might be talked into taking the initiative in a move to curtail District freeways." Thus far, the editors indicated, Mayor Washington "has wisely resisted pressures to back him into that corner."

The editors' hope was that Secretary Boyd's "fence-straddling" would serve as "an invitation to proceed with legislation to get the freeway program moving." If so, the Committee on Public Works' action would be "fully justified." ["Unprepared," *The Evening Star*, January 1, 1968]

New Year, Old Battles – 1968

As of January 1, 1968, the District's Real Estate Division had acquired full title for 32 lots, worth \$510,350 in the North-Central Freeway corridor along the railroad tracks between Harmony Cemetery south of Rhode Island Avenue and Taylor Street NE. The division had contracts for another 39 parcels worth \$1.7 million. Offers had gone out for 55 other lots, worth about \$3.7 million. The division also had acquired most of the cemetery at a cost of \$3.4 million. Appraisals were underway on the remainder of the parcels in the corridor. The District estimated that in all, it would need about 295 lots for the freeway to Taylor Street.

Critics such as Kennan of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City wanted the city to withhold its 10-percent share of the purchases, thus ending the acquisition process. Although the purchases had begun when the District commissioners were in office, Kennan said Mayor Washington had supported the North-Central Freeway by allowing the acquisitions to continue.

Kennan also accused the House Public Works Committee of hypocrisy in urging the Department of Transportation to approve construction of the Three Sisters Bridge:

The House Public Works Committee has no business addressing itself to local highway problems – its role ought to be that of overseer of the national highway program.

The works committee is acting contrary to the whole spirit of the highway program, that highway aid is on a reimbursement basis, and is not based on dictation from the federal level. In addition, the works committee's action is outrageous because the committee has not heard all sides of the highway dispute.

Because the District was considered a State under the Federal-aid highway program, Kennan said that even if Congress passed legislation ordering construction of the bridge, the city council had the power to decide against doing so.

Kennan also challenged Chairman Kluczynski's claim that the committee would hold hearings to hear all viewpoints. The committee has already decided what it would do before hearing from critics. [Flor, Lee, "Council Weighs Freeway OK, But D.C.'s Buying the Land," *The Sunday Star*, December 31, 1967; Flor, Lee, "Freeway Foe Hits House Unit's Stand On 3 Sisters Span," *The Evening Star*, January 1, 1968]

During a 2-hour closed meeting on January 2, District officials discussed whether to halt the acquisitions. Council Chairman Hechinger told reporters "we are still looking into it." However, at a later press conference, Mayor Washington denied to reporters that the matter was an issue at all. The acquisitions had been ordered by the District commissioners; the new government could not do anything about past contracts and acquisitions. ["District Defends Buying Of Land for Freeway," *The Evening Star*, January 3, 1968]

On January 3, the city council met to consider Mayor Washington's proposed budget, including continuation of funds for freeways. The *Star* characterized the discussion of the freeway funding as a first for the city council:

During debate on highway allocations, the councilmen engaged each other in arguments for the first time in their two-month history. Heretofore, they have gone to great lengths to keep everything harmonious.

However, harmony within the council lost out to harmony within the city government yesterday.

Councilman Nevius had headed the two-member subcommittee, with Councilman Anderson, that reviewed the freeway budget proposal. Speaking for the subcommittee, Nevius said that 700 middle-income families would be displaced by the North-Central Freeway and they would not receive sufficient compensation that would allow them to buy comparable homes elsewhere. Unlike the middle-income families, the low-income families that were displaced could at least expect help in relocation from RLA. In all, 89 businesses would be acquired.

He said the council had three choices: accept the budget, reject it, or leave the Mayor's options open while advising him to convene a planning team, similar to Baltimore's Urban Design Concept Team, to review the plans. He did not say he supported the options or formally offered them for consideration. However, he said, "I don't think any responsible person will deny there is a need for connecting links to the outer perimeter of the city." With 20 years of planning and \$20 million also invested, "The D.C. government has very little power to change what's already been done." Moreover, Nevius said, "The mayor has indicated he would veto the budget if highway funds are taken out."

Mayor Washington had emphasized that in seeking the funds, he was not taking a position for or against freeway construction. He was, as he had said, "leaving open my options." Eliminating the funds would be taking a position and he did not want to do so at this time. Councilman Turner, who was involved with the Highway Users Conference, led support for the budget proposals. He did not state support for the freeways, but argued that Mayor Washington should have a free hand rather than dividing the city government:

You don't sink half the ship, you sink the whole ship. When we have a champion performing as the Mayor is performing, I think the least we can do is give him support.

In the end, the city council voted 5 to 4 to approve an amendment by Chairman Hechinger in support of the funding. The amendment called for use of the "planning team concept" to restudy the network. It also called for Mayor Washington to report back in 30 days. In supporting the Mayor's proposal, Chairman Hechinger was joined by council members Haywood, Thomas, Turner, and Yeldell.

