

Florida Expressways and the Public Works Career of Congressman William C. Cramer

by

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ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of automobiles to Florida in the 1900s, highways have been integral to the state's economy. In the 1950s, statewide limited-access highway projects were introduced in the form of a state-operated turnpike and the national Interstate highway system. This paper traces the simultaneous development of both expressway systems, outlining the previous condition of Florida's highways, the initiatives taken by Florida's governors, and especially the role of William C. Cramer of St. Petersburg, Florida's first Republican United States Congressman since Reconstruction.

In the House of Representatives, as a ranking member of the Roads Subcommittee of the Public Works Committee, Cramer played a prominent role in shaping federal highway policies, addressing corruption in highway politics, keeping Interstates toll-free, and preventing highway funds from being diverted to other programs. He battled proponents of the Sunshine State Parkway, which ran parallel to designated Interstate routes and threatened to make them unfeasible. As the capstone to his public works career, Cramer secured additional mileage to provide for the 'missing link' between Tampa Bay and Miami, which had not been authorized in the original federal outlays. The designation extended a route through St. Petersburg.

Introduction

Three hundred feet below the earth's surface, beneath the border of France and Switzerland, a miniature Big Bang is taking place. Scientists have created a device with which they can observe subatomic particles slamming into each other at nearly the speed of light, in hopes of discovering the nature of these particles, the formations of solar systems and galaxies, and the creation of the universe. I envy these scientists. Their task is relatively simple. Across the Atlantic in St. Petersburg, Florida, as a student of the Florida Studies Program, I observe much more complex phenomena, involving what happens when people of diverse backgrounds and expansive technological capabilities come together in a state with a unique environmental makeup, asking, what is Florida's place in relation to its neighboring regions, the country, the world?

The familiar lament among scholars of Florida is that the state's culture is too diverse to be understood. Composed of numerous regions, each culturally distinct and some in themselves as diverse as a small state, Florida bewilders and amuses scholars trying to find a common thread. While journalist Michael Paterniti has described Florida as "the truest melting pot we have," novelist Carl Hiaasen describes the state as "almost Toffleresque in its chaos." Events occur in disjointed, episodic sequences, "as a television drama unto itself," wrote Paterniti, "a place where dots do not connect."¹ Meanwhile, Florida has come to be regarded as a bellwether state for the rest of the

nation. During the 2008 presidential election, political analysts observed with keen interest the behavior of voters along the I-4 corridor running from Tampa Bay through Orlando to Daytona Beach. While voters of this corridor figure out where they stand on the issues, this booming population may provide indicators of what direction the nation will take.

What does this mean for the future of Florida and the nation? “To visit a people who have no history,” wrote historian Richard Hofstadter, “is like going into a wilderness where there are no roads to direct a traveler. The people have nothing to which they can look back; the wisdom of their forefathers are forgotten; the experience of one generation is lost to the succeeding one; and the consequence is, that people have little attachment to their state, their policy has no system, and their legislature no decided character.”² My aim has been to pinpoint some aspect of history that penetrates the complex, nuanced history of modern Florida and the United States. Throughout the nation, and especially in Florida, mobility is perhaps the most common American trait. According to Hofstadter, “the American habit of movement has continued in full force even after the disappearance of the frontier.” Helpful in understanding American history, declared Hofstadter, would be a “great imaginative book on American movement.”³

On reading Hofstadter, I found affirmation for my nearly two years of research on Florida’s highways. When people refuse to stand still long enough to allow for a thorough study, it seems logical to bring attention to the technology that enables that movement. In fact, my fascination with American mobility dates back to my childhood. Some of my earliest memories are of traveling with my family along Interstate 80 from my hometown of Evanston, on the Southeast border of Wyoming, to the nearby city of

Salt Lake City, Utah, counting train engines on the nearby Union Pacific railroad. I also remember my father waking up early for his drive to nearby mountains, where he labored as a technician for a petroleum company, while my mother worked as a front desk clerk in hotels built to accommodate passing travelers from distant places. Next to my grade school playground was Interstate 80. As I slept, the wail of speeding semis pierced the silent Wyoming night. In short, I grew up with a pronounced awareness of the prevalence of motor transportation in American life. In fact, I do not recall ever living more than a mile or two from an Interstate highway.

By focusing on expressways, I hope to bring attention to an aspect of Florida that represents a shared experience. Everyone in this state, regardless of background, is affected in countless ways by car culture. Most able adults have experienced driving a vehicle, many of them on a daily basis. With roadways, parking spaces, and garages, the built landscape is dominated by motor vehicles, such that areas designated for pedestrians, cyclists, and mass transportation are in the margins. As for the cars themselves, drivers often put a great deal of thought into the kinds of vehicles they drive, including power, suspension, transmissions, steering, brakes, along with interior comfort, such as seats, headrests, and air conditioning. Take a glance at any newspaper, and motor transportation stories are bound to fill a few columns. The stories deal with road rage, hit-and-runs, changes in driving laws and road conditions, suggestions on how and how not to drive, car insurance, fuel economy, and the progress of major car companies, to say nothing of pages upon pages of new and used car sales advertisements.

More specifically, I have brought attention to what I consider to be the most explosive, defining event in the state's motor transportation history: the creation of the

Interstate and turnpike systems, starting in the latter half of the twentieth century. This study ties together many major elements of the overall Florida story: interregional interaction, political transformation, and environmental degradation. My hope is that this study will be useful in discussing Florida's impressive transportation systems, how they came to be, how they shaped the state, and what their future holds in store.

The year 2006 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956. While President Dwight D. Eisenhower has been recognized for his leadership, less has been said about the roles of successive Presidents and members of Congress who saw the Interstate system to its completion. This thesis focuses on the endeavors of Congressman William C. Cramer of St. Petersburg, Florida, who in the 1960s was the senior Republican on the Roads Subcommittee of the Public Works Committee of the House of Representatives.

On the Roads Subcommittee, Cramer championed the Interstate system during the administrations of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. Throughout his career, Cramer fought the incorporation of toll highways into Interstate routes. He stood out early in his career in the creation of tougher laws to fight corruption in Interstate construction; eventually, the Kennedy administration adopted some of his proposals. While President Johnson promoted Great Society programs and escalated the Vietnam conflict, Cramer rallied fellow Subcommittee members to prevent Interstate funding from being diverted to other programs, a struggle that continued into the Nixon presidency. While helping the Subcommittee broker additional Interstate mileage for the nation, Cramer secured extra mileage for his home state and district. Thanks largely to Cramer,

Florida gained an Interstate route linking Tampa to Miami, including a loop through St. Petersburg with two connectors to the downtown area.

This thesis situates Cramer within the broader context of Florida highway development, from the conception of the Dixie Highway to the present, with emphasis on the simultaneous construction of the Florida Turnpike and the Interstate. Besides highlighting Cramer's efforts to shape Eisenhower's national vision into the system we know today, attention is given to the battles Cramer fought against state officials to prevent Florida's Interstate routes from being altered, delayed, and littered with tolls.

The First Wave

In *Dirt Roads to Dixie*, Howard Lawrence Preston remarked that since the end of the Civil War, Florida had been developing a reputation as a “recreational haven.” However, nothing Florida’s early admirers said, wrote, drew, or painted “directly” changed Florida. In order for actual change to occur, northerners needed access to the state. Nineteenth century railways spurred the early growth of numerous boomtowns, notably Miami and Tampa, but at the turn of the twentieth century, Florida remained the most sparsely populated state in the South. Actual change, Preston remarked, arrived with the “throng of automobile tourists attracted by the region’s greater accessibility, which highway progressivism made possible.”⁴ What the Iron Horse did for the West, the highway would do for Florida.⁵

Essentially inaccessible by car as late as 1910, much of Florida lay “beyond arduous and impassable sands, behind impenetrable morasses of red gumbo and just around the corner from Stygian cypress swamps and other road unpleasantries,” forcing tourists to ship their cars by steam or rail to one of Florida’s cities.⁶ Gradually, cities and counties built roads according to their needs, and a network developed. Initiated in 1914, the two major prongs of the Dixie Highway expedited the process of bringing northerners south. Sending motorists down the Atlantic coast of Florida, the east leg of the Dixie Highway passed through Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Daytona, Fort Pierce, West Palm

Beach, and on to Miami. The western route entered Florida at the panhandle, passing through Tallahassee on the way to the interior into Gainesville, Ocala, Orlando, Kissimmee, Bartow, Arcadia, Fort Myers, and Marco, then across the Everglades to Miami.

The above cities were blessed with a highway through a combination of geography, power, and luck. To become part of the network, cities bypassed by the highway had to exercise some initiative of their own and build links. This was especially true for Tampa and St. Petersburg. Rather than complain that the Dixie Highway had bypassed them, Tampans worked with neighboring communities to create a link to the Dixie. In November 1915, the *Tampa Daily Times* announced that the last part of the road surface between Tampa and Lakeland would soon be completed, providing thirty-five miles of some of the best brick road in the country. Although the main Dixie Highway would not come within forty miles of Tampa, motorists could be tempted to turn west on this finely-built leg, a road fifteen feet in width rather than the usual nine feet, with crowning steep enough to evacuate water but not too steep for cars, along with culverts and concrete bridges with protective rails for passing over waterways. The path was straight and the grades were smooth.⁷

Once on the road from Lakeland to Tampa, tourists might be further tempted by intersecting roads of slightly lesser quality, made of clay, shell, or stone, leading to farms, tourist sites, or the great unknown.⁸ From Tampa, motorists could drive to Indian Rocks beach in about an hour over a “popular auto drive,” passing through “pine forests, orange groves and several pretty country towns.” A ferry provided access to the island until a toll-free bridge was completed in 1915, leading to a “shell drive.” Indian Rocks

anticipated hundreds of visitors on the bridge's opening day.⁹ Until they were brought into this growing network, many nearby communities remained isolated from incoming car traffic.

By 1920, Florida had a functional motor transportation system, complete with main arteries to cities, although there were weaknesses in the system. A 1921 account claimed that of all counties on the drive from Clearwater to Orlando, Pinellas had the worst roads. Brick roads on the county line near Oldsmar were "narrow and rough." On the turnpike crossing Old Tampa Bay and through Safety Harbor, an unsafe bridge and bad road conditions caused traffic to be diverted to Sutherland and Dunedin. Unless the county made strides, news of bad roads during the upcoming tourist season was sure to mar the county's reputation.¹⁰

Superintendent of county roads C.E. Burlison helped improve the road system and modernize the county's road-building equipment. When Burlison began, the county presented him with 13 mules, "12 of which he said were half dead." After four years, he acquired a sixty horse power tractor that could accomplish as much as three hundred laborers, a clearing plow and a road grader, five Mack trucks, five army trucks, five International trucks, and carloads of equipment. Equipped, Burlison's team could build one mile of road per day.¹¹ Nevertheless, an observer once complained of seeing only two men on a Burlison road crew doing any work. The rest were "doing the heavy looking on."¹²

Tampa Bay transportation development made great strides in the 1920s. Daring projects paid for themselves in no time and extended prosperity to the surrounding areas. The promise applied to projects big and small. When the bridge to Pass-a-Grille,

population twenty, was destroyed by the 1921 hurricane, the Pass-a-Grille Bridge Company had saved enough in a single year of operation to rebuild and resume traffic by the end of the year. Gearing up to build the Gandy Bridge from St. Petersburg to Tampa, promoters looked to the success of the St. Johns River Bridge recently finished in Jacksonville. While an estimated 80,640 vehicles crossed the bridge in 1922, the St. John's River Bridge's tolls had already paid off twenty percent of its ten-year bonds in the first year of operation.¹³

The 1920s thus served as a window of opportunity for George S. Gandy to construct a bridge linking the commercial city of Tampa to the resort city of St. Petersburg, a project twenty years in the making. In 1913 the surveys began, followed by a lengthy application to the War Department to build over navigable waters and the passage of necessary state legislation. The bridge received full authorization just in time for World War I and a period of deflation, "when capital ran to cover and refused to be coaxed." Local residents finally purchased most of the shares, and construction began in the fall of 1922.¹⁴

"The rhetoric flowed," noted journalist Leland Hawes, "as dignitaries from around the nation participated in the official opening" of the Gandy Bridge on November 20, 1924. St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce president Bradford Lawrence proclaimed, "Two golden shores are now linked by a ribbon of silver."¹⁵ St. Petersburg mayor Frank Fortune Pulver waxed similarly that the neighboring cities were diamonds joined by a ribbon of gold.¹⁶ Whatever kind of ribbon, the Gandy Bridge stood testament to the prosperity of the Tampa Bay region while adding to it, uniting a combined population exceeding one hundred thousand, the largest metropolitan area in the state.¹⁷

Tampa Bay residents, said the *St. Petersburg Times*, had a great opportunity to “join hands and work together for the future of southwest Florida.”¹⁸

Previous to the Gandy Bridge’s construction, the shortest road from St. Petersburg to Tampa was 43 miles and the shortest steamboat route covered 22 miles, each route taking two to three hours. The Gandy Bridge reduced the trip to a mere forty to fifty minutes, making the linked cities “virtually one.”¹⁹ “One will find it hard to think of a more pleasant evening,” gushed the *Times*, “the long drive over the moonlit waters, the car parked out in the middle of the bay for a spell then across to the other shore and back.” While Tampan and other Floridians would have easier access to gulf coast fishing, bathing beaches, and “countless resort attractions,” St. Petersburg would have at its doorstep Tampa’s “quaint Latin colony in Ybor City with its Spanish, Cuban and Italian atmosphere of romance and the old world,” the “interesting cigar factories,” and the annual Gasparilla Celebration. It was only a “magnificent pleasure drive” away.²⁰

Completed in the late 1920s, State Road (SR) 19, later US 19, made Pinellas Point the southern apex of a northern Florida trunk line. No longer would tourists have to drive through Florida’s interior to get to Tampa Bay. SR 19 shortened the trip from St. Petersburg to Tallahassee to 250 miles, opening St. Petersburg to “immense traffic” from northwest Florida. From Tallahassee, SR 19 headed to the gulf through Lamont and Sirmans, then ran parallel to the coast through Perry, Cross City, Oldtown, across the Suwannee River, into “the huge development of Homosassa,” and on to St. Petersburg. A precursor to mid-century expressways, SR 19 was notable for having “no sharp curves” and “long, easy tangents,” including a 10.2-mile straightaway.²¹

