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New York Airways Collection - Air Transport Association of America (ATA), Information Bulletins, August 1963 to January 1968

Extracted on Apr-23-2024 10:49:00

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Under the TOPICS program, some streets in towns of 5,000 or more population which previously did not qualify for Federal aid can now be incorporated into the Federal-Aid Primary System, making them eligible for Federal financial assistance. Such streets must be connected to a Federal-aid route to create an integrated network. They can be arterial highways and major crosstown, radial and circumferential streets not already on a Federal-aid system; most or all streets in a downtown area; and a limited street system in other areas carrying a heavy concentration of traffic.

Federal funds can be used on these streets only for traffic engineering improvements and not for major construction or reconstruction. Mr. Bridwell explained that TOPICS seeks to make more efficient use of existing streets without resorting to expensive construction projects.

Cities already taking part in the program are Augusta, Maine; Kokomo and Indianapolis, Indiana; Stamford, Connecticut; Canton, Ohio; Dover-Somersworth, New Hampshire; Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Memphis, Tennessee; Lincoln, Nebraska; Huntsville, Alabama; Charleston, West Virginia; Peoria, Illinois; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Wellesley, Massachusetts; Rutland, Vermont; and Searcy, Arkansas.

"Many of our urban streets are clogged with slow-moving traffic partly because their capacity potential is not being used to the fullest," said Francis C. Turner, Director of the Bureau of Public Roads. "Through TOPICS we expect to increase the productivity of our urban highway resource by making better use of what we have."

"We feel the movement of vehicles on our city streets can be speeded up as much as 25 percent by employing traffic engineering improvements. At the same time these streets will be made safer for motorists and pedestrians. This can be accomplished with relatively modest investments of money."

He said the TOPICS program includes such things as channelization of intersections, additional traffic lanes, grade crossing separation for vehicles and pedestrians, traffic signals, lighting and separate lanes for transferring passengers and loading and unloading of trucks.

Cost of the improvements is shared by the Bureau of Public Roads on a 50-50 basis out of regular Federal-aid highway apportionments. The selection of streets is made by State highway departments in cooperation with local officials, subject to approval by the Bureau.

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(For further information, contact J. W. Perlin, Information Officer, WO 7-3271.)

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