Council members Anderson, Fauntroy, Nevius, and Shackleton opposed the amendment. Anderson and Shackleton did so because they thought the freeway program should be

reevaluated. Shackleton said the council had a responsibility to the people who had made clear they opposed the freeways.

Vice Chairman Fauntroy opposed the amendment because he wanted to kill the North-Central Freeway. He wanted the land already acquired for the freeway to be sold back to the previous owners if they wanted it. He asked Chairman Hechinger what could be done if Mayor Washington's report did not satisfy the council. The chairman replied, "We could take the highways right off the map since we have to approve urban renewal and street closings. It's our ultimate authority that we could delete them right off the map – if we have the legal right. [West, Hollie I., "Divided Council Leaves Freeways Up to Mayor," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 4, 1968; "Council Supports Mayor on Roads," *The Evening Star*, January 4, 1968]

Although neither Mayor Washington nor the city council claimed their actions meant they supported the freeways, ECTC wanted to make sure its views on the North-Central Freeway were known. Despite 25-degree temperature, ECTC arranged for 50 or so picketers in front of Mayor Washington's home at 408 T Street, NW. Picketers came from ECTC, the Brookland Civic Association, and civil rights groups, including Marion Barry of Pride, Inc. Signs included:

- Mr. Mayor: Stop Walking . . . Start Acting! Stop the Freeways
- Mr. Mayor: What OPTIONS do displaced Negroes have?

Another sign informed Mayor Washington that "the honeymoon is over."

After about 40 minutes, Mayor Washington came outside to talk with the protesters. The protesters demanded that Mayor Washington immediately halt acquisition of property for the North-Central Freeway. They told him the city's highway department was "harassing and intimidating" homeowners to get them to sell. Chairman Pryor of the Brookland Civic Association said he was one of the residents being harassed. Highway department officials had called him repeatedly during the past week trying to set up an appointment to negotiate purchase of his home. He told the mayor, "Our home is not for sale." He added that the city was offering "much too little" to acquire similar homes.

Louis Florento, a white resident of Taylor Street, NE., told the mayor, "I can move to Maryland if the freeway comes through, but my black neighbors have no option."

Mayor Washington replied that the acquisition program began in 1966. "This is not my problem," he said, but added, "I'm making it my problem."

ECTC's Sammie Abbott, who still lived in Takoma Park, Maryland, confronted Mayor Washington, as reported in the *Post*:

Washington: "I have hope that in the days ahead we can do something about the total situation."

Abbott: "What's the total situation?"

Washington: "If you wanted to know, you would have asked the question in another way."

Abbott: "We're going to be here for a long time."

Washington: "I've been here for 50 years and I don't think I'm going anywhere, not even in Maryland."

Later, Mrs. Abbott said that, although residents of Maryland, the Abbotts would be affected by the freeway.

Barry asked the mayor about his feelings on freeways and urban renewal, which he called "urban removal." Mayor Washington replied, "I'll give you my feelings in time."

Before returning to his home, Mayor Washington said he would "make a run" through Brookland to sound out citizen feelings and meet with them in a week. [West, Hollie I., "50 Picket Mayor Over Freeways," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 8, 1968; Spencer, Duncan, "Mayor Picketed at Home," *The Evening Star*, January 8, 1968]

Secretary Boyd on Political Clout

Secretary Boyd discussed the North-Central Freeway when he appeared on WTOP's television program, "Capital Conversations," on January 14. He said he had refused to approve the freeway because the location had been determined not by "where the traffic wants to go":

All the traffic surveys say it should be built along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. But the people who live along Wisconsin Avenue or have businesses there have much more political clout than the people on the other side of town.

He recalled efforts to build the freeway along the Potomac River shore:

But it was pushed eastward and eastward until political opposition was insufficient to stop it.

He acknowledged that political pressure could not be avoided entirely. "I'm not kidding myself about that at all." However, "We must do better than taking the property of all the poor people and leaving alone people with political pull." The current plan "would displace poor people, Negroes, even though that's not where the highway ought to go."

Highways could be built "to compact themselves reasonably well" through neighborhoods if the air space was used for homes and businesses that would be displaced. "We should not just tear up the homes of poor people and Negroes. We ought to make a determined effort to put freeways where traffic wants to go."

As for the Three Sisters Bridge, he would continue to oppose it until he knew "what's going to happen to the traffic" using it. At present, "there is no provision for a distribution system" to carry the traffic through the northwest section of the city. He understood the "impatience" of

Chairman Kluczynski and others, but he would not approve the bridge until he was certain how it “fits into the District’s highway system.” He would, however, continue to discuss the bridge with Mayor Washington and the city council. “Decisions affecting local transportation should be made locally.”