For all of Tampa Bay's road improvements during the 1920s, the Great Depression dampened the economic promises. Tolls failed to keep the Gandy Bridge enterprise solvent. Following the initiative of Senator Claude Pepper and the Roosevelt Administration, the federal government bailed out the bridge for \$2.38 million and lifted the tolls in 1944 as wartime measures.²² Despite hardships, communities maintained their road systems and sometimes added modest improvements. Following a 1935 hurricane, the Works Progress Administration improved the drive between St. Petersburg to Tampa, rebuilding Tampa's damaged seawall and adding concrete balconies, benches, and steps leading down to docks.²³

With the rise of automobile usage in Florida came a decline in the use of rails. In the early 1900s, F.A. Davis dreamed of the day when ten thousand passengers per day would ride St. Petersburg's streetcars. In 1917, the city's rail system reached that benchmark and was ready for expansion.²⁴ But within a few decades, streetcars were perceived more as nuisances than conveniences. More people owned cars, and motorbuses were going where the trolleys could not. In the late 1930s, "Miami's biggest traffic headache" stemmed from a traffic island designed for trolleys in the middle of one of the United States' busiest intersections. Traffic engineers looked forward to replacing the trolleys with buses so the island could be removed.²⁵ In 1936, Jacksonville was the first major city to give up its trolleys, followed by Miami in 1940, Tampa in 1946, and St. Petersburg in 1949.²⁶

The Gridlock City

The end of World War II spelled the resumption of automobile manufacturing and the end of gas rationing. Cars flooded downtown streets; parking spaces filled; horns blared, and pedestrians ran for cover. In most cities transportation systems directed traffic to the city centers, and downtowns became clogged with more cars than they could handle.²⁷

Traffic jams soon threatened city centers, including St. Petersburg's. "Unless a solution is found," predicted a postwar editorial, St. Petersburg's "entire business district will [...] inevitably be led into economic chaos as customers move to easier parking grounds."²⁸ During the 1945 tourist season, finding a parking space in St. Petersburg was not a problem until late November; by 1946, it was hard to find a space in October. In 1947, it was predicted, parking would be difficult in September, and "we will find the community strongly united behind a program to do something about traffic."²⁹ The efforts were to no avail. In 1949, the city had only nine thousand parking spaces in the business district to accommodate an estimated eighty thousand vehicles and failed to create any new spaces the following year. St. Petersburg was becoming better known as the Gridlock City than the Sunshine City.³⁰

As the city groped for solutions, the problem grew, compelling the *St. Petersburg Times* to publish a three-part series on the city's traffic problems. Although Maas

Brothers built a million dollar department store in downtown, decentralization, a natural reaction to downtown congestion, was already taking place as businesses established themselves beyond the gridlock. City officials told these maverick proprietors they were “too far out” to succeed, but the businesses proved them wrong as shopping centers took hold on the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and 9th Street South; along Central Avenue at 34th Street and between 68th and 72nd Street; at 34th Street and 9th Avenue North; at 16th Street and 17th Avenue North; and wherever suburban motels sprouted in place of traditional urban hotels.³¹

Each new establishment chipped away at downtown’s drawing power, sales potential, property value, and tax revenue. Critics suggested mitigating the problem by replacing Albert Whitted Airport with a parking lot, improving public transportation, and removing the Atlantic Coast Line railroad tracks along 1st Avenue South. But city leaders, short on resources and initiative, could not act fast enough to keep up with the pace of development in other parts of the city.³²

Until the 1940s, residential areas were largely confined to the Central Avenue corridor out to 34th Street, the region beyond being “very thinly peopled.” After the war, the corridor, and the city’s center of gravity, began to extend farther towards the Gulf of Mexico. Every year from 1946 to 1949 brought the construction of more than a thousand homes in the city’s western reaches, and between two and three thousand homes every year from 1950 to 1952.³³ At 34th Street and Central Avenue, entrepreneurs developed Central Plaza, a major shopping center. The site included two supermarkets, A&P and Publix; various chains, including Belk, Liggett’s, McCrory’s, Butler, Diana, Kinney, and Singer; and a few local businesses, including two laundromats and an optometrist.³⁴

Holding its grand opening in 1952, an estimated fifty thousand customers visited Central Plaza on its first day of business.³⁵

As development expanded inland, so did St. Petersburg's transportation agenda, and asphalt spread like kudzu across the peninsula. By the mid-1950s, finding solutions for downtown's gridlock slid from the city's agenda as planners began envisioning a comprehensive, countywide grid system in place of "the awkward system that now exists."³⁶ Fourth Street had only four lanes up to Thirtieth Avenue North, where traffic was then squeezed into two lanes up to Gandy Boulevard. Drivers, especially patrons of the Derby Lane dog track and Tampa's Jai-Alai Fronton, would "pass at random," "causing many collisions." This "traffic headache" and the addition of the Courtney Campbell Bridge prompted the six-laning of Fourth Street and four-laning of Gandy Boulevard.³⁷ In 1957, the city put into effect a truck route "to relieve congestion from thoroughfares" and "speed truck traffic through the city."³⁸ Planners kicked around the idea of making the county's roads more amenable to industry and envisioned a "multi-million dollar bridge and causeway program linking the Gulf beaches."³⁹ As St. Petersburg four-laned Tyrone Boulevard and designated 66th Street as a main artery, plans went into motion for another crossroads shopping center where 66th Street intersected 18th Avenue North, this one larger than Central Plaza.⁴⁰ In 1963, the county gave St. Petersburg another east-west artery, extending 22nd Avenue North from 34th Street to Tyrone Boulevard.⁴¹ Taking advantage of the freeze of 1962, the city contracted to remove ten thousand dead trees from needed rights-of-way. Residents complained when some of the removed trees "didn't appear dead."⁴²

On into the late 1950s, downtown still experienced record-breaking traffic jams, especially when major events coincided with spring training and when bad weather prohibited beach ventures. Webb's City continued to have huge sales days, bringing in \$175,000 in one day in March of 1957, but by 1963 it was evident that the "old-fashioned, rundown commercial establishments" that occupied downtown were increasingly "doomed by competition."⁴³ The gridlock subsided enough that City Manager Lynn Andrews proposed removing the city's parking meters.⁴⁴

While city and county transportation systems grew, regional and statewide projects imposed major changes on St. Petersburg. At the end of the war, a network of highways and bridges connected the city to Tampa, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and beyond, but the path to Miami still presented a glaring obstacle. Along the east coast, travelers could follow US 1 all the way down to the Overseas Highway to Key West. On the west coast, however, travelers following US 19 had to negotiate Tampa Bay by veering inland or by taking chances with the Beeline ferry from Pinellas Point to Manatee.

On the morning the Beeline ferry resumed service at the close of World War II, forty cars waited in line to board a barge built to hold twenty-eight cars. That day, a single ferry carried 217 cars. The Beeline acquired two more ferries after they were decommissioned from wartime service, but the crossing remained an inconvenience, not to mention discontinuations in service due to labor strikes.⁴⁵ One motorist complained of arriving at Pinellas Point an hour early for the last ferry to Manatee. After buying his ticket, agents told him that the ferry was full and that he would have to drive around the

bay. Angrily, the motorist remarked, “Good will created on the spot is surely worth as much as many colorful posters up north.”⁴⁶

Determined to devise a better way to cross the bay, the St. Petersburg Port Authority considered building a tunnel, but engineers decided that a lower bay bridge would be more realistic.⁴⁷ Completed in 1954, the Sunshine Skyway Bridge made it easy to cross the southern portion of Tampa Bay.

Subsequently, US 19 quickly rose in prominence. To the south of the Skyway, US 19 joined with highways 41 and 301 in the city of Palmetto, leading to the construction of a new bridge across the Manatee River and the four-laning of US 41 to accommodate the increased traffic.⁴⁸ At the northern end of the Skyway, US 19 replaced US 92 along 4th Street as St. Petersburg’s main north-south artery. The sudden presence of traffic created demand for the Bayway Bridge across Boca Ciega Bay to sites along barrier islands to the west such as Pass-a-Grille, the Don Cesar Hotel, and Pine Key.⁴⁹ In 1963, traffic at the crossing of US 19 and 54th Avenue South prompted the city council to consider installing traffic lights.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the intersection of US 19 and US 98 was deemed “one of the most dangerous in Florida.” A third of a mile before the intersection, one of the highways narrowed dangerously from four to two lanes. The state planned to upgrade the routes into divided four-lane highways, with one-way drives separated by islands, a concept that roadside business proprietors were reluctant to accept.⁵¹

Terrific Amount of Rock

With the reign of the automobile, St. Petersburg businesses touted their parking spaces as much as their actual services. With a parking lot on Central Avenue and 19th Street that accommodated 110 cars for free, the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association encouraged its customers to “Save without *fuss* ...the parking’s on *us!*”⁵² Central Plaza Bank and Trust Company claimed to be “Surrounded By Convenience.” Occupying an entire block on US 19 between 2nd and 3rd Street, the bank offered parking on every side of the building and a drive-through option, making Central Plaza Bank “The Symbol of Banking Convenience.”⁵³

“Cars, Cars, and More Cars ... a typical Suncoast scene,” read the caption to a *St. Petersburg Times* photograph in which Fords and Chevrolets were lined up bumper-to-bumper on a four-lane city street with yet more cars occupying every parking space.⁵⁴ Throughout the postwar years, Tampa Bay’s population grew remarkably dependent on automobiles. In the Tampa-St. Petersburg Metropolitan area, the 1960 census reported that 77 percent of central city inhabitants either drove their own cars or car-pooled. In suburban areas, that figure was 81 percent.⁵⁵ That year, Pinellas guzzled 109 million gallons of gasoline, with the state burning 1¾ billion gallons.⁵⁶ In the three counties adjoining Tampa Bay, registered cars reached a total of 353,359. Pinellas County’s numbers were striking. From 1950 to 1959, Pinellas experienced a 176 percent increase

in car registrations.⁵⁷ Although Pinellas was Florida's second-smallest county in total area, it had nearly 163,000 registered vehicles, 9,000 more vehicles than Hillsborough County. Statewide, only Dade County had more registered vehicles.⁵⁸

The state as a whole also experienced an exponential rise in car usage. In the 1950s – the decade that Florida became the nation's fastest growing state – Florida's highways became among America's most traveled. This was largely due to the state's massive number of tourist drivers. By 1962, Florida was drawing an estimated 10.6 to 11.5 million tourists every year and expecting “an ever-swelling tide of tourists” in the future. Statistics confirm that the overwhelming majority of these tourists preferred to drive – and often not just to singular destinations, but all over the state. In 1956, out of a sample of 4,932 visitors to the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, 81.5 percent came by car. Many visitors made a “circle tour” down one Florida coastline and looping back up the other.⁵⁹

Florida's residents also preferred to drive. Car culture had so pervaded Florida that when the *St. Petersburg Times* discovered that a Circuit Court judge still actually commuted to and from Dade City “via Choo Choo,” reporters were incredulous. Despite the judge's commitment to the Atlantic Coast Line, the closest depot to his home was seven miles away in Trilby. From there, he depended on a cab.⁶⁰ By 1960, Florida's resident drivers ranked ninth in the nation at three million. With tourists and residents combined, Florida ranked third only behind California and New York in the number of highway-using vehicles, edging ahead of the higher-populated Texas.⁶¹

Statewide, Florida struggled to keep up with the automobile invasion. By and large, citizens had the will to build the necessary highways, the ideas were there, and so

were the money and materials, but the government experienced a great deal of difficulty getting organized and, after that, staying on track. During Governor Fuller Warren's administration some ambitious projects went into motion, particularly the Jacksonville expressway system. However, it might also be said that Warren's administration adhered to the spoils system of government. Duval County, home of Warren and the Jacksonville expressway, received far more funds than any other county during Warren's administration, in 1953 soaking up almost twice as much state primary road funds as any other county. Despite the funds heaped on the expressway, the *Tampa Tribune* reported in 1954 that although bond issues had been raised and spent to speed the expressway's completion, the state had thus far neglected to do its part.⁶²

Meanwhile, several demographically small, undeserving counties received far more than their fair share as road agendas in developing parts of the state went hungry.⁶³ In December 1951, the *Tampa Morning Tribune* reported that Hernando had received more state road money than Hillsborough since Warren's inauguration, even though, according to the last census, Hillsborough's population was 249,894 while Hernando's was 6,693.⁶⁴ This spoke of the unchecked power of the road board and its chairmanship. Regardless of how much the counties gave the state in gasoline taxes, they were only guaranteed a twenty percent return; the other eighty percent was spent at the state's discretion; while Hernando was the home of Warren's appointed road board chairman, Alfred A. McKethan.⁶⁵

During McKethan's chairmanship, Hernando turned its share of the gasoline tax over to the state along with \$30,000 a year in county road funds. What the state did with the sum of state and local funds raised a few eyebrows. McKethan donated, at what he

deemed “considerable sacrifice,” seven-and-a-half acres on the gulf for county parkland at Pine Island; then the road department contracted to build a bridge and highway to the park passing directly through McKethan’s adjacent property, this one privately developed. Meanwhile, the parkland was dredged and filled at the state’s expense. Whether it was even prudent to dredge the area was questionable. E.A. Lopez, Jr. of the Laguna Corporation admitted that his company’s dredge, operating at \$25.45 per hour, was working constantly and running into “a terrific amount of rock.” In a few months, Laguna took in \$13,000 from the Pine Island project.⁶⁶

In other parts of the state, McKethan was accused of putting politics before civic-mindedness. According to the Range Line Road Association, a group representing Sarasota and neighboring municipalities, a proposed bridge crossing the Manatee River ought to have directed traffic onto Fifteenth Street rather than First Street, thus avoiding the creation of a new bottleneck in the already congested Bradenton. Only a “selfish” minority was “anxious for the bridge to be placed” at First Street. Local mayors and county commissioners agreed on this and convinced McKethan’s engineers of the ideal location. Then, McKethan was reportedly “cornered” by a few individuals and changed the route to First Street, where the bridge landing was eventually built.⁶⁷ McKethan was also accused of arranging a major highway from the northeastern United States to Tampa Bay (probably US 301) to “ben[d] at right-angles through Starke to pass [Senator] Charley Johns’ tourist cabins.”⁶⁸

