Our Transportation System is in Crisis - XXV

Last week the current categories of roads were identified, and a new road classification system proposed based on the function of the road types for movement or access. Today I examine the planning of pedestrian and vehicular traffic for various land uses.

Land intended for industrial use must be physically separated from residential or similar land uses where the presence of high traffic levels or heavy vehicles will not be tolerated. In locations where industries already exist amidst residential areas and such segregation is not possible, serious consideration needs to be given to relocation as a long-term aim. Land zoned for industrial purposes should have access directly from the collector road network whenever possible. Each industrial site should have sufficient off-road parking and loading areas to accommodate all its operational, staff and visitor requirements within the site boundary. Roads and footpaths should provide a safe and efficient means of access for workers, visitors and the range of vehicles which can be anticipated when a number of different industries are grouped together. Networks of safe footpaths should be created between the industrial area and the main areas where employees live.

In residential areas, pedestrians must be given the priority, especially close to buildings and in play areas. Non-access traffic needs to find it impossible, or highly inconvenient, to use residential roads as a short cut. Pedestrian crossings of traffic routes should be convenient and safe. Overnight parking of goods vehicles and storage of materials on the road should be actively discouraged.

All commercial and retail areas should be away from the through-traffic network. If located alongside, then service roads should be provided to service the development. Adequate parking and loading facilities for operational use should be provided within the site of individual premises if possible. Visitor and customer parking should be provided off the road, possibly on a communal basis. On-street parking should be discouraged and only permitted where it does not obstruct general traffic movements or conflict with pedestrians.

The elderly and disabled must be made to feel part of society and should be integrated as far as possible. In the pedestrian mode, the following should be considered when providing for their accommodation: sidewalks; traffic control devices with communication aids; and, terminals and stops with well planned ramps, escalators, communication aids, special service persons, seats, toilets, and parking stalls. In the vehicle mode, they are as follows: vehicle specification with appropriate seating availability, door width, and height of steps; licensing of a particular style or design of vehicle; call buttons conveniently located; bus stop signs; and, storage for wheel-chairs or space for wheel-chaired person. The funding of any facilities for the elderly and disabled should be considered as part of Government's social obligation. Facility design codes should include minimum standards of accessibility for the elderly and the disabled.

Pedestrianised areas are areas from which all vehicles are excluded. Pedestrian routes or areas should not be planned in isolation because vehicular traffic still has to be accommodated somewhere. Residential, industrial and commercial areas should be linked by footpaths providing the most direct and pleasant route between destinations. The use of trees to provide shade can encourage use. Where vehicles are displaced, adequate capacity needs to be provided elsewhere on surrounding roads for loading, parking and movement, but such facilities should always be within easy walking distance. If no alternative provision can be made for vehicular traffic, consideration may be given to pedestrianisation by time of day, that is, vehicle access allowed only when pedestrian flows are light, for example very early in the morning or late at night. Connections to transit stops, parking areas and terminals are vital and should be convenient. All pedestrianised areas must have provision for access of emergency and refuse collecting vehicles.

Some examples are now given of the efficiency of traffic operations for specific roads and land uses. First Example: The Uriah Butler Highway was designed to function as a four-lane divided expressway, also called a two-lane dual carriageway. The original highway was a two-lane single carriageway called the Princess Margaret Highway. With the upgrade, several villages that once were connected through roads intersecting the highway were immediately cut off. Therefore, while some people lived on one side of the highway, their relatives, schools, places of worship and general social linkage requirements were on the other side. The answer was to re-link them by way of pedestrian overpasses. These measures have clearly not achieved the level of success that was intended.

There are still several areas along the UBH where pedestrians cross the highway at-grade, such as at Jerningham Junction Road.

Perhaps lifting of the highway above the roads that have been cut off would have provided a safer solution for both pedestrians and vehicles, as well as catering for improved connectivity for the villagers. In other words, the creation of viaduct would have

permitted at-grade crossings for both pedestrian and vehicles without disrupting the highway movement.

Some more examples next week.

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