Secretary Boyd also opposed plans for a tunnel under K Street between Whitehurst Freeway and the Center Leg Freeway. He said that without exits, the tunnel would be “a multi-million dollar or multi-hundred million dollar tomb.” He added, “It doesn’t make a bit of sense to tear up that major artery for several years with no way to get traffic in and out of the tunnel.” [Feinberg, Lawrence, “Boyd Charges Freeway ‘Politics,’” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 15, 1968; Sarro, Ronald, “Boyd Says Politics Sets Freeway Path,” *The Evening Star*, January 15, 1968]

Secretary Boyd’s comments infuriated Representative Gude, who took to the House floor to criticize Boyd’s “incredible compendium of contradictions in defense of his opposition to Washington area freeways.” His reference to traffic surveys favoring the Wisconsin Avenue corridor over the North-Central Freeway corridor “ignores the fact that some experts have said both are needed, as he would know, had he not studiously isolated himself from local freeway experts.” His comment about “where the traffic wants to go” ignored the “paralysis” that would result if the North-Central Freeway were not built.

Decisions on freeway locations in the District were the result of “years of debate” that Secretary Boyd “dismissed as the product of ‘political clout’” even though “in the next breath” he insisted that “decisions affecting local transportation should be made locally”:

He crowns this absurdity by his own moves to block the Three Sisters Bridge, and his own attacks on local freeway planning, of which this morning’s article [in the *Post*] represents the most recent example.

Secretary Boyd’s comments about tearing up the homes of poor people and Negroes were “irresponsible demagoguery” and contradicted his own comments about how air rights could provide better housing for those displaced:

Such statements hardly contribute to the local decisionmaking process by Mayor Washington and the new District government. Just last month Mr. Boyd was talking about converting a park along the Potomac into an interstate highway. One can only wonder what he will recommend next month. [Washington Area Freeways, *Congressional Record-House*, January 15, 1968, pages 17-18]

Star editors agreed with Representative Gude. Secretary Boyd’s performance, the editors stated, “would be hard to top for pure demagogic irresponsibility.” His history of the shift of I-70S from the Wisconsin Avenue corridor to the North-Central Freeway “is a flagrant distortion of the history of the North-Central Freeway.” Further, “its racial implications are the most unconscionable of all.” While “political pressures from a variety of sources” played a role in foreclosing construction of the freeway west of Rock Creek Park in the 1950s, traffic studies

“were showing conclusively that the primary freeway needs then, as now, were not along Wisconsin Avenue but east of the park”:

The fact is that the officially-approved transportation plans of those days accordingly gave the highest priority to freeways east of the park *in addition to* relatively modest proposals on the west – not in lieu of them.

Either Boyd is unaware of these facts – which is hard to believe since many of his present subordinates were parties to those previous plans – or he is misrepresenting them deliberately.

Either way, his contention that the growing population in the Silver Spring-Wheaton area who would use the North-Central Freeway would prefer to use a freeway west of Wisconsin Avenue “is patently absurd.” In trying to force the District “to embrace – as its program – his own fallacious conclusions” was “a no less reprehensible game of politics” than the alleged political clout he described:

Washington’s freeway program has stagnated primarily because of the obstructionist tactics of a handful of federal officials who are philosophically opposed to urban freeways. When the new Department of Transportation was created, there were high hopes that its chief, as a cabinet-level coordinator, would get things moving. Boyd, instead, has proved to be a Secretary of Anti-Transportation, and one wonders how much longer the White House will permit this intolerable situation to continue. [“Boyd’s Distortions,” *The Evening Star*, January 18, 1968; italics in original]

As described in the *Star*, Mayor Washington and Assistant Mayor Fletcher met with more than 400 “angry” Brookland residents on January 16 at St. Anthony’s School. The residents complained about the pressure from city highway officials to acquire property for the North-Central Freeway. Highway officials, Gallaudet College Professor Leonard P. Siger said, had signed “death certificates” for 44 homes, with acquisition underway for 287 more.

The mayor told them he had inherited “complex legal issues” that would have to be solved before the city could build or abandon the North-Central Freeway. He said he could “do no more at this point than pledge my support to respond quickly to this sordid situation.” He could not call for a moratorium until the U.S. Court of Appeals resolved the legal issues. He recommended that Brookland citizens associations form a committee to meet with city officials on individual acquisitions.

As the 2-hour meeting was nearing an end, Sammie Abbott jumped on the stage, pointed at the mayor and charged that he was not using his “political clout”:

The mayor, visibly disturbed, stood up and retorted, “I can’t come out in an open meeting and solve all legal problems. I came out here to listen and to understand. No other city commissioner has done that.”

Washington added that he has met “almost daily” with U.S. Transportation Secretary Alan S. Boyd, who is reviewing the freeway issue

Fletcher commented: “We can promise you we are up to our antlers in this issue. We have a complex legal problem in finding what we can do on a decision made by a previous government.” [Gregory, John, “Can’t Halt Freeway Land-Buying, Mayor Tells Angry Group,” *The Evening Star*, January 17, 1968]

Potomac Watch columnist William Raspberry wrote that while Mayor Washington had included freeway funds in his proposed budget to keep his options open, Secretary Boyd’s comments were making those options “less attractive every day.” The mayor had “made some brilliant moves in his short term,” but for the first time was “stuck with a situation where there is no right move.”