Sources indicate that much of the damage inflicted during previous administrations was rectified during the brief administration of Governor Daniel T. McCarty and his road board. Where previous road boards hired unnecessary staff and

initiated narrow-sighted road projects for the benefit of a privileged minority, McCarty's board laid off four hundred employees, eliminated six million dollars worth of unworthy road projects, and started practical projects which would receive approval and funding from the federal government.⁶⁹

McCarty's road board chairman, Richard Simpson, was well regarded among his colleagues and throughout the state. As a former speaker of the state legislature, he was, according to the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, an "advocate of good government who was deliberate in action and fair-minded in argument."⁷⁰ Thomas B. Manuel of the fourth district expressed gratitude for Simpson's "advice and counsel and for the consideration shown by you and the entire Board to the traffic needs of this district." During its first meeting, Simpson's board agreed to allocate funds "regardless of location, based on engineering reports showing the greatest need." Manuel's fourth district included Dade County, which contributed nearly eighteen percent of the state's gasoline tax, while the district as a whole contributed nearly thirty percent. Historically, the fourth district did not receive its fair share of funding and was in constant need of improvements. By the end of 1953, the fourth district had forty-eight projects under construction and \$55 million in new projects slated for 1954.⁷¹

Likewise, board member J. Saxton Lloyd of Daytona Beach brought to his home county of Volusia \$900,000 for four-laning and improving parts of the heavily burdened US 1 along with another \$496 million for a bypass truck route. Not one to privilege his county unfairly, Lloyd also sought federal assistance for improvements to US 1 in other parts of his district.⁷²

Governor McCarty suffered a heart attack and died in his first year in office. Senate President Charley Johns took over shortly thereafter; subsequently, the tenure of McCarty's proactive road board was also cut short. On December 11, 1953, Johns suspended the entire road board and turnpike authority and appointed new officials in their place.⁷³ As the new road board set to work, Johns campaigned for the 1954 gubernatorial election. Soon, the entire state began to notice that a flimsy style of politics dictating the administration's road agenda. By summer, people from all around the state were complaining about Johns's ill-conceived road agenda.

The Tampa Bay area was especially critical of Johns, particularly after he ordered road board chairman Cecil M. Webb to hold hearings for a toll reduction on the Sunshine Skyway – still under construction – to one dollar. Webb took the matter to Coverdale and Colpitts, the consulting firm that set the toll-rate based on calculated earnings statements. The firm responded that although the reduced toll would induce a hundred thousand more cars across the bridge every year, five hundred thousand annual crossings would be needed to make up for the lost revenue. Johns's move was interpreted as purely political, not practical. Johns, it was suggested, ought to turn his attention to the completion of US 19, which to date forced “1.2 miles of east-west driving detours and about three miles of travel on ordinary city streets” through St. Petersburg, the inconvenience resulting in “a potential loss of \$70,000 or more in [Skyway] revenues.”⁷⁴

Simpson also accused Johns's road board of rushing “skeleton or incomplete plans,” giving contractors only two days to study the plans and make bids. To cover their assets, contractors would bid high, so high that the Bureau of Public Roads would refuse to finance the project. Chairman Webb responded that Florida could still use the federal

money on other projects, but Simpson pointed out that federal money had to be matched by state money, which was in limited supply; in recent years the state lost nearly \$12 million in unmatched federal money. Examples of lost federal funding due to rushed contracts included the northern approach to the Skyway, the San Marco overpass on the Jacksonville Expressway, and a stretch of US 1 north of Jacksonville.⁷⁵

Johns's reign was especially felt in Tampa. Where McCarty's administration set out to extend the Dale Mabry Highway northward – eventually connecting it to US 41 and US 19 near Weeki Wachee Springs, “vastly improv[ing] access to Tampa from the two main tourist routes into the West Coast area” and “speed[ing] up local traffic by taking pressure off the approaches to U.S. 41” – Johns promised voters in Sulphur Springs that he would block the extension of the Dale Mabry Highway north of Hillsborough Avenue in order to force traffic to drive past Sulphur Springs' motels and attractions. “Consider what this means to the growth of Tampa,” pointed out the Tampa Morning Tribune. Not only was Johns's proposal poorly conceived, it was ill informed; his own road department had already begun construction on Dale Mabry north of Hillsborough Avenue.⁷⁶

Perhaps Johns's biggest mistake in his bid for governor was “heaping unjustified abuse” on Simpson's suspended road board. Simpson, initially accepting his suspension gracefully, could “no longer sit still” as Johns publicly denounced him and his colleagues as a “do-nothing” board that would not “cooperate” with him. Simpson, well versed in Johns's record, unleashed some criticism of his own while helping gubernatorial candidate LeRoy Collins shape a road agenda that would win the voters' confidence. As for his lack of cooperation with “the Acting Governor,” Simpson recalled being

reprimanded by Johns three times: “for refusing to find some way to change a contract in favor of a senator’s friend at a loss (to the state) of approximately \$100,000;” for not granting “special consideration” to a contractor; and for not inflating a property assessment for a friend of Johns. As for the “do-nothing” board, Simpson explained: “When we took over [...] we found the road department in the worst financial condition in its history. ... The total deficit [...] was close to \$28,000,000. [...] The McCarty road board met the deficit, carried on a creditable, if limited, building program and accumulated enough cash to make the 1954 program possible. [...] History will show that 1953 was the most constructive year of the Road Department since its creation.”⁷⁷

Johns also accused Simpson’s board of budgeting only a million dollars for the Jacksonville expressway merely “in order to keep it alive” for political reasons. In reality, said Simpson, the McCarty administration “told the people the full truth about the expressway. We pulled it down from a heaven of promises and made out of it a fine practical project, actually spending around two million dollars of State money on it.” Johns, Simpson recalled, was more severe than McCarty, openly refusing to spend any more than “what normally would be spent” in Duval so that more funds would be available for his own district.⁷⁸

Other criticisms of Johns included “openly and brazenly promising roads and bridges far beyond his ability to deliver;” hiring a Director of Wildlife Exhibits even though the Road Department did not have a wildlife exhibit; hiring three extra lawyers for the Jacksonville expressway though there was not enough work for one; and needlessly inflating the costs of a proposed turnpike. “In view of the present situation,” quipped Simpson, “non-cooperation may be regarded as a mark of distinction.” The

chief engineer of the road department, Sam Turnbull, concurred. After twenty-eight years of service and only twenty-two months before retirement, Turnbull resigned from his post, remarking that Johns's road board needed "a political engineer instead of a professional one."⁷⁹

Interlopers

With Johns in power, proponents of progressive government began to take steps towards reforming Florida's road department. In the 1950s, the five members of the state road board represented the congressional districts as drawn in 1937. With board members elected for four-year terms by the governor, Senator B.C. Pearce complained that the system provided "no continuity from administration to administration." "A governor appoints a road board that develops a program that fits in with his ideas. That program is just under way well when a new governor is elected. He names his own road board and, more often than not, its ideas are directly opposite those of its predecessor board. So it throws out the old program and starts one of its own."⁸⁰

In 1954, the state Legislative Council organized a special committee to make "an exhaustive study of all phases of Florida road building with a view toward drafting recommendations for a highway code." Some suggested staggering road board appointments to create more continuity. Pearce, a committee member, wanted to see an elected board member from each of the eight congressional districts, with the state as a whole electing a chairman. Others asked, "What's the point?" The congressional district lines were no fairer than the road districts'.⁸¹

While campaigning in 1954, Collins heard pleas to save Florida from outmoded transportation governance. The Dade County Central Labor Union complained of

Florida's "spoils system" of government, which with every new administration brought the firing of hundreds of road workers. In response, Collins favored "career service" and promised to "take politics out of State employment."⁸² Just as the Range Line Association turned to Collins with its bridge predicament, the citizens of Port St. Joe sought salvation from a highway from Apalachicola that, at the behest of Johns's crony George Tapper, was going to transform Harrison Avenue, through the community's "nicest residential section," into a major thoroughfare. Johns reportedly gave Port St. Joe an ultimatum: take the highway as planned, or be bypassed altogether: not a viable option for St. Joe Paper Company.⁸³

Near Lake Okeechobee, Tom Gaskins was fighting with all his might to save "a beautiful Cabbage and Oak Hammock that thousands of visitors have admired" in the middle of his Cypress Knee Museum site from being destroyed by a rerouting of US 27. "[I]t's not just some small filling station they are going to ruin," howled Gaskins, explaining that his attraction was listed on "pictorial road maps of Florida, recommended by the A.A.A. and other tour guides," and "written up in many national magazines." Convinced that a hostile government intended to destroy him, Gaskins turned to Collins as a last resort, vowing to "spend a great deal of thought in publicizing this dastardly act" if it came to fruition, as it sadly did.⁸⁴

In this atmosphere of frustration, Collins ran for governor with the promise of modernizing the government. Progressives were hungry for a methodical system of government that ceased to allow small-county officials, 'pork-choppers,' to dictate where to build the state's highways. Collins and his administrative assistant, Joe Grotegut, received tips on Johns's misdeeds and valuable advice from a network of insiders,

including Simpson. With this, Collins took a firm stand on road issues and organized solid support by seeking to eliminate politics from road planning; supporting staggered terms for road board members; rejecting the division of road money based on antiquated district lines; and promoting “a legal designation of a state arterial system” with provision for “ultimate, reasonable, limited access features.” Although Collins knew where he thought new superhighways should be built, he emphasized that such decisions are “not for the Governor to decide.”⁸⁵

Although, as we shall see, the Collins administration can be credited with temporarily kicking the state’s turnpike program into high gear, the governor could not follow through with all of his promises. In particular, he was unable to establish order in the state road department. In Florida, as in many other states, business as usual was frequently unethical; some acts, if not criminal in the legal sense, should have been. Collins, though himself an agent of change, would be a victim of unfortunate timing, his term coinciding with a surge of investigations into Florida’s highway construction outlays, with some of the blame resting with the governor and his appointees for not whipping the road department into shape.

Scott Kelly, appointed chairman of the senate’s Public Roads and Highways Committee in June 1959, created the Legislative Interim Committee on Public Roads and Highways to develop legislation to address problems with the road department. From October 1959 to April 1961, the Kelly Committee ran hearings throughout the state, revealing evidence of “bribery, substandard work, conflicts of interest, profiteering, kickbacks, waste and corruption.” The accused included “contractors, material suppliers, engineers, real estate investors,” as well as politicians. Numerous road department

employees were caught accepting gifts and paychecks from contractors. Committee members included Senator Johns and Legislator E.C. Rowell, who were especially eager to find dirt on Collins's road board. In this, the committee was successful, as Collins's road board members were caught in conflicts of interest involving building materials and real estate along the right of way, with one member's parcel of land originally appraised for \$3,200 reappraised for \$41,107 before being sold to the state.⁸⁶

The investigation revealed what was already widely known about Florida's Democratic establishment, which was entrenched, stuck in its ways, and without serious challenge for over a century. Even Governor Collins was unable to act fast enough to make long overdue changes in government operations. Metropolitan areas, especially the Tampa Bay region and Dade County, had had enough. As long as small county representatives dominated state politics, soaked metropolitan areas for taxes, and gave little back in return, metropolitan counties would blast the pork chop agenda. In the 1950s, Republicans created a small but meaningful dent in the Democratic hegemony, installing representatives not just into federal judgeships and postmaster general positions, but also into city councils, county commissions, the state legislature, and the United States Congress.

St. Petersburg and Pinellas County led the Republican revolution. As with many of Florida's cities, migrants flooded into St. Petersburg, and the city grew in just a few decades from a quaint resort town into a bustling city. Most of St. Petersburg's residents were not from Florida – fewer than 20 percent were Florida natives in 1950; and most residents were not even drawn from the South, but the Midwest. The newcomers brought with them Republican politics. The status quo was not deeply invested in the 'Southern

way of life,' especially when it came to politics.⁸⁷ Instead, this maverick city acquired a fighting, can-do spirit, spanned impressive bridges across the bay, grew, and prospered. Fighting for fair representation from its inception, the relationship of Pinellas County to neighboring Hillsborough and the state as a whole was like David to Goliath. No longer satisfied with trying to reform the Democratic Party from within, a homegrown Republican populace transformed the county into a GOP stronghold and sent Florida's first Republican congressman since Reconstruction to Washington.

