



ATLANTA TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COUNCIL

A Citizens' Organization Devoted to Traffic Improvement and Accident Prevention

SUITE 1130
COMMERCE BUILDING
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303
688-3411

August 10, 1967

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
Mayor
City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Ivan:

During a recent visit in Washington, D. C., I talked with officials in the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads about a program which could mean a substantial number of dollars for traffic engineering in Atlanta. In a nutshell, money is available from the federal government to match a substantial portion of the funds we are presently spending for improving traffic flow on our major streets and downtown streets. This is a different program from the highway safety program I mentioned in an earlier letter.

The rub is that this federal money must come from funds which are allocated to the State as the federal government's share of construction of the federal aid primary system. Thus, this money is available if the State of Georgia will permit it to be made available to Atlanta rather than used elsewhere in the State for construction.

Our Council would like to make a major push to see this done, provided that the City also is inclined to follow through on the program.

The program involved is known as "TOPICS" (Traffic Operations Program for Increasing Capacity and Safety). According to the persons with whom I spoke, the Bureau of Public Roads is shifting more to urban-oriented problems. This program is an administrative step rather than a legislative step as there has been no law passed really authorizing this.

To qualify under the existing regulations, the city must designate its major streets and its main business streets as part of the federal aid primary system. Then these streets become eligible for federal funds to improve the operation of traffic on the streets.

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No major construction is permitted under the program unless a particular location can be designated as a key bottleneck or high accident location, the remedy for which would involve a grade separation, widening or similar construction. In this case construction could qualify.

One of the requirements to receive these funds is that the various traffic improvement projects must be part of an area-wide plan. This plan would outline proposed traffic improvements within the area over a long period and approximately when the various portions of the plan would be accomplished. Most cities are having consulting firms do their plans. The consultant fee for such a plan is also eligible for the matching federal funds.

I am informed that programs of this type are now under way and receiving matching federal money in Memphis, Tennessee, Huntsville, Alabama and one is about to begin in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The federal officials are aware that while some states are eager to join in the program, some rurally-oriented states are hesitant to get started since it means giving up funding which could be used to build something else. The attitude of those with whom I spoke was one of being eager to see a city such as Atlanta request and receive this funding and they will do all they can at their end. The key, however, is in having the State approve allocating some of the federal aid primary system funds for use in Atlanta.

The purpose of this letter is to determine whether the City will be willing to pursue this matter and seek to have the State make this federal money available. If so, we will be happy to lend the Council's aid to this end.

Sincerely,



Edmund W. Hughes
Managing Director

EWH/sp