Raspberry agreed with Secretary Boyd’s summary of how the freeway shifted east of Rock Creek Park, but during that time, Mayor Washington was running the city’s housing program. Now, with all that history behind the North-Central Freeway, he became mayor “too late to do much about the planning of the freeway but in perfect time to catch the flak that is certain to fly as soon as he makes any decision at all.”

He apparently had hoped to delay a decision until Secretary Boyd “took it out of his hands.” Then came the Sunday interview program, during which Secretary Boyd said decisions should be made locally, thereby declining “to take the Mayor off the hook.” Secretary Boyd planned to work with Mayor Washington and the city council but “he made it clear that he would leave the decision to them.”

Although shifting the freeway to northwest where it once was would “remove the specter of a government picking on poor folk and Negroes,” it would nevertheless dislocate many people and businesses. “What is needed, really, is a restudy of the entire freeway system, but it is awfully late in the day for that”:

Mayor Washington’s best bet may be to ignore them altogether and rely on his own judgment as to what is best for the city as a whole.

It must be small comfort for him to know that whatever he does – or fails to do – will be wrong. [Raspberrrt, William, “The Mayor Can’t Win On Freeway Decision,” Potomac Watch, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 17, 1968]

The GW Link

Representative Gude arranged a January 3 meeting with Nash Castro, the new NPS regional director, at the dead end of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near Chain Bridge.

Castro agreed to support a 1,300-foot ramp connecting the end of the parkway to MacArthur Boulevard, which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owned. The ramp would link the parkway from about 200 feet east of the Little Falls pumping station to the boulevard at Maryland Avenue in the Brookmont subdivision. The Maryland Avenue link was critical because it would remove traffic from the western end of the boulevard that was threatening to crush the underground conduits. The Corps, which had previously agreed to the plan, would strengthen the boulevard at the site of the ramp, but would not have to strengthen the remainder of the boulevard into the city because the conduits were not under that part of the roadway.

The NPS, still unwilling to pave the parkway link until it knew the fate of the Palisades Parkway and Three Sisters Bridge, would gain from the plan. Maryland traffic that was crossing the Potomac River to use the parkway on the Virginia side before crossing into the District, and vice versa, would now have an outlet in Maryland. Castro estimated the ramp, plus some culvert work, would cost \$170,000, a sum he would seek authority for from Congress.

The Federal Government owned most of the land for the ramp, but D.C. Transit System owned a portion that had been used for its abandoned Cabin John trolley line. Representative Gude said he would work with Castro to secure approval from O. Roy Chalk for an easement. Castro would seek NCPC approval for the project.

All parties agreed the ramp would be a temporary substitute for extension of the “parkway to nowhere.” When the freeway fights were resolved, they would plan a permanent end of the parkway.

On January 11, Representative Gude brought NPS and the Corps together to formally agree on the plan, subject to securing the easement from Chalk and approval by NCPC. [“Agencies Agree on GW Link,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 4, 1968; “Ramp From MacArthur To Parkway Endorsed,” *The Evening Star*, January 4, 1968; “2 Agencies Agree on Parkway Ramp,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 12, 1968]

The *Star*’s editors applauded Representative Gude’s initiative. “How he did it we’ll never know,” they wrote. The parkway had been finished except for the section that was “utterly inaccessible to anyone” because of “the interminable, asinine fuss over a Three Sisters Bridge.” They applauded Representative Gude for two reasons, one of which was the obvious one “that any further use of the parkway is better than nothing.” The other reason was that once the ramp opened, “one of the jumbo traffic jams of all time will occur on MacArthur Boulevard, especially in the area of Foxhall and Canal Roads.” They hope that “the ensuing howls of anguish in that event should apply some much-needed pressure on Secretary Boyd to settle the silly freeway dispute.”

The *Post* agreed that the link between the “parkway to nowhere” and MacArthur Boulevard “would provide some relief,” but was “a poor substitute for linking this parkway with the yet-to-be-built Palisades Parkway in the District.” The editors warned that, “Serpentine MacArthur Boulevard is no rational alternative. Somehow the seven-year war over the proposed Three Sisters Bridge must be brought to a head so that the essential Palisades Parkway may be speedily constructed.” [“Road to Somewhere,” *The Sunday Star*, January 7, 1968; “Poor Substitute,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 8, 1968]

Work Group Reports

On January 13, Mayor Washington released the reports of the national work groups he had assembled to explore District issues. He said of participants in the five groups, “It would be difficult for me to overstate my appreciation for their work.” However, “no action has been taken on these proposals. All of our decisions lie ahead.” Inevitably, “some of the suggestions will be accepted, some rejected, and others adopted in some modified form.” Overall, the reports

provided “a package of fresh and stimulating ideas for attacking the city’s major urban problems.”

He emphasized that the reports were “not going to be filed and forgotten”:

Nor are they going to be fed into some slow-grinding municipal machinery, where they will yellow with age before decisions are made.

Instead, using our best resources for analysis and evaluation, we will move as swiftly as possible to make maximum use of all feasible proposals within the range of our possibility and capability.