The life of Congressman William Cato Cramer is illustrative of Tampa Bay's transformation. Cramer was born in Colorado in 1922, and he migrated with his family to St. Petersburg when he was three years old. William's mother worked as a laundress and his father peddled citrus. A *St. Petersburg Times* reporter wrote of him: "If Cramer believes that in this nation any poor railsplitter can become President, it is not so much the life of Lincoln that tells him so, but his own life. He is right out of Horatio Alger."⁸⁸

Signs of Cramer's political destiny were evident early in his youth. Foreshadowing his conservative law-and-order agenda, his classmates at Lealman Junior High elected him as the lieutenant colonel of the schoolboy patrol. Cramer stayed engaged in student government at St. Petersburg High School and St. Petersburg Jr. College. During World War II, he joined the Navy's V-12 program, where he "turned the tragedy of war into a personal opportunity," attending the University of North Carolina, rising to the rank of lieutenant, and serving his country in Southern France on D-Day. While completing his studies at UNC, he convinced Dean E. N. Griswold to admit him to Harvard law school.⁸⁹

In 1948, his studies behind him, Cramer returned home to an American South undergoing a profound political shift. For years, Gallup polls showed a majority of southerners believing “the South would be better off, in general, if there were two political parties of about equal strength instead of one strong party.” From 1939 to 1946, the percentage favoring two parties increased from 57 to 62 percent. During a similar period, 1932 to 1944, the percentage of southerners voting Democrat decreased from 76 to 69 percent, and in Florida the percentage fell from 75 to 70 percent. “Competition” was widely considered “essential to a sound democracy” and necessary to “help build ideas” – “and the south could sure use some new ideas,” quipped an observer. It was also argued that if democrats nationwide could no longer take the South for granted, the region might receive “more attention from Washington and have greater say in Democratic party councils.”⁹⁰

President Harry Truman expedited the South’s transformation. At the request of “Black leaders,” Truman formed the President’s Commission on Civil Rights, which released a report in 1947 entitled *To Secure These Rights*. The report was more than a bland statement of the nation’s race problems; it was a call to action that “sketched out the liberal agenda on civil rights for the next twenty years.”⁹¹ Truman’s Committee was repulsed by the perverse treatment of blacks, “a kind of moral dry rot which eats away at the emotional and rational basis of democratic beliefs.” There was also a political motive. Truman believed that the black vote would help reelect him in 1948.⁹² For segregationist southern Democrats, this affront, plus the approval of Hubert Humphrey’s civil rights plank, along with the nomination of Truman for a second term, prompted the formation of the Dixiecrats.⁹³

With the Democratic Party in splinters, the time was ripe for change, and few counties were as ready as Pinellas. “Give Pinellas County A Two Party System,” was the battle cry in 1948. “If a two party system is good for the nation, it is good for Florida and Pinellas County,” announced Ohio Senator Robert Taft. That year left a few chinks in the armor of Pinellas Democrats, with Dewey receiving 24,900 votes to Truman’s 15,724 and Republicans capturing numerous positions, including two county commission seats, the supervisor of registration, justice of the peace, and tax assessor. Now a young lawyer, Cramer took notice, betrayed his family’s party affiliation, and led the charge as Republicans geared up for the election of 1950.⁹⁴

Adeptly exploiting the political circumstances, Cramer’s Republican surge came as a complete surprise to “the slumbering Democrats who were not used to GOP challenges.” “[O]ut-organized,” “out-hustled,” and “smeared,” Democrats hardly knew what hit them as fourteen of fifteen county offices went to Republicans and Cramer was elevated to the state legislature. Summing up the election, a *St. Petersburg Times* cartoon depicted a “herd of stampeding elephants running roughshod over a sole donkey.” As St. Petersburg became Florida’s undisputed Capital of the Republican Party, the *Times* cried out, “Hey, We Said A Two Party System!” “Almost overnight,” concluded political scientist Darryl Paulson, “Cramer transformed Republicans from minor players in local politics to the party that would dominate Pinellas politics for the next half century.”⁹⁵

Two other Republicans accompanied Cramer to Tallahassee, and Cramer did everything in his power to make their presence known. “We used the U.S. House rules,” Cramer recalled, “insisted on our rights, held caucuses, nominated me as Speaker of the House. I got three votes.” When Democrats held a caucus to distribute pageboy jobs,

Cramer introduced his first resolution “lamenting” the exclusion of the minority party. With an air of “condescending tolerance,” Democrats granted the interlopers another page. Cramer also proposed a resolution expressing “appreciation and gratitude” to General Douglas MacArthur, recently terminated by Truman. Democrats “mashed” the resolution, 14 to 62. In general, there was little the trio could do to “ripple the placid Democratic pond,” so Cramer cosponsored favorable Democratic bills.⁹⁶

During Cramer’s first and only term in the state legislature, Eisenhower and the GOP made some inroads in the South. In 1952, six southern Republicans were elected to the House of Representatives, five of them from contiguous Blue Ridge districts in Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. Cramer himself ran for Congress, but lost narrowly to Courtney Campbell, ostensibly “on the count of absentee ballots.” Cramer returned to Pinellas, where he again practiced law, was appointed county attorney, and “never stopped running” for Congress.⁹⁷

As county attorney, a part-time, \$5,000-a-year position, Cramer “represented the county in legal matters involving rights-of-way, sewers, submerged land, and the control of dogs and hot-rodders.” For extra services, he charged the county extra, and for this he received criticism. As a minority party, Republicans had promised to eliminate or revise the post of county attorney, otherwise known as the “sixth commissioner,” deeming the position too powerful not to be accountable to voters; but once in power, republicans neglected to relinquish the office. To his credit, Cramer drafted legislation that would create a “fulltime legal department” with a salary “worthy of an attorney’s time.” Long after Cramer’s departure the bill finally passed.⁹⁸

George Gallup remarked back in 1946 that “the more taste a southern state has of an effective two-party system, the more it likes that system.”⁹⁹ Florida’s top Democrats were cognizant of this problem in 1954, as gubernatorial candidate LeRoy Collins and United States Senators Spessard Holland and George Smathers campaigned in St. Petersburg for the reelection of Florida’s seven United States Representatives – all Democrats.¹⁰⁰ That year, Gallup’s observation still held, as southern Republicans lost one House seat but gained two more, both in metropolitan districts: Bruce Alger of Dallas, and Cramer, Florida’s first Republican Congressman “since the days of President Andrew Johnson.” In addition, Republicans won seven seats in the Florida legislature.¹⁰¹

That same year, the Supreme Court decision, *Brown versus the Board of Education*, outlawed segregation in public schools, and quickly alienated southerners from the Republican Party. Drafted by Eisenhower appointee Chief Justice Earl Warren, the decision dismayed the president. Nevertheless, in 1957, Eisenhower upheld the verdict with force in Little Rock, Arkansas, sealing the Republican fate in the South. After 1954, the South elected no new Republicans for the rest of the decade. For the moment at least, Gallup was wrong; the South had its fill of Republicans, though Cramer was already in office.¹⁰²

In Washington, Cramer placed friend and assistant Jack Insko on the congressional payroll as “district assistant.” With Insko as his “eyes, ears and alter ego,” Cramer was able to “build a political party from one thousand miles away” as he “wooed his new constituency without mercy.” “His weekly reports were carried that first term on 13 radio and three television stations in his four-county district, more than 5,000 newsletters were mailed from his office every two weeks, he toured the district whenever

possible in an office-trailer to hear complaints and requests, and he made 182 speeches, as many as 51 a month.” Cramer was everywhere. According to legend, “if two members of the GOP chanced to meet on a street corner, he showed up, too.” Never missing a meeting, Cramer was appointed Republican National Committeeman. Eventually, Pinellas Republicans rivaled Democrats in numbers.¹⁰³

Although an ardent organizer for the GOP, Cramer’s Republican loyalty was consistently trumped by two agendas. First, he supported the “conservative coalition:” “that amalgamation of conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats that materializes when the issue involves the rights of the states – or the rights of the Negro minority.” As long as he served in the House his coalition support “never slipped below 73 percent;” in 1959 he had a “perfect 100 score;” and in 1956 he insisted on signing the Southern Manifesto, though he later considered the decision a mistake.¹⁰⁴ The only matter to rival his conservatism, ironically, was a bill that frequently challenged the rights of the states: the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956.

Cramer’s appointment to the Roads Subcommittee of the House Public Works Committee during the development of the interstate highway system was a case of being, to borrow one of the politician’s most commonly used phrases, “in the right place at the right time.” Florida had an exceptional number of vehicles on its roads, and so did the nation as a whole. Transport for a new America required a new kind of highway. In the age of the high-speed automobile, the same highway could not satisfy both the need for local access and for high-speed motion. Traditional highways had been “encroached upon by commercial . . . uses,” resulting in “disorderly strips of commercial development” which contributed to the “progressive deterioration of adjacent residential

communities,” and it forced traffic to merge from a standstill onto high-speed lanes, increasing the chances of a collision.¹⁰⁵

During World War II, the United States found the highway it wanted in a nonstop, limited access, divided highway called the German Autobahn. On such a highway, Americans would be able to travel hundreds of miles without ever having to wait at an intersection, without worrying whether around the next bend or over the next hill a motorist was going to merge onto the highway from a dead stop, creating the potential for a deadly accident; without having to stare into the headlights of an oncoming truck only to discover a moment too late that the truck had drifted into oncoming traffic.

The 1950s proved a monumental decade in federal road funding. Since 1939, when the United States began gearing up for World War II, each successive presidential administration “argued in favor of relatively low road outlays.” At last, in 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower “endorsed a big jump in road spending,” issuing reports that America’s highways “had deteriorated to a point where drastic action was necessary.”¹⁰⁶ Cramer was at the end of his first term when Eisenhower pushed through his giant public works bill. As a junior member of the roads subcommittee, Cramer played a minor role in the initial shaping of the bill and immersed himself in all aspects of the monumental legislation while learning the ropes in Washington.

By the end of the decade, Cramer was coming into his own as a public works legislator. Working closely with interstate program experts and officials, Cramer relished the complexities of Washington and soon was reshaping and drafting amendments to the interstate program. On the one hand, Cramer was very collaborative and eager to work with individuals on either side of the aisle who wanted to see the project to its fruition.

On the other hand, he was extremely combative and quick to find errors, especially under Democratic rule. He could be irritating, but colleagues soon recognized that debates with Cramer generally yielded strong, well-considered resolutions. Couple his lawmaking ability with his rising influence, first as senior Republican on the roads subcommittee and then on the public works committee, and by 1963 Cramer was assuming a fairly influential role in Washington. By extension, he effectively insinuated himself into Florida highway politics, using every bit of knowledge, every connection, and every tool at his disposal to shape the state's highway systems to the ends he saw fit.

Bobtail

Before the advent of interstate and other limited-access highways, Florida faced dire challenges in providing safe and convenient routes for tourists and citizens. When LeRoy Collins ran for governor in 1954, letters flowed into his office on what to do about the state's most important north-south thoroughfare, overburdened US 1. "If U.S. 1 had been intelligently handled from the beginning," said one observer, "Florida would have no great problem now; however towns were permitted to grow up on the highway, local jurisdiction was allowed, schools were permitted to be built, quite unnecessarily right on the highway, with the result that from Jacksonville to Miami there are hundreds, maybe thousands of 'School Slow' signs. . . . Today a driver is fortunate and able indeed who can drive from Jacksonville to Miami in less than fourteen hours whereas he should be able to do it in seven."¹⁰⁷

Collins responded that US 1 could be four-laned, as it should have been from the start, but "current road funds" would not permit a major overhaul transforming US 1 into the north-south artery that Florida needed.¹⁰⁸ That need would have to be fulfilled by the construction of a project that had been on the minds of highway advocates for years.

As early as 1941, the state of Florida had considered proposals for a statewide thru-highway providing easy access to Miami from the Georgia border. Florida highway promoters proclaimed that with the five-day week, the desire of Americans to "see more

of their native land,” retirement plans, and vacations, people were “taking to the highways of this country by the millions.” The war effort undercut the possibility of such projects, but by the early 1950s, the “spectacular growth of Florida” and the “desire of tourists to visit all sections of Florida” made it imperative for the state to build a north-south limited access highway.¹⁰⁹

For \$62 million, the Warren administration found the state could build the first segment of a limited access turnpike. Exploring the possibilities, a delegation from Simpson’s road board visited the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the New Jersey Turnpike, seeking assurance that an expressway would not make “Ghost Towns” along the previous routes. They returned “feeling that the turnpikes were practical, that they did not tend to harm by-passed communities, and that they had good public acceptance.” Nevertheless, the question was still a toss-up. Florida lacked the “large centers of population” and “industry found in the states visited,” as well as the “vast number of vehicles” needed to justify a turnpike. Then again, the “experience of other states” had shown that traffic could be “induced” and make for a “successful venture.”¹¹⁰

Simpson’s Road Board recommended the construction of this expressway by a turnpike authority and that the agency should be authorized by the Florida legislature. That way, the authority would have better legal standing and would be established in a more democratic manner, as opposed to authorization from a handful of officials on the Internal Improvement Commission or the Road Board.¹¹¹ Simpson’s board also expanded the Warren administration’s plans, but through the Johns administration, the turnpike had still not been set into motion. According to Simpson, Johns needlessly

managed to inflate the cost by forty percent, at a profit to the consulting firm, Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Hall and McDonald.¹¹²

While the state talked about building a turnpike, the Sunshine Skyway Bridge linked the lower Pinellas peninsula to the mainland. Completed in September of 1954, the bridge marked a new level of commitment to road construction, demonstrating the revolutionary progress that a major transportation project could bring to the state. It was widely recognized, in Florida, and throughout the nation, that the completion of the Skyway marked a new era in Florida's development. The *New York Times* dubbed the Skyway "the most important single factor in the entire area it is to serve," accelerating fruit traffic, closing the gap to Miami, and generating an anticipated million dollars annually in toll revenue.¹¹³ In 1954, the Florida Power Company predicted that population increases on the west coast of Florida would nearly double, up from 17.5 percent over the usual five-year period to 31.79 percent, while in five years increases in retail sales would jump from 14.5 percent to 31.7 percent.¹¹⁴

Indeed, a new era in the region's history had begun. "St. Petersburg at midcentury," writes historian Raymond Arsenault, "was closer to its past than to its future."¹¹⁵ In the decades following construction of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, "the entire Tampa Bay region would be transformed into a spiraling metropolis."¹¹⁶ The west coast of Florida at the end of the war, said another observer, consisted of "a string of isolated communities with long stretches of undeveloped land separating them."¹¹⁷ With the Skyway closing the last major gap on the gulf coast, cities such as St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Clearwater, Bradenton, Tarpon Springs, Venice, and Naples became prominent features of the once desolate west coast landscape.

Amidst celebration of the new bridge, Collins pronounced himself the governor who would build the turnpike. His election closely coinciding with the bridge's completion, Collins deemed the achievement "of tremendous importance to the future of a great area of Florida." In it, he saw the "vision of the sort we in Florida must have if we are to meet the challenges facing us and realize our boundless opportunities."¹¹⁸ Collins saw "no limit to Florida's tourist and other possibilities" and was "determined that we shall have the kind of roads and the kind of government in other ways that will enable us to realize our boundless opportunities."¹¹⁹ The Skyway, a symbolic milestone, exemplified the forward-thinking approach to engineering and financing that would guide the creation of a state turnpike. Months before his inauguration, Collins took up the reins and rushed the turnpike into motion.