We are, of course, hoping and expecting to hear from the citizens on these work group reports. The reaction from the community will provide us with an additional valuable tool to weigh and measure the value of these ideas.

The transportation work group addressed the planning problem by recommending that power over freeways and transit should be taken away from NCPC and centralized under the mayor and city council. The city should create a Department of Transportation to carry out the mayor’s and city council’s decisions. The new department would include the parking, motor vehicle, and highway and traffic departments. It would review and study proposals, but would not have veto power.

The department would not include WMATA, which had areawide responsibility. However, the work group suggested that the department assume some responsibility for transit, comparable to transit commissions in other area jurisdictions. At present, the District did not have a transit agency or even a single transit staff official to consider rail rapid transit plans.

The group’s other recommendations included:

- Establish a traffic management center that would, among other things, use computers to adjust traffic signals to speed traffic;
- Develop a continuous planning process that would use transportation decisions to help control city development;
- Use freeway air rights over freeways for housing;
- Create a parking authority to establish and run lots and garages on public and private land, including under the National Mall; and
- Establish a public relations program to bring citizens closer to planning and transportation decisions.

Overall, the work groups addressed “disorganization and fragmentation” by proposing creation of four super agencies. In addition to the department of transportation, the groups proposed agencies or departments for environmental protection, housing and community development, and human resources. Liaison with Federal agencies would be handled by an Office of Metropolitan and National Capital Affairs. [Flor, Lee, “Experts Urge City Control Of Freeway, Transit Plans,” *The Sunday Star*, January 14, 1968; Sarro, Ronald, “New Powers for D.C. Mayor, Four Super

Agencies Proposed,” *The Sunday Star*, January 14, 1968; “Summary of Task Force Reports on City Woes,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 14, 1968]

The 1968 Interstate Cost Estimate

On January 12, Secretary Boyd submitted the 1968 ICE to Congress as the basis for adjusting the apportionment formula for Interstate construction funds.

The 1965 ICE had estimated the total cost of the Interstate System was \$46.5 billion (Federal share: \$42 billion). The 1968 total was \$56.5 billion (Federal share: \$50.6 billion). Counting all funds used thus far or authorized but not yet expended, FHWA would need an additional \$18,689,119 to complete the Interstate System to full standards.

The difference of \$9.7 billion was attributed to several factors:

- A \$310 million allowance for reserve mileage totaling 31 miles that had been estimated in 1965 at \$5 million per mile, an increase of \$155 million;
- An increase in the allowance for State highway and Public Roads planning, administration, and research and for contingency items;
- Change in cost due to the increase in unit prices;
- Additional interchanges and grade separations, plus improvements in design of ramps and structures;
- Additional lanes, including lanes added as a result of a provision in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966 requiring all segments to have a minimum of four lanes;
- Extra pavement structure on earlier opened sections to accommodate design year traffic;
- Added landscaping, erosion control features, roadside rest areas, and rest facilities;
- Additional safety features on segments under construction, including flatter slopes, wider bridges, additional guardrail, safety posts, and light standards;
- Added safety features on segments previously opened
- System additions and replacement of segments.

Secretary Boyd, in transmitting the estimate to Congress, said, “These estimates . . . represent the best coordinated engineering judgment in this important matter.” [The 1968 Interstate Cost Estimate, Letter from the Secretary of Transportation, Committee on Public Works, U.S. House of Representatives, 90th Congress, 2d Session, House Document No. 199, January 15, 1968]

The District’s 29-mile Interstate System had increased from a total estimate of \$545.6 million to \$772.2 million. To complete it, the District would need \$506.7 million, compared with \$408.6 million in 1965.

Maryland’s estimate of the total cost of its Interstate routes was \$1,017 billion, up from \$780 million in 1965. The State had estimated in 1965 that it needed \$524.5 million to complete the network, but in 1968 estimated it needed \$632.9 million.

Virginia’s total estimate had increased from \$1,401 billion in 1965 to \$1,567 billion in the 1968 ICE. However, the amount needed to complete the State’s network had decreased from

\$807.3 million in 1965 to \$684.2 million, reflecting progress on rural segments. [Flor, Lee, “Cost Estimates Soaring For Interstate Roads,” *The Evening Star*, February 5, 1968]

In January 1968, Lee Flor in the *Star* and Jim Hoagland in the *Post* provided readers with summaries of the District’s transportation situation. Flor told readers that, “so many governmental agencies are making decisions about local transportation that it is almost impossible for the public to check these decisions.” He estimated that about \$2.4 billion was planned for the rail rapid system and about that much for highways and buses:

This year, some tough decisions will be made about rapid transit. The Washington area freeway program, already in trouble, may be cut back in a final settlement of disputes which have raged over the years.

Referring to the 95.6-mile rail rapid transit system identified in October 1967, Flor said that WMATA wanted to hear from the public before making a final decision in March on the scope of the network:

The March deadline is important, because Congress this year will be asked for about \$60 million in federal aid, plus about \$29.4 million in direct grants from the District

If the interstate authority [WMATA] gets clearance and funding from Congress, it wants to break ground for its first subway construction at the proposed 8th and G street site or the Judiciary Square station (at E and 5th Streets NW). The contract is to be awarded in October, with groundbreaking ceremonies following shortly.

The start would be for the 25-mile system Congress had approved in 1965. For the total system, WMATA expected to issue \$810 million in guaranteed revenue bonds to be repaid from the farebox. “If the number of riders does not come up to expectation, the cities and counties will be responsible for paying off some of the revenue bonds.” If revenue exceeds expectations, the balance would be used to retire the bonds sooner. In addition, WMATA expected to receive \$1.1 billion in Federal transit aid and about \$535 million from bond issuances by local jurisdictions:

At any rate, this year is the “make or break” year for the rapid transit system.

In 1967, most of the “news about freeways was bad – delays, little progress.” The new city council’s support for freeways in the budget was “lukewarm,” while Secretary Boyd had declared several segments “unwise.” A fight had erupted between Secretary Boyd and the House Committee on Public Works over the Three Sisters Bridge and the other segments. “The National Capital Planning Commission, which now has enough anti-freeway votes to block the bridge and the controversial freeway projects, also is on the spot”:

However, the District is proceeding with its Center Leg freeway as far north as H Street NW, between Second and Third Street NW. Also, the District is working on some bridges on the North Central Freeway, and is tying the Southeast Freeway into the Eleventh Street bridges across the Anacostia. [Flor, Lee, “More Decisions Than Speedup Likely in Area Transport,” *The Sunday Star*, January 7, 1968]

Hoagland began his summary:

The District's 20-year war over interstate freeways appears to be entering its most decisive stage.

Highway officials were pushing for approval of the basic network that Director Airis called "essential . . . to keep pace with the growth of the District." Opponents questioned parts of the 29-mile system and were "attacking many of the basic assumptions on which the system is planned." About the only thing everyone agreed on was "that the conflict must be settled now if an orderly transportation system is to be provided for Washington in the future."

He recalled the May 1966 agreement to move forward, followed a year later by NCPC's decision to ask Secretary Boyd if the Three Sisters Bridge was needed. His decisions, revealed during his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Roads, were "taken as an affront by the District Highway Department, which complains bitterly that \$20 million has already been spent studying the system." The dispute left Mayor Washington "the target of opposing pressures" from both sides, with citizens threatening to use their bodies to block bulldozers.

District highway officials believed the time for study was running out. They predicted a doubling of the metropolitan area's population and "that, on past performance, this means traffic on Washington's already congested streets and bridges will double in the same period." Without the new freeways, "chaos will ensue, the [Highway] Department warns."

The Department of Transportation questioned the prediction and the assumption that "anyone in the city should be able to drive at 50 or 60 miles an hour at any time," an assumption that would require "much more concrete than is good for the city":

The Highway Department counters with statistics – and rush-hour photographs – showing that traffic from the suburbs into Washington is already choking existing roads beyond their capacity.

New, ineptly planned roads will aggravate, not solve that problem, Transportation Department aides reply. Boyd says that new roads create traffic, like a vacuum cleaner sucking in dirt.

Actually, the rapid rail system of Washington has been the principal hostage of this freeway war. In 1966, members of the House threatened to kill the proposed subway unless freeways got the go-ahead.

They got it, and the subway system is still alive. But so is the threat of retaliation against the rapid rail forces if the House District Committee decided the freeway system is being slowed.

District highway officials predicted that if they could get started now, they could finish within the 1973 deadline for the Interstate System. Beyond 1973, the District runs the risk of losing 90-percent Federal funding for the freeways. "By then, the subway system would be half finished in the downtown area and thus able to stand on its own." As Hoagland pointed out,

“There is considerable doubt that Congress will actually shut off the interstate system in 1973. It could easily be extended, Department of Transportation experts say”:

They add that cities don't have to take the 90 per cent money just because it's there. The money, they say, could, in effect, ruin a city by speeding traffic through it.

It is with these weapons of conflicting ideas, statistics and assumptions that the battle over specific parts of the freeway system is being fought. The skirmish line is the Three Sisters Bridge.

Airis, Hoagland wrote, was proud that the Commission of Fine Arts had praised the bridge's design, which would span the river between the Key and Chain Bridges without displacing any families. Secretary Boyd argued that the bridge would displace trees and 50 acres of parkland, citing Secretary Udall's conclusion that the bridge was “a major threat to the scenic value” of Potomac Palisades. Airis pointed out that the bridge would take only 5 acres of parkland in the District, and those acres would be replaced although not necessarily in the same area. “From this narrow argument, both sides escalate their cases for and against the bridge, and other disputed segments.”

Airis argued that by 1990, cross-river demand would reach 34,000 vehicles an hour during peak periods, but even with the Three Sisters Bridge, capacity would equal only 30,700 vehicles an hour. Transportation aides pointed out that the four traffic studies the District used for those estimates differed by as much as 30 percent.