Before Collins was elected, the state had some general ideas of where a turnpike might be built. In the early 1950s, state officials contemplated an east coast route, from Jacksonville to Miami, or an inland route, serving "the great agricultural areas of the Everglades and Central Florida." Either route would provide a link to Tampa Bay.¹²⁰ The central route would be less expensive to build, passing through "low priced farm-grove and pasture land" while still being within range of major cities.¹²¹

Rather than build the entire highway at once, successive road departments endeavored first to construct a limited-access highway along the southeast coast from Stuart to Miami, an area in need of "traffic relief at the earliest possible moment," and to build the extension to Georgia later. The first segment became known as the 'bobtail,' a somewhat denigrating term referring to the 108-mile-long highway's shortness and inadequacy to the state's overall needs.¹²²

The Collins administration inherited plans for the bobtail, but they needed much revision. Sam Turnbull reported to Thomas Manuel that out of eighty planned structures, only fourteen were salvageable, mainly because they were the only ones to adhere to a standard road width of twenty-eight feet.¹²³ New plans were quickly drawn.

The decisiveness of the Collins administration rested on the time-tested expertise of a number of consultants from around the country. On the twenty-third floor of 120 Wall Street, reinstated road department officials Sam Turnbull and Thomas Manuel met with Sam P. Brown of Coverdale and Colpitts, the firm producing the turnpike's traffic and earnings report. Also present was R.N. Bergendoff of Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, whose firm was drafting the engineering report miles away in Kansas City, in close concurrence with Coverdale and Colpitts's earnings report. As of November of 1954, a few kinks still had to be worked out. The routing was not quite settled; Coverdale and Colpitts needed assurance that the Florida legislature would rescind a decision to convert Route 9 north of Hollywood Boulevard into a limited access, and therefore competitive, highway; and the consulting firm also needed to know before completing a revenue estimate that the turnpike's restaurant facilities would be up to par, their quality to be regulated by the state.¹²⁴

As the year came to an end, Collins's team made a last ditch effort to make slight alterations to the route, but Brown waved them off in lieu of the timeline drawn up by Manuel.¹²⁵ By January 4, the route was to be fixed and construction costs estimated; then a feasibility report and validation; on February 14, the advertising of bonds and construction contracts; March 1, bonds sold and construction bids opened; and March 15, groundbreaking.¹²⁶

As plans went into motion, the public became interested in the specifications of the bobtail. “Isn’t that to be a parkway as superhighways are in the north,” not unlike “the beautiful one on Long Island,” a Yankee asked of Collins. “You will remember that there are only occasional gasoline stations.”¹²⁷ Presumably, most travelers would be pleased with the limited access aspects of the bobtail.

On the other hand, a local industry of restaurants, filling stations, and tourist attractions had grown up around the traditional highway. With a little ingenuity, a determined entrepreneur of modest means could stake a claim on the roadside and have a decent chance of making a living, if not striking it rich. What would become of the concession industry when the fastest, most convenient route to Miami consisted of a minimum of exits, with real estate and contracts going to the highest bidders? Noting that 9,938 gasoline retailers had established themselves in the state, a representative of the Allied Gasoline Retailers Association of Florida wrote Collins with a novel idea: Don’t create any service stations along the thoroughfare, but rather provide access to the towns where these establishments already existed. He added: “[T]here are ample facilities for all needs in the cities and towns along the state’s thoroughfares; . . . if a motorist should need gasoline, the same as he might need repairs to his car or a place for his night’s lodging, he should obtain these necessary accommodations where they are already provided – off the turnpike.”¹²⁸

Consultants of national standing rejected the notion that traditional, small-scale establishments would have any part in creating the modern facilities. One went so far as to say that “the most successful operation of service facilities is where one operating

company is charged with the responsibility of selling gasoline and oil, food, repairs, communications, medical service and even policing.”¹²⁹

Ultimately, the quality of Florida’s turnpike facilities was outlined in New York, Chicago, and Kansas City. In November 1954, the state informed prospective bidders that concessions along the bobtail would consist of three service stations. It was “a terrible blow to small operators,” lamented the oilman. As for food, there would initially be perhaps only one restaurant on the entire bobtail, perhaps more if the cost could be kept under a million dollars.¹³⁰ Hot Shoppes eventually won the contract.

Engineers and financiers of the nation’s highway industry took note of Collins’s ability to coordinate operations. Letters with attached brochures flowed in, informing the governor of what industry experts had done in the past, and what they could do for Florida. Wallace G. Rouse, the same consultant who recommended one operation to manage all facilities, aggressively entreated the governor to relinquish authority to him on future programs. The problem with Florida, said Rouse, was that there were “too many unqualified persons involved in a situation that requires a highly-specialized knowledge.” “In the field of turnpike operations,” said Rouse, “we are not obliged under any circumstances to bow to any authority.” As an adviser to the National Association of State Turnpike Authorities, Rouse played a role in establishing “the standards by which any well-informed turnpike authority should operate,” and he was ready to share his already drawn plans for Florida. Convinced that the bobtail was not “practical or feasible from a banking point of view,” Rouse pushed Collins to gear the legislature for a full-length turnpike and coordinate with a Georgia pike while he took care of the rest.¹³¹

Apparently, Collins preferred dealing with experts with a softer, gentler approach than Rouse. Paul D. Speer of H.C. Speer and Sons Company of Chicago claimed to have an excellent grasp on the coordination of the financial, engineering, and legal aspects of a major project. Speer assisted with finances on the Skyway as well as the bobtail. Whereas Rouse wanted to dictate, Speer offered to provide expertise where it was needed. “The members of our councils, commissions and other governing bodies,” said his brochure, “have the duty of seeing that governmental policies reflect the desires and best interest of the public in general, and they are not expected to be experts in municipal finance.” The responsibility of a municipal finance consultant, said Speer, was “not only to save all the cost of his services for his clients, but should save those costs many, many times over.” Speaking logically, rather than forcefully, Speer explained: “With bond issues running for periods of twenty, thirty or forty years, a mistake causing only a slight difference in interest rate can result in a tremendous difference in total cost over the life of the bonds. On a twenty year issue of \$1,000,000, one-quarter of one percent per year comes to a total of \$50,000.”¹³²

N.C. Hamilton of Smith, Barney & Company also pursued business in a friendlier manner, meeting Collins’s assistant Joseph Grotegut face-to-face and expressing interest in the shaping of the governor’s road board and turnpike authority. Spun off from a banking concern dating back to the Civil War, Smith & Barney offered “a background of long experience and high traditions in the financial world with extensive modern facilities and national scope,” claiming to be “one of the few firms that offers all-embracing financial services as underwriters, brokers, and dealers in investment securities.” Smith &

Barney also had a history with Florida, assisting with revenue on the Jacksonville Expressway.¹³³

Turnpikes were sprouting up all throughout the east, and the outlines of a countrywide network were beginning to emerge. Promoters envisioned express links from New York to Chicago and from Chicago to Florida, and adjacent states began coordinating links. On the path to Florida, Alabama was as strong a contender as Georgia.¹³⁴

Despite their growth, however, turnpikes were not as financially sound as was hoped. Initially, it was assumed that once the states paid off their construction debts, the tolls would be lifted, but this proved financially unsound. In Pennsylvania, the nation's most prosperous turnpike owed its success to three factors: no competing routes had yet pierced the Allegheny Mountains; it was built on a railroad bed; and it received federal assistance. As a result, in 1955 the Pennsylvania pike had the "lowest debt per mile of any modern toll road." Other toll roads without these advantages had only a "marginal" chance for success, although the possibility of federal aid could assure survival.¹³⁵

As Eisenhower broached the idea of federal aid for superhighways, initially proposing \$50 or \$100 million, the committee designated to direct financing, headed by Lucius D. Clay, toyed with the idea of providing financial assistance to toll roads – great news for the turnpike industry.¹³⁶

With the bobtail under construction, the Collins administration developed plans for Florida's turnpike extension to the Georgia border. In 1956, bonds for a full-length turnpike were already validated and the state was ready to build. Fatefully, passage of Eisenhower's 1956 Interstate Act did not bode well for turnpikes. Instead of

compensating turnpikes, it promised a toll-free nationwide network. The announcement rocked the turnpike industry to the core. Turnpike Authority Chairman Thomas Manuel saw the writing on the wall, stating bluntly, “Any competing free road built to Interstate standards is better than a toll because it is FREE – it is just that simple.”¹³⁷

The federal program dwarfed the state’s wildest highway dreams: 1,100 miles of interstate highway crisscrossing the state at a projected cost of \$500 million. First on the agenda was I-4, which by 1965 was to extend a total of 154 miles from St. Petersburg to Daytona Beach, passing through Tampa and Orlando. I-10 would run across northern Florida, from Jacksonville to the Alabama border and on to California. I-95 would enter Florida from Georgia, pass through Jacksonville and terminate in Miami. I-75 was to cover the 210 miles from Georgia to Tampa.¹³⁸ With such an ambitious program, what would be the fate of Florida’s turnpike?

Although Floridians generally favored free federal expressways, up until 1954 it was widely assumed that turnpikes were the only feasible way a state such as Florida could construct a superhighway – that is, through the issuance of bonds redeemed with toll revenue. When in 1953 the Miami Chamber of Commerce resolved to “use every available means to urge the people and government of the State of Florida” to construct a superhighway to South Florida, it was the Chamber’s assumption that this would be constructed as a “Toll Turnpike.”¹³⁹ With funds from such sources as gasoline taxes spreading thin, it appeared that the ‘pay-as-you-go’ method of funding alone could not handle Florida’s transportation development. Imperative road projects such as the Jacksonville expressway were soaking up available funds, such that the state did not have anywhere near the amount of money it needed to keep up its existing road program and

develop a new statewide project. It therefore seemed logical that any superhighway would be “paid for by those who use it.”¹⁴⁰ Although the toll philosophy had many opponents, it quickly emerged among Florida’s political elite as the sole plausible means of constructing a superhighway. Many other states were already embracing the toll philosophy, and Florida’s boosters did not care to be left behind.¹⁴¹

Even with the inducement of 90 percent federal funding, Collins proclaimed that the turnpike authority was ready to go ahead with the extension “just as soon as our additional bonds could be properly marketed.”¹⁴² In January 1957, Collins dedicated the first 108-mile bobtail section of the Sunshine State Parkway.¹⁴³ Safe and convenient just like the projected Interstate, the bobtail boasted a minimum of 725 feet of visibility around curves, a 950-foot minimum of merging length, wide shoulders and a median.¹⁴⁴ Collins was proud of the accomplishment, and admonished the state for merely “toying with the idea of a turnpike for the past 17 years at least,” as well as the 1953 legislature for only authorizing a highway of bobtail size, rather than a “full-length turnpike.” Fortunately, the 1955 legislature “saw the mistake” and called for lengthening the turnpike from “north of Jacksonville” to the Gold Coast “with spurs to the Tampa Bay area and West Florida,” but in the two years that the legislature wasted, the projected cost of construction increased by \$20 million.¹⁴⁵ Now, with a federal program in the works, Collins believed that the state should take advantage of both federal funding and tolls. This was the time to build by any available means, not to yield the state’s highway future to the interstate.

The bubble burst in the spring of 1957, when turnpike engineers confirmed that an east coast interstate highway to Fort Pierce would jeopardize turnpike income, making

the extension unfeasible. Collins conceded that the competing federal route created a “tough hurdle,” but insisted that the engineers were wrong. The state’s needs demanded going full steam ahead with both methods of funding. In the end, he believed the turnpike and interstate would complement each other, giving the state “a more complete network of limited access highways.”¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, consultants warned that even the bobtail, not to mention the extension, would experience trouble upon the opening of southeast Florida’s federal superhighway. Coverdale & Colpitts warned that upon completion, roughly in 1976, the competing federal highway would produce a “substantial and gravely adverse effect on . . . traffic and toll revenues,” with estimated revenue dropping as much as fifty percent.¹⁴⁷

To protect bobtail revenue, Manuel struck an agreement with road department chairman Wilbur E. Jones, making the section of expressway paralleling the bobtail the last of the federal system to be built. Jones agreed, but with the stipulation that when advertising the bonds for the extension, any prospectus should inform buyers of the east coast interstate route.¹⁴⁸

Towards the end of Collins’s term, Coverdale & Colpitts at last felt that with the financial success of the bobtail, the state could cautiously move forward with the extension. The bobtail had not generated quite as much money as consultants hoped – with the exception of toll roads in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, no turnpike ever did – but high construction estimates “set the scales right.”¹⁴⁹ Besides, the state had a plan. As I-95 and I-4 entered the planning and construction stages, the turnpike authority coordinated with the state road department in the planning of interstate construction. If the road department sped the construction of I-95 from Georgia to Daytona, along with I-

4 from Daytona to Orlando, then motorists could be induced to take the extended turnpike from Orlando to Miami – at least until 1975. With this in mind, it was argued as late as June of 1960 that Collins could initiate construction on the extension. This was preferable to seeing “the new administration immediately do what we know we can accomplish now, thus bringing criticism on the present Turnpike Board for its inaction.”¹⁵⁰

As time went by, it became evident that the extension would be constructed by Collins’s successor, not him. However, there was still hope that the bonds could be validated and sold during Collins’s term, such that the next governor could “let contracts left and right” as soon as he took office.¹⁵¹ As Farris Bryant emerged as the frontrunner, Collins entreated him to “make a careful analysis of everything our Turnpike Authority has done in seeking to develop an extension from Fort Pierce to Orlando,” and to see if he would like to follow the same course. Collins was anxious to know Bryant’s position, because a “group of antagonists” was organizing legal opposition to the extension, and to move forward, Collins faced a “legal battle” and a “public relations battle” along with an “all-out effort to get the bonds validated.” Collins was ready for the fight, but he and his financial advisers needed to be assured that his efforts would “not prove futile” due to Bryant changing course.¹⁵²

Talks with Bryant proved disappointing. A number of disagreements stemmed from a central matter of financing. The bobtail had been financed by \$74 million in bond sales sold at an annual interest rate of 3¼ percent. After completing the bobtail, the fiscally responsible turnpike authority managed to buy back nearly \$8 million worth of bonds, reducing the debt to \$66 million. Financial advisers approached Collins with the

idea of refinancing the existing bonds to generate capital for the extension; but while Collins saw a few advantages to refinancing, he ultimately rejected the plan. With competing interstate routes, the best Florida hope for was a $4\frac{3}{4}$ percent interest rate on a new bond issue. The added $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent interest on refinanced bobtail bonds would cost the state extra, nearly \$9 million. Terms cited in the trust agreement would cost the state another \$10.2 million, for a total additional cost of nearly \$19 million.¹⁵³

Bryant nevertheless favored refinancing. In refinancing, Bryant sought to free interstate construction from restrictions under the existing contract. Collins also considered this, but pointed out that any refinancing plan would doubtless include the same restrictions – for good reason. Ironically, although Collins generally favored urban expressways over rural, and although Bryant’s record indicated the opposite, the bobtail compelled Collins to put the brakes on federal urban expressway construction where it was most needed, in southeast Florida, while Bryant apparently was ready to go forward. Bryant also thought that refinancing might help speed the turnpike’s current litigation; however, according to Collins, the litigation had nothing to do with financing, but with routing, and therefore the litigants would not likely be “assuaged” by refinancing.¹⁵⁴

Having outlined his case against refinancing, Collins sensed that Bryant had made up his mind and therefore decided to “leave the matter now for you to . . . work out in accordance with your own evaluations.” Collins, who touted his turnpike administration as “one of the best in the country and one that has a fiscal soundness that is the envy of toll facility administrators throughout the land,” offered to assist but would proceed no further “with the plan . . . which you find you cannot approve.”¹⁵⁵

As to what advantages financial advisers saw in refinancing, and why Bryant adopted the plan, I have not been able to ascertain. Bryant's campaign assistant, John Hammer, whom Bryant later appointed turnpike chairman, was apparently willing to accept Collins's judgment, but was not of the same character as his predecessor, Thomas Manuel; on matters big and small, Hammer relinquished authority to Bryant, who was more authoritative than his predecessor on turnpike matters.¹⁵⁶

Through 1961, while construction surveys commenced on the extension route, Bryant conferred with financial advisers. In June of 1961, Jerome Tripp, president of the turnpike's financial consultant, Tripp & Co., assuaged Bryant's fears in reference to a bond estimate: "Please do not be concerned if some of the preliminary figures [...] are not altogether pleasing."¹⁵⁷ Later that month, more bad news: President Kennedy successfully pushed Congress to get the interstate program back on track. Where turnpike consultants based their estimates upon the system being completed no sooner than 1975, Kennedy brought the target date back to 1972. Predicting trouble, Manuel tried to convince Hammer to cut his losses. "God knows that I'd like to see it built to the Georgia line," said Manuel; but: "The larger the bond issue – the harder to sell. The longer the road – the more it will cost." Orlando was a safe bet, but if the turnpike was too ambitious, it might reach "the point of no return."¹⁵⁸

The conflict came to the attention of Bryant's staff in December of 1960 during meetings with Collins' officials. W.R. Kidd, Bryant's administrative assistant, noticed "a very serious planning problem:" plans for Interstate 75 had been "prepared independently" from the turnpike, "with no thought as to its possible effect." "You will note that in the vicinity of Ocala the Turnpike and the Interstate system parallel each

other for a considerable distance. This is a situation that indicates either a total lack of planning or absolutely no coordination between the two projects. It would not be economically feasible.”¹⁵⁹

Aware of the potentially vexing interactions of federal and state governments, Kidd warned Bryant, “it is sometimes extremely difficult to get the Federal Bureau of Roads to make any changes to approved alignments.” This problem could “delay the construction of the Orlando extension.” Kidd continued, “You can see the situation that is rapidly developing. The Interstate system from the Georgia line to Alachua is under contract. The Authority is now considering the extension of the Turnpike to Orlando, and possibly Leesburg. Yet, at the same time, no provision has been made for a connection between the two systems and, as I pointed out before, we simply cannot afford parallel expressways this close together.”¹⁶⁰

Cognizant of the problem, Kidd offered a solution: “I do respectfully suggest that you direct that the Interstate, Sunshine State Parkway, and the primary system be coordinated at the State and Primary level. This will have to be done by someone who has considerable authority to make decisions and I would suggest that possibly Mr. Monohan might be the proper selection.”¹⁶¹

As Bryant and his administration responded to the situation, interstate advocates watched with keen interest.

Clash

C. Farris Bryant was born on July 26, 1914 in Ocala. His father was a farmer and bookkeeper. Although “of modest means,” the Bryants had close connections to Florida’s political elite, with Bryant’s uncle Ion Farris having served as Florida’s Speaker of the House and in the Senate. After receiving his degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida, and a law degree from Harvard in 1938, Bryant served as an auditor in the State Comptroller’s office and then established a law practice in Ocala. In 1942, Marion County elected him as State Representative, but his term was cut short by World War II.¹⁶² In the Atlantic, Bryant commanded artillery aboard an oil tanker sailing from Galveston, Texas, to Bristol, England, watching helplessly as U-boats sank allies off the coast of Iceland. Later, Bryant staged mock training battles from Guam Naval Station. After the war, Bryant returned home to resume his career in politics.¹⁶³

As a state legislator representing Marion County, Bryant eventually favored the turnpike through central Florida, although Floridians in general remained sharply divided on whether they wanted the limited access highway. Understandably, roadside enterprises such as gas stations, motels, and restaurants protested that they would lose trade. Furthermore, some argued that a highway without traditional roadside businesses could not be profitable.¹⁶⁴ Amidst heated debates over highway financing, Bryant also established himself as a believer in toll roads. “Toll roads are unpalatable,” Bryant

conceded, amidst a flurry of pleas not to promote them, “but we’ll have them tomorrow, not because we like them but because there is no other way to finance needed road construction.”¹⁶⁵

There are many plausible reasons why Bryant sided with the turnpike. He was well connected with the turnpike promoters and knew how to work with them. Meanwhile, although he was no stranger to the allure of federal highway funding, his correspondence suggests impatience with the federal application process. In 1955, he inquired to Chairman Wilbur E. Jones of the Florida Road Department as to why the state would have to renegotiate a highway contract order to procure federal aid. Jones patiently explained that federal engineers needed to approve the entire process, “the specifications, the bids and the contracts,” before providing aid. Likewise, Bryant hoped to procure federal aid for work already completed. However, federal statutes precluded that option, as Regional District Engineer B.P. McWhorter informed the state: “where contracts had already been executed,” the state “could do nothing to help get Federal Aid” unless the state could “cancel out the contract and readvertise.” (Florida’s sole exception to this rule was the Gandy Bridge.)¹⁶⁶ Technicalities such as these discouraged many politicians from relying heavily on the federal government for highway funding, and Bryant was no exception. Instead, Bryant preferred dealing with the state turnpike authority, where he was better connected and exercised more direct control of routing, engineering, contracting, and financing decisions.

As previously discussed, even with the availability of federal funding, toll financing proved impossible to shake. The bobtail was already under construction while Congress debated Eisenhower’s initiative, and Collins was raring to see the realization of

the full-length turnpike. As Collins was putting the pieces in place for the extension of the Sunshine State Parkway, warning signs arose that the merging of the Parkway and the Interstate, backed by diametrically opposed philosophies and interests, was not going to be a simple matter.

The first sign of problems to come, with the simultaneous development of the turnpike and interstate systems, arose as the turnpike authority built the first stretch of highway from Stuart to Miami. Built within miles of a proposed federal route, interstate interests fumed over the lost federal funding. The debacle churned up a plethora of concerns for interstate interests both in Florida and around the nation. If state or private organizations could build over proposed interstate routes, would they be compelled to meet federal standards? Would their highways be adequate for national defense as well as for everyday travel? Was the toll-free interstate system going to be peppered with tolls? In the event of a national emergency, would these turnpikes exact tolls on the United States armed forces, as would occur during the Cuban missile crisis?¹⁶⁷

Needless to say, the federal government already had its work cut out in making sure the interstate system was completed in a logical, uniform manner. Toll roads presented formidable challenges to the system's integrity. With prominent Floridians, including Bryant, revving for turnpike construction, it was no foregone conclusion that the state's interstate system would be built according to the guidelines of the 1956 Act. Were it realistic for Collins to believe that state and federal programs would be seamlessly woven together without a hitch, that assumption would be shattered during the Bryant administration.

As Bryant emerged as the frontrunner in the 1960 election and Collins began ceding authority to him, the new governor introduced an insular style of government that some, especially Cramer, found off-putting. A relentless booster of highway matters and now a powerful member of the public works committee, it did not take long for Cramer to argue that Bryant was purposefully or mindlessly undermining Florida's interstate system. Portraying Bryant as a servant to selfish turnpike interests who wanted nothing more than to rake profits off of tolls, the benevolent Cramer would leverage his authority to create as many toll-free routes as possible while mitigating their disruption by toll-ways.

Regardless of how much substance there was to Cramer's accusations, the toll issue offered prime opportunities to garner support in his district and throughout the state of Florida. After all, someone had to protect the interests of northern visitors, who could never be sure what kind of highways they would be subjected to on the way to their vacation destination. If anyone was going to soak Florida's tourists, it was going to be the South Florida tourist establishment, which did not want visitors complaining of gouging by toll roads, gyp joints, and speed traps in North Florida, Georgia, and other states to the north.

Rather than meekly submit to the Democratic establishment's promotion of turnpikes, Cramer urged the public to become aware of the dichotomy of toll roads verses free roads, skeptical of the former, and optimistic that they had an ally strong enough to protect them from being exploited by turnpike bondholders, some of whom did not have in mind the best interests of the state. This simple agenda offered Cramer ample opportunity to cast himself as the just minority squaring off against the entrenched

squirarchy of his own state. He had an excellent grasp of the tools at his disposal, effectively searching out his enemies, pinpointing their weaknesses, manipulating evidence, organizing a formidable army of supporters, and bringing the opposition to its knees.

In the toll versus Interstate highway question, Cramer insisted on taking advantage of federal funding while making Florida's roads user-friendly. Key to Cramer's efforts was an intimate knowledge of the 1956 Interstate Highway and Defense Act and the Federal-Aid Highway Act. His congressional career literally grew up with the legislation, and even as Congress and the presidency passed on to the Democratic Party, Democrats with opposing road development philosophies would find a powerful foe in Cramer and his allies. Knowing his limitations, Cramer also made valuable friends among knowledgeable road officials. One of these was Clifton W. Enfield, Republican Counsel for the Bureau of Public Roads, whose knowledge and expertise came in handy as Cramer endeavored to protect Florida's interstate system from being compromised by toll roads.

Quick to remind Floridians of the mileage lost from Stuart to Miami, Cramer sounded the alarm as the state extended the Sunshine State Parkway from the bobtail up through central Florida. Problems with this development were numerous. First, the Parkway might render Interstate 95 along the entire southeast coast of Florida unnecessary. As Clifton Enfield pointed out, in 1956 the Secretary of Commerce had issued a statement regarding toll roads along interstate routes that had become a maxim: "There is no intention whatever of building any Interstate routes paralleling a toll road

which until 1975 will adequately serve the traffic needs of the area through which it runs.”¹⁶⁸

Based on this mandate, Enfield also presumed that “Interstate route 4 from Daytona Beach to Orlando and that section of the Sunshine State Parkway . . . from Orlando to Fort Pierce can adequately serve the traffic needs until 1975 between Jacksonville to Miami.” Therefore, “a free section of Interstate route between Daytona Beach and Fort Pierce would not be justified.” Interstate 95 south of Daytona could be justified only if the Bureau of Public Roads conceded that Interstate 4 and the Parkway could not serve South Florida’s industrial, commercial, residential, and defense requirements. In other words, there had to be enough traffic to justify both routes, a tall order. Enfield suggested that Florida “secure . . . a commitment from Public Roads that construction of the proposed extension of the Sunshine State Parkway will not be a basis for Public Roads withholding approval of construction projects on IS 95.”¹⁶⁹

During the summer of 1961, Cramer launched a two-pronged highway campaign: one to shape federal law and policy according to a more prudent design, and another to make sure that those laws were enforced in his own state. To the congressman’s credit, it took a great measure of finagling, pitting Cramer’s legal and political talents to those of the opposition in its many forms. Due in large part to these coordinated efforts, he carefully aligned himself on the side of law and common sense.