Further, District officials did not know what would happen to the traffic leaving the bridge. Building the bridge before decisions were made on traffic outlets would, as Secretary Boyd had said, transfer the traffic jam from Virginia to the District:

Airis derides this as a “chicken-or-the-egg” argument. He says plans for the bridge are more advanced than for a cross-town link for interstate traffic. “When we know where the ends of the systems are, we can nail down the center,” he said.

Department aides clearly fear what the center might be. Whatever its location, the route's designation will be the “North Leg.” Its purpose will be to funnel interstate traffic from Virginia into the Inner Loop, a tiny beltway in downtown Washington and part of the interstate system.

The North Leg has been an even more controversial part of the system than the bridge and is to many the real key to the lingering freeway dispute.

Hoagland summarized the shifting location of the North Leg. Congressional opposition had killed the expressway through Glover-Archbold Park. The substitute, along Florida Avenue and S and T Streets, NW, would have displaced 10,000 people as well as businesses and “would have sliced a corner off the prestigious Cosmos Club.” The May 1966 compromise resulted in shifting the North Leg Freeway to a tunnel under K Street, NW., from 26th Street to Mount Vernon Square at 9th Street, to a connection with the Inner Loop.

Secretary Boyd, who opposed the Florida Avenue and Glover-Archbold Park routings, argued that without them, the Three Sisters Bridge was an anachronism. “But he is also convinced that the K Street tunnel is unworkable, and that the Highway Department will have to abandon it.” Building the Three Sisters Bridge would be “like pointing a gun at the head of Northwest Washington” and give the city leverage to revive the Glover-Archbold Park and Florida Avenue routing:

That is not so, Airis replies. Neither route would be any more politically feasible after the building of Three Sisters than it is now, he argues. To him, both plans are dead and Three Sisters has nothing to do with them.

The sides disagree on the importance of the bridge to speeding traffic to and from Dulles International Airport. The city argued that the combination of the bridge and I-66 would cut 30 minutes off the 55-minute trip between the airport and downtown Washington:

Boyd’s aides point to the map, trace a finger over the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, along Interstate 66 and the [Dulles] access road. This route will take two to three minutes longer than the Three Sisters route, they assert. Airis doesn’t agree, saying Roosevelt Bridge will become choked if Three Sisters is not built.

He also argued that without the Three Sisters Bridge and I-266, I-66 would need 10 lanes:

Traffic experts in the Bureau of Public Roads doubt that ten lanes would ever be built in Rosslyn, or that such a need will materialize.

Further, transportation aides argued that 60 percent of traffic leaving the bridge would be destined for the northwest quadrant or the Maryland suburbs west of the District:

That means the K Street tunnel would be useless to them, Boyd’s aides say.

The tunnel would provide no exits between 26th Street nw. and the Center Leg of the Inner Loop, near the Capitol. That’s fine if you want to avoid Washington’s downtown, but not so good if you’re coming from Virginia to shop, work or tour downtown, Boyd says.

Boyd agrees that a cross-town link is needed. Without it, the rest of the interstate system already built here, or which is not disputed, would be a white elephant, he concedes.

Critics also argued that business owners along K Street would never tolerate the disruption that building the tunnel would cause:

This argument angers Airis. “I’ve been an engineer for 40 years and I can assure you we can build the tunnel so as not to disrupt the commercial district,” he said.

Secretary Boyd had not endorsed any routing for the North Leg Freeway:

Some of his aides earlier mentioned tying the existing E Street Expressway into the Pennsylvania Avenue Commission's proposal to tunnel under the Ellipse and run the Expressway into downtown.

But Airis contends the E Street plan is unfeasible. He says the existing Expressway is already a heavily traveled feeder road that could not handle crosstown traffic, that the right-of-way needed could not be obtained along and under E Street without knocking down new, large buildings and that grading makes a depressed highway beyond the Ellipse impossible.

One argument for extending the E Street Expressway was that it would help accommodate traffic generated by the new southwest:

Getting them to and from there is the chief justification for the one segment of the freeway system that Boyd says should not be built in any case – the South Leg tunnel.

The mile-long South Leg tunnel connecting the West Leg Freeway with the Southwest Freeway would cost \$100 million or \$10 million a mile. The link could be provided at a lower cost, but NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, and others objected on aesthetic grounds:

Even so, it leaves some major engineering problems that have not yet been solved to the Fine Arts Commission's satisfaction – chiefly, how to provide an exhaust shaft without putting it near the Lincoln Memorial and how to save the trees near the Memorial that would be endangered by the tunnel.

Airis dismissed the cost argument against the South Leg Freeway, saying it was “no more proportionately” costly than the eight-lane, half-a-mile long tunnel carrying the Center Leg Tunnel under the Capitol grounds.

Secretary Boyd and BPR pointed out that traffic from the South Leg tunnel and the new 14th Street Bridge span would jam the Southwest Freeway that “already is what they call a ‘turbulent’ area, especially at the 12th Street and Maine Avenue exits.” As a result, the South Leg Freeway tunnel would provide only “marginal improvement” at a high cost.