Cramer’s campaign depended largely on the support of concerned Floridians who were directly affected by the expressway developments. One of Cramer’s local informants in Central Florida was N.G. Sherouse, from Reddick. When it looked as though the state government wanted to inordinately manipulate the interstate system,

Sherouse paid close attention to the media, put notice on public officials that they were under his close scrutiny, and brought relevant developments to the attention of Cramer. According to Sherouse, the state desired “a shift” of I-75 to the east of Ocala to enable a shorter link with the Sunshine State Parkway, and perhaps even to extend tolls on I-75 as far north as Gainesville.¹⁷⁰ In a vitriolic press release, Cramer interpreted the I-75 situation: “The Bryant Administration’s original proposal for the Toll Parkway extension, according to the Bureau of Public Roads, was to insert a 77-mile toll road on Interstate 75 between Alachua and Wildwood. This highway, serving the West Coast of Florida, is a proposed freeway paid for [...] by the public out of road user taxes including a 4 cent per gallon gasoline tax. Had this initial plan been approved, a \$30 million loss in Federal matching funds to the State of Florida would have resulted – and a toll facility would have been injected on a freeway according to the Bureau of Public Roads in testimony before the Highway Investigating Committee.”¹⁷¹

Sherouse considered it a victory when Bryant seemed to have “thrown in the sponge” on rerouting I-75, sighing stoically when “stuck with a diversion” of US 441 “away from the original route south from Orange Lake to Ocala.”¹⁷² In return for Sherouse’s cooperation, Cramer thanked him, urged him to attend the upcoming Road Bureau meetings, and emphasized their purpose to “not sacrifice our free system in an effort to build the toll facility.” At this hearing, Cramer hoped to smoke out Bryant’s intentions for I-75 out into the open and force him to publicly seek advisement from the Bureau as to whether the construction of I-95 would be affected by the Sunshine Parkway.¹⁷³ Cramer argued that the turnpike would have a devastating effect on I-95, “the result of which is a loss of 135 miles of Interstate allocations from the Federal

Government.” “This ridiculous scheme,” said Cramer, “will result in Florida’s losing between \$60 and \$75 million in Federal apportionments, substitute a toll road in place of a programmed free road from Daytona Beach to Fort Pierce and make indirect, a previously scheduled direct route along the East Coast from Jacksonville to Miami.”¹⁷⁴ For the Bureau meeting regarding Interstate 95, Cramer supplied Sherouse with a copy of embarrassing State Committee hearings “which substantiate my initial charge that there was an intention of inserting a toll section into Interstate 75. This, of course, has been denied by the Governor and apparently the plan has now become abandoned.”¹⁷⁵

While using public pressure to compel the governor to shed light on his intentions, Cramer publicly extended an offer of assistance to lend his expertise “in getting clearance, from the Bureau of Public Roads, for Florida’s free Interstate System between Fort Pierce and Daytona Beach.” Cramer suggested Bryant “make a request . . . asking for an unequivocal commitment from the Bureau that Florida’s free highway system will not be jeopardized by the tollway.” The end of this seemingly conciliatory press release ended with a sharp reminder of “Bryant’s charge of ‘politics’ – which Cramer sweeps aside with his assertion that he only wants to help Bryant’s Administration avoid the previous mistakes of the Collin’s [sic] Administration when some \$20 million was lost by integrating 44 miles of the Turnpike into the Interstate System.”¹⁷⁶

While Cramer battled Bryant at home, he also negotiated favorable policies in Washington. Sensitive to the desires of road users who expected uniform standards on federal highways, he initially forwarded their complaints to the authorities at the Bureau of Public Roads. However, many Bureau officials believed that the incorporation of toll

roads into the interstate system would speed its completion and was therefore justified. Commissioner Ellis L. Armstrong, for example, maintained that although the fusion of toll roads and free roads “may seem illogical to the individual road user,” “there is an overall benefit in that available funds are diverted to the development of the Interstate highway elsewhere,” making possible “a greater mileage of the Interstate System in a shorter period of time.”¹⁷⁷ Though it may not have seemed in the best interests of most Americans, states maintained the right to build toll roads wherever they pleased, and it was beyond federal jurisdiction to prevent their construction even where they overlapped with the interstate. Cramer therefore had to spend a great deal of time rectifying federal highway policies and the opinions of officials in order to keep the interstate system toll-free.

Cramer brought the issue to the national stage when, on August 21, 1961, he proposed legislation to the House Roads Subcommittee that he hoped would settle the I-95 question. Expressing in unflattering terms the state’s intentions to sidestep federal policy and thus jeopardize I-95, Cramer pointed out that in previous years the Bureau had revoked existing interstate routes due to the construction of nearby toll roads, resulting in losses of \$92 million in Massachusetts, \$65 million in Kansas, and \$36 million in Texas. The Bureau also had a history of delaying construction “until it is clearly demonstrated that the toll road cannot carry the traffic and the construction will not jeopardize toll road bonds.” Was it justifiable to build two parallel routes to southern Florida? With Congress for the first time in a position to halt the construction of a toll road before allowing it to disrupt an interstate highway, Cramer saw this as a “unique opportunity”

for Congress to conduct a thorough inquiry before Florida “is inextricably committed to a toll road program.”¹⁷⁸

Cramer introduced two bills in that congressional session: one that would require Congress to approve the designation of toll roads as part of the interstate system, the other to preserve I-95 between Fort Pierce and Daytona Beach. Although neither bill was enacted, Cramer later claimed that “the hearings served to pinpoint problems which exist, not only in Florida but in many other states as well, regarding the relationship between toll facilities and the Federal-aid highway systems.”¹⁷⁹ “Rather than the Governor and his road board acting in secrecy,” reasoned Cramer, “a public hearing before the committee would be required and the people interested and affected would know what’s happening with their tax dollar and their highway future.”¹⁸⁰

While behind the scenes Cramer endeavored to flush out an “unequivocal” statement from the Bureau or proceed with congressional action regarding the routing of I-95 alongside the turnpike, he reminded Bryant and the Florida public that he was as capable as anyone at brokering an agreement amenable to the interests of the turnpike. “I volunteer my assistance,” Cramer wired Bryant and Hammer on August 23, “in attempting to get a favorable unequivocal commitment from the Bureau preserving Florida’s free system and at the same time making it possible to build the Turnpike without adversely affecting the interstate system.” With the welfare of the Florida public at stake, Cramer demonstrated that it was the governor’s duty to present the turnpike plans over to the Bureau for hearings.¹⁸¹ One of Cramer’s proposals to the Governor was to “float advance construction bonds guaranteed by future Federal allotments, thereby assuring a free system by 1972 rather than a network of tollways.”¹⁸²

On September 15, the *St. Petersburg Times* outlined possible snags in the turnpike contract itself. Even if the Bureau allowed for a competing road, the turnpike bondholders might not. The contract stated that any highway proven “materially competitive with any part of the turnpike system” could result in a renegotiation of the contract based on lost earnings to the competitive highway. John Fowler, vice president of the New York bonding house Dillon, Read and Company, believed I-95 would compromise the turnpike’s earnings. Based on projections of I-95 being completed in 1972, turnpike revenues would decrease from \$17 million \$12 million, annually. Although with this \$5 million loss there would still be enough revenue to pay off the debt, such a loss would not sit well with bondholders.¹⁸³

Cramer adapted the same set of facts into a strategic power play, asking, “how can [Turnpike Chairman John] Hammer in one breath say that Interstate 95 and the Turnpike are not competitive and in the next breath reveal that over 30 percent of the revenue on the Turnpike will be lost once I-95 is completed and opened to traffic.” Fowler meanwhile insisted that I-95 be delayed at least until 1973. Warning that it would be within the bondholders’ rights to prohibit the state from constructing I-95 until 2001, Cramer recommended that the state draft a new contract assuring that turnpike bondholders would not object to I-95, rather than accepting Hammer’s assurances. Again, Floridians could depend on nothing less than “Unequivocal clearance.”¹⁸⁴

Where Cramer saw the Governor hedging on the option of deferring to federal road officials, he went straight to the source, himself. If the Governor insisted on building the turnpike, then he should have obtained unequivocal approval for I-95 from the Bureau of Public Roads and from turnpike bondholders. If the State “can force a

change of policy in the form of an unequivocal commitment as a result of my criticism, then my purpose . . . will be accomplished.” However, Cramer had serious doubts that such a policy change would be made. After conferring with Federal Highway Administrator Rex Whitton as well as Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer for the Bureau of Public Roads Frank Turner, Cramer was unable to obtain a “definite commitment.” Cramer concluded, “the state’s approach – at best – is risky business. . . . [T]he bond peddlers will be deciding the highway future of Florida.”¹⁸⁵

In the end, Interstate 75 was linked to Tampa without tolls, and the Sunshine Parkway was linked to I-75 at Wildwood. This episode, however, did not end Cramer’s crusade to protect the interstate system from turnpikes. At the end of the 89th Session of Congress in 1966, Cramer boasted of having been “successful in helping to prevent the construction of Interstate 95 in Georgia as a toll road connecting with Florida’s Interstate as had been considered by some officials in Georgia.”¹⁸⁶

Besides the issues described above, the infusion of private tollways with the interstate system yielded further obstacles to a complete, smoothly operating system. On February 23, 1966, Cramer noted in a speech to the American Road Builders’ Association that at the junction of the Sunshine State Parkway and Interstate 4, both the federal government and the Turnpike Authority yielded to laws, contractual agreements, and financial studies which precluded the construction of a connecting interchange from one expressway to the other. Whereas a “law concerning the use of Federal funds for facilities that will serve only toll traffic” restricted federal construction of the necessary ramps, the Turnpike Authority also demurred, since “the ramps do not meet economic

justification criteria which governs expenditure of its funds.” “As a result,” observed Cramer, “travelers who wish to go from one highway to the other must use widely separated interchanges and travel several miles over heavily congested city streets.” So much for convenience, safety, and national defense. As fate would have it, “private developments,” including “a proposed new Disneyland,” said Cramer, “led the turnpike authority to decide recently that an interchange can be economically justified, and it is planning now to construct one with its own funds – someday.”¹⁸⁷

Fruitcake

Immediately following the enactment of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highway Act and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the programs proved vulnerable to theft and fraud.¹⁸⁸ Responding to widespread scandals, in the summer of 1957 the Bureau of Public Roads developed a Project Examination division “with the specific responsibility of making reviews and investigations, on a ‘spot-check’ basis.” Despite the Bureau’s efforts, the graft “substantially increased.” In September 1959, the Subcommittee on the Federal-Aid Highway Program, dubbed the Blatnik Committee, was created as a subcommittee of the Public Works Committee “to investigate the highway program and act as a congressional ‘watchdog’ to protect the Federal interest.”¹⁸⁹ While the Kelly Committee unveiled Florida’s highway contracting shenanigans for the world to see, the Blatnik Committee was doing the same on a national scale. Cramer used his committee status to bring federal scrutiny to the time-honored manner in which engineers and contractors conducted business in Florida and around the nation. He summed up the problem this way:

Any program which involves such tremendous sums of money and the participation of so many thousands of people, is bound to be a temptation to dishonest and unscrupulous persons who can find many opportunities to profit at the expense of the public. . . . Before the creation of the special Subcommittee on the Federal-Aid Highway Program, I was convinced that the vast majority of the persons building our highways were honest, competent, and dedicated to serving the public interest. However, the

disclosures of the special subcommittee have made it abundantly clear that fraud, graft, thievery, and incompetency are far more widespread, and involve far more persons, than most of us would have suspected or believed.¹⁹⁰

The first state highway department to undergo public subcommittee hearings was Oklahoma. Cramer noted an “amazing picture . . . of inadequate or no supervision, failure to make proper tests and inspections, falsifications;” in short, a “deplorable failure to meet specifications.” Disclosures in other states also proved “shocking.” Florida was no exception:

In our own State of Florida it was shown that over the years many of the big highway contractors have been making payments of cash, whisky, turkeys, and other merchandise of substantial value to officials and employees of the State road department who were, of course, paid by the State to see that these same contractors complied with specifications. The Florida hearings have also shown that due to inadequate planning and worse, the State has disposed of valuable improvements on rights-of-way in total disregard of the public interest and has allowed the contractors and speculators to reap windfall profits that should have been realized by the State, a system that has permitted some contractors to use these valuable assets for what might be euphemistically called payola to grease the palms of two city commissioners and at least one highway official.¹⁹¹

A comprehensive study of kickbacks and graft in Florida’s road development history might well trace it to the first paved paths. To Cramer, as with many other proponents of the interstate program, the highway question was more than just a question of civic and economic development. Taking seriously the concept of interstate highways as a national defense system, corrupt practices in America’s highway development were practically, if not literally, tantamount to breaches in national security. In the early 1960s, as Cramer rose through the ranks of Congress to become the ranking Republican on the Blatnik committee and the roads subcommittee, and later the public works

committee, he distinguished himself in his efforts to develop strong laws that would bring accountability to federal road projects and stiff penalties to transgressors.

Developing these laws was not a simple task. For years, it appears to have absorbed the legal talents of Cramer and his colleagues. Just how successful Cramer and other watchdogs were remains to be assessed; but it seems that by the end of 1963, the congressman contented himself with his accomplishments in this arena and essentially gave up on what he could not push through that year.

In 1961, Cramer truly came into his own as a public works legislator, making the first of a series of concerted efforts to tighten up federal highway construction laws by drafting a bill that would make a federal crime the “indirect financing of primaries and elections out of Federal funds appropriated for highways, to prohibit certain improper and undesirable practices relating to the Federal-aid highway program, and for other purposes designed to protect the public interest and investment therein.” The proposal threatened fines up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment to any “officer, agent, or employee of the United States, or of any State or territory or political subdivision thereof, or whoever, whether a person, association, firm, or corporation” caught issuing false statements, offering or accepting kickbacks, or benefiting from a conflict of interest.¹⁹² Named the Federal-Aid Highway Reform Act, Cramer’s legislation “added several new provisions to the law and amended some portions of existing law and would . . . greatly strengthen the Federal law enforcement agencies in their efforts to prevent frauds and abuses and to punish such actions when they are detected.”¹⁹³

The above bill, like many of Cramer’s bills, brought with it a partisan intent. It was the first of a series of such bills Cramer would propose, most if not all of which

would be voted down by the Democrat-controlled congress, although many of the measures in his bills would eventually be adopted. Due to countless instances of incompetence, ignorance, selfishness, conspiracy, or just the unquestioned towing of the party line, the Democratic Party alone could not be entrusted to enact laws to ensure the successful execution of the national highway program. With Democrats in control of the executive and legislative branches of government, Cramer cast himself into the role of the just minority seeking to introduce law and common sense into highway governance.