Cost and safety were among the reasons why Secretary Boyd also opposed the North-Central Freeway. As with the South Leg Freeway, the high cost of the North-Central Freeway – \$193.5 million or about \$25 million for each of its 8 miles at a time when BPR considered \$10 million a mile “a reasonable price” for urban freeways – was not a result of engineering decisions. “The Highway Department says it has leaned over backward to reduce the displacement of families – cutting the original estimate of 2194 displaced families to 532.”

Secretary Boyd claimed that the North-Central Freeway would be dangerous because it would connect with the Beltway's most dangerous section – the hook between Georgia and Wisconsin Avenues. “Airis has an answer – straighten out the hook, and widen that part of the road.”

Even if that were done, Secretary Boyd pointed out the danger of forcing six lanes of traffic from the North-Central Freeway and six lanes of traffic from the Northeast Freeway into a junction

with the eight lanes of the North Central Freeway near Fort Totten Park. “That’s 12 lanes of traffic whizzing along at 60 miles an hour trying to squeeze into eight, according to Boyd.” The city planned to siphon two lanes of traffic away the Northeast Expressway before it reached the junction, for example by routing the two lanes of traffic under the North-Central Freeway for a link to North Capitol Street, NW.

They North-Central Freeway, highway officials argue, also was needed to keep truck traffic off local streets. Transportation Department aides countered that most of that truck traffic was local and would be on those streets anyway.

Hoagland added:

Boyd has not challenged the Northeast Expressway or the section of the North Central Freeway that continues to the Inner Loop after the Fort Totten Park junction. It is exactly this segment that is the most controversial issue to face the new city government.

Many residents of Brookland, just east of Catholic University, feel the road would shatter one of the city’s most racially heterogeneous neighborhoods. They voice resentment because this road, which originally was to go through Georgetown, has been shifted east into a less affluent area.

Although the freeway survived the preliminary vote in the city council on the FY 1969 budget proposal, “opposition was expressed.”

Highway supporters resented Secretary Boyd’s criticism, but were just as bitter over his alternatives. As an alternative to the Three Sisters Bridge and North-Central Freeway, he favored construction of the Palisades Parkway as an extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The parkway would connect with the Potomac River Freeway, “already partially under construction at 31st Street.” This route, Boyd suggested, would carry the I-70S designation presently assigned to the North-Central Freeway and would be built with 90-percent Interstate funds. The Palisades Parkway would be four lanes wide; to avoid damage to the Potomac Palisades, six lanes could not be built:

Making the Palisades a part of the interstate system would, however, give Boyd more leverage in his reported desire to see limited truck traffic on this road.

By opening the Parkway to trucks and also routing them across the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, which would become part of Interstate 66 in Virginia, Boyd would take some of the sting out of the argument that the North Central and Three Sisters are needed for trucks.

Publicly, Secretary Udall had not said that he would allow trucks on the George Washington Memorial Parkway or the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, “but he has said so privately”:

Truck traffic is now barred from the Parkway because, according to the Park Service, the road will not support the weight of heavy trucks and buses. The already constructed part of the road would have to be reinforced for heavy trucks.

Udall would also face the charge of “breaking promises” in opening up the Parkway and the Roosevelt Bridge to trucks. But he can counter that opening Roosevelt to trucks has already been endorsed by the Policy Advisory Committee, in its agreement that cleared the way for the freeway system.

Airis would prefer to retain the restriction on truck use of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, which was “already congested and cannot handle truck or increased car traffic that failure to build the Three Sisters Bridge would aim at it.”

In closing his summary of the freeway battles, Hoagland returned to the North-Central Freeway, which was designed to meet needs in the northern quadrants of the city between the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Potomac River. Based on projections, the city needed 24 to 26 new lanes to accommodate traffic:

The North Central and Northeast Freeways would provide a total of only 14, meaning that there would still be congestion and that the idea on which the need for the new roads is based would not be met. Both the Department of Transportation and Airis agree that 24 lanes of highways cannot be built down that corridor.

This means, the Transportation Department suggests, that a new set of criteria should be found. These criteria give weight to displacement, aesthetic and other urban factors, along with traffic demand.

“Under that argument, you’d never built a highway,” says Airis. “Our assumptions here are the same ones on which the entire interstate system is based. They may not be perfect, but nobody’s come up with any[thing] better so far.” [Hoagland, Jim, “War Over City Freeways Is Entering Decisive Stage,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 23, 1968]

On January 24, Secretary Boyd addressed the Sigma Delta Chi journalism society at the National Press Club. During a brief question-and-answer session, he was asked about the proposed K Street tunnel. He opposed the tunnel, which would serve only through traffic “because there’s no way on or off.” He asked, “Why tear up the most expensive part of the city so someone can go from Charleston, South Carolina, to Buffalo, New York?” He added:

We’re not going to build highways in urban areas as we have in the past. Cities are for people.