One state indicted by Republicans to have some of the most notorious road scandals was none other than President Kennedy's home state of Massachusetts. Charges issued by the Republican members of the public works committee included "kickbacks," "political contributions, conspiracy between some state highway officials, contractors and engineering consultants that have resulted in inflated highway costs, political favoritism, and conspiracy to cheat the government through the use of over-runs, inflated 'winter work' bonuses, payments for work not actually done, and other techniques of fraud which can easily be accomplished."¹⁹⁴

Corruption in Massachusetts's road development richly earned a national reputation. In August 1960, the Bureau of Public Roads submitted the Beasley and Beasley report on corruption in Massachusetts. In March 1961, *Atlantic* magazine published "Dirty Money in Boston," which described the case of Thomas Worcester, caught evading hundreds of thousands in income taxes and bribing public officials, the latter offense Worcester considering an "'ordinary and necessary' cost of doing consulting business with the Massachusetts Department of Public Works." On June 19, 20, and 21, the *New York Times* followed up with front-page stories.¹⁹⁵

With Massachusetts making headlines, the case of Worcester seemed to the Republican public works members to provide “a logical starting point for a thorough investigation.” However, the Democrats who dominated the committee refused to conduct a proper investigation. “Apparently everyone can find wrongdoing in Massachusetts,” chided the Republicans, “except [the Blatnik Committee] and its expert staff.” Accusing the Democrats of “an obvious whitewash” and a “party line refusal to adequately staff the Massachusetts investigation,” Cramer and Minority Counsel Robert E. Manuel did some investigating of their own, finding in Massachusetts a mere “skeleton force” of investigators “operating under directions dictated by the Democrat majority, which limit them solely to real estate appraisals which have largely already been investigated by the Bureau of Public Roads.” More “foot dragging” on the part of Democrats included the removal of a “U.S. Attorney who was seeking indictments by the Grand Jury in the federal court” and the delaying of a “simple executive order authorizing an inspection by the subcommittee of the income tax returns of persons suspected of fraud and bribe-taking.”¹⁹⁶

In lieu of the “deliberate refusal” of the subcommittee to “do its plain duty,” the “result of direct orders from the top Democratic party leadership,” Cramer and fellow republicans endeavored to enact the “duties and obligations that must be carried out as Members of Congress” by calling for a “full and exhaustive investigation.” Even though a similar motion had already been voted down, the Republicans hoped to “establish for the record the manner in which the dictatorial majority is manipulating important committees of Congress to accommodate their own narrow political interest, at the expense of both truth and the public interest, and to register our determination not to be

accessories either before or after the fact to practices that threaten to subvert the very committee system of Congress and many cherished concepts of representative government.”¹⁹⁷

Eventually, the Democrats on the Blatnik Committee came around to the minority view, and when they did, Florida was on their investigative list. Democrats concurred that since 1956, Florida manifested “a sustained disregard for the public interest and has eschewed the adoption of measures necessary for the proper protection and conservation of [federal and state] funds.” The Democrats also condemned “a long-standing practice in Florida by which some road builders paid unauthorized money and other valuable merchandise to many State supervisory employees under circumstances which bordered on bribery and extortion.”¹⁹⁸

Republicans agreed with the democrats, but they wanted more forthright action to institute responsible government in Florida’s federal highways. Each candidate for governor was promising “extravagant highway millenniums” but delivered only “crash” construction programs. Governors were also appointing “partisans” to the state road board, such as Governor Farris Bryant’s selection of Warren Cason, a relative by marriage of the Cones, a prominent family in the construction business with over \$30 million in state contracts. As a result, the Republicans argued, “highly technical engineering decisions are often made by politicians, not by competent, experienced personnel.”¹⁹⁹

The Republicans supplemented this criticism with the testimony of W. C. Peterson, a division engineer of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads who worked with the Florida government. According to Peterson, disorganization, along with cronyism, was at

the heart of the problem, largely because Florida “never entered into long-range planning.” Florida’s road governance had “no continuity of personnel and therefore no continuity of policy planning or programming.” Three chairmen of the roads board served under Governor LeRoy Collins, each with “a different idea of how the highway department ought to be run,” each “pressuring” Peterson “pretty hard to ‘get the show on the road.’”²⁰⁰ Peterson claimed: “Every letting I can remember that we have had in Florida is under pressure. There is always a pressure to get the plans in and I have never known from one letting to the next what group of projects they are going to send over. It is very difficult for me to operate that way.”²⁰¹

Cramer asked Peterson how long Florida gave him to complete the “required engineering,” “right-of-way acquisition and so forth.” “Sometimes 3 days,” Peterson responded, “sometimes. Only on very, very seldom occasions have we gotten a set of plans as much as a week ahead of time or even 2 weeks ahead of time. I have never had that experience in other states.”²⁰² The minority report also pointed out how, during the transition from one administration to the next, the work of the previous administration could be laid to waste. In one instance, \$6 million paid to consulting engineers during the Collins administration was wasted due to an overhaul of plans under the Bryant administration.²⁰³

As a result of poor planning and graft, the cost of constructing interstate highways in Florida was among the highest in the South, with Florida paying \$89,216 per mile; Georgia was paying \$67,355, and Oklahoma only \$17,447.²⁰⁴ Cramer’s group recommended “a number of local reforms and procedures suggested by the record and consideration of which we urge upon the appropriate state authorities.” Republicans

wanted to impose laws on how the state conducted business with federal funds. By this time, Florida had responded with some minor reforms, but in the Republican opinion, it was still not enough. The state legislature needed to do more to punish “the givers as well as the receivers of largess.”²⁰⁵

To free the state road board from “the dead hand of partisan politics,” it needed continuity of personnel, policy, and programming, rather than having all five members appointed by each administration. Likewise, Republicans recommended the creation of a highway administrator, isolated from gubernatorial politics. The road department, though subject to the authority of the road board, was staffed with “able and dedicated people who are overworked and underpaid,” and needed a respectable pay scale, job designation, and a merit system to insulate it from politics.²⁰⁶ The properties management sector of the roads department, characterized with “blunders and confusion,” brought attention to the need for “reorganization under a single, coordinated authority,” rather than the “hydra-headed monster which has long plagued the Interstate System.”²⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the state needed to address its right-of-way acquisition laws, which permitted the state to offer property owners five percent more than the market value and which taxed the state with attorneys’ fees, leading to “protracted and costly litigation.”²⁰⁸

Amidst the cultural and political upheavals that took place in Florida during the late 1950s and 1960s, the state initiated a series of investigations and reforms of its transportation governance, culminating in the creation of the Department of Transportation in 1969. Cramer played a prominent role in bringing problems to light and offering solutions.

As for Washington, the first executive department to accommodate the Republican demand for stricter laws was the Department of Commerce, which had authority over the Bureau of Public Roads and was “responsible for the administration of the Federal-aid highway program.” Here, we have evidence of Cramer pushing, with some success, to institute significant changes on national policy. In response to Cramer’s 1961 bill, the Department of Commerce began to acknowledge that the federal government needed to play a stronger, more direct role in the state management of federal funds. On March 15, 1962, the Under Secretary of Commerce congratulated the “continuing investigation of the special subcommittee,” which had demonstrated that national reforms were “a vitally necessary adjunct to present highway program legislation.” Neither the existing highway statutes nor the authority of the Federal Highway Administrator to withhold Federal-Aid funds had proven effective deterrents.²⁰⁹

In March 1962, the Commerce Department also initiated House Resolution 9353, which was “somewhat similar” to what Cramer had proposed in 1961. Although, in lieu of the Commerce Department’s bill, the Blatnik Committee conducted further investigations in Massachusetts and West Virginia, Congress failed to enact legislation based on the Committee’s findings. Persistent as ever, on January 24, 1963, Cramer introduced a new bill “to revise and strengthen the Federal laws relating to offenses committed in connection with the Federal-aid highway program.” Again, Cramer called for stricter enforcement against “conflicts of interests, . . . false statements and representations relating to the acquisition, administration and disposition of real property, as well as the work, material and equipment,” and “political contributions . . . by any

person or firm who is at the same time negotiating for or performing a contract in connection with a Federal-aid highway project.”²¹⁰

Cramer sensed that the “kickbacks” measure would be the most controversial part of the bill, so he provided some background to show that his proposal was not a major departure from past precedents. Since 1940, federal law prohibited firms and individuals with contracts with the United States from making political contributions. However, because U.S. highway contracts were issued by individual states, the law did not extend to federal highway programs, even if federal aid amounted to fifty to ninety percent of the cost. “But if it’s bad to misuse Federal funds for political purposes at the Federal level,” said Cramer, “it is equally bad at the State level.”²¹¹

The *Boston Herald* touted the “tough bill” drafted by the “minority leader of the Blatnik committee.” Given the “mounting evidence” of “widespread cheating,” the *Herald* predicted that although his previous bills were “sidetracked,” “some sections” of this recent bill had “a better chance of passage during this session of Congress,” now that the states’ “shenanigans . . . had time to sink in at the Capitol.” The measure prohibiting political contributions was considered the “most far reaching,” but also had the “least chance of passage.” After all, “politicians the country over depend heavily on contractors for their campaign funds;” “most construction companies in the position to make generous donations to political committees, are involved directly or indirectly in the interstate road program.” The Herald noted that Massachusetts Governor Peabody’s “very successful birthday dinner . . . was enriched considerably by contractors shelling out \$1,000-a-table.” “Campaign contributions,” the article concluded, “are a bread and

butter issue with politicians and until someone can suggest a suitable alternate, Congress is not likely to prohibit contractors from spreading their manna.”²¹²

Cramer’s bill made headway as higher officials in the Kennedy Administration began adopting some of his proposals. On April 4, 1963, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy of the Department of Justice proposed jointly with the Department of Commerce legislation “substantially similar” to Cramer’s, although weaker on conflicts of interest (requiring full disclosure, but not instituting penalties) and without a “provision prohibiting political contributions.”²¹³ Later that month, Congressmen Emanuel Celler and Jim Wright both introduced the administration’s softer bill.²¹⁴

By the summer of 1963, Cramer had essentially thrown up his hands on legislating penalties for conflicts-of-interest and political contributions relating to federally funded highways. Having become astute observers of federal highway ethics, he and his colleagues developed treatises on right-of-way acquisition and the thorny issue of conflicts-of-interest, to be delivered to professionals in the federal highways business. One of these talks was delivered to the New York Court of Claims School of Advanced Study in Real Property Acquisition by the minority counsel for the roads subcommittee, Clifton Enfield. The address dealt with the “complexities” faced by the “modern day right-of-way agent,” who must be “25 percent appraiser, 25 percent salesman, 25 percent engineer, 25 percent lawyer, 25 percent governmental administrator, 25 percent economist, 25 percent public relations expert, and 25 percent psychologist . . . a double-sized man.” This detailed address suggests the level of compassion that Cramer and his colleagues had developed for professionals in the road development industry, as well as a detailed understanding of the challenges these professionals faced. The last thing these

professionals could do was rest on their laurels. “The time has come,” Enfield admonished his audience, “when members of the right-of-way profession, as well as all others associated with the highway program, must be brutally objective and honest in the evaluation of themselves and their associates. Those who are competent, honest, and dedicated are a credit to the profession and an asset to the highway program. I am sure that the great majority of persons engaged in right-of-way acquisition for the highway program fall into this category. However, there are others who are neither a credit nor an asset to anything.”²¹⁵

Bad right-of-way agents fell into two categories: the dishonest agent and the honest agent “who simply does not know how to do his job and hides the fact from his superiors.” The former, prevalent in Massachusetts, could be restrained but not eliminated. The latter, prevalent in West Virginia, simply had to be educated.²¹⁶

Cramer’s last known address to Congress regarding his Federal-Aid Highway Reform Act was delivered on August 23, 1963. His speech, “Conflict of Interest as a Legal and Administrative Problem,” was drafted by another of his trusted advisers, Robert L. May, minority counsel for the Blatnik Committee. May originally delivered the address to a group of highway lawyers. As an “administrative problem,” May began, conflicts of interest involve “questions of policy and practicality, as well as principles of ethics and integrity.” As a “legal problem,” as Cramer and his colleagues well knew, “it involves questions of the legal authority to regulate, valid means of regulation and enforcement, and the rights of public officials as citizens, as well as technical problems of drafting a clear, unambiguous regulation or statute.” The main difficulty in regulating conflicts of interest was that it encompassed such a wide range of behavior that any

general law “would probably be too vague to be enforceable.” As a result, convictions were rare. After years of Blatnik Committee investigations, the same problems were cropping up around the country, “a disturbing indication that administrative action . . . is lagging.”²¹⁷

The President summed up the problem with existing laws. “The fundamental defect of these statutes as presently written is that: On the one hand, they permit an astonishing range of private interests and activities by public officials which are wholly incompatible with the duties of public office; on the other hand, they create wholly unnecessary obstacles to recruiting qualified people for Government service. This latter deficiency is particularly serious in the case of consultants and other temporary employees, and has been repeatedly recognized by Congress in its enactment of special exemption statutes.”²¹⁸

Following a lengthy discussion on the efforts of the government to regulate conflicts of interest, May presented, in further detail, the pending legislation presented by Cramer, Wright, and Celler. All three bills barred contractors from giving to state employees, prevented contractors from deviating from their contracts, and prohibited false statements. Cramer’s bill stood alone in denying those engaged in federal highway projects from making political contributions, and only his bill provided actual penalties conflicts of interest cases.²¹⁹ The address trailed off into general, philosophical questions directed to lawyers. If these two documents were Cramer’s final effort to get his legislation passed, then it was an uncharacteristically feeble effort. By the end of 1963, Cramer’s attention had shifted to other issues.

The deplorable condition of Florida's interstate highways made the November 30, 1963 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Page 19 shows a close-up of a Florida road surface, textured everywhere with little grooves maybe an inch deep, with golf ball-sized chunks of rubble strewn amidst the remnants of blown tires along the median. The state had to build a dividing wall to prevent out-of-control cars from careening into oncoming traffic.²²⁰ This was the surface of the W. Howard Frankland Bridge over Tampa Bay, at the southwest terminus of Interstate Highway 4 – a bridge funded 90 percent by the federal government and designed to link Pinellas County with the greatest road program in American history, perhaps the history of the world. This boon to economic development, this pillar of national defense, *this* was Florida's monument to American mobility. The original cost was \$6.2 million. The 30-inch dividing wall cost another \$250,000. One of the span supports met minimum federal standards, but 39 others did not. It was, said Congressman James Wright, "about as poorly constructed as any bridge in the United States."²²¹ Congressional investigators discovered that project engineer Joe R. Maseda, Jr., whose job was "enforcing specifications," received "payola" from the road surfacing contractor, Hardaway Contracting of Tampa. Though unethical, this was not unusual. Similar activities were going on throughout Florida and in many other states.

Florida's shenanigans had their own signature. They were not the most sinister (that would be Massachusetts), nor did they stem from the most ignorance (that distinction went to West Virginia). The nature of Florida's deviance was captured under the heading: "PAYOLA INCLUDED CIGARETTES, WHISKEY, TURKEYS, HAMS, AND, FRUITCAKES." Namely, state engineer William H. McLeod Jr. was caught collecting at

least \$10,000 in spirits, smokes, and vittles.²²² On national television, McLeod proudly stood his ground and proclaimed, “I can still live with myself. I can look back over and I can look you or anybody else in the eye and tell you that I haven’t done anything wrong. Only thing wrong I have done is possibly work too many hours and tried to do the right thing about everything.”²²³ There was a well-established precedent for McLeod’s lack of remorse. As President Julian L. Cone, Jr. of Cone Brothers Contracting Company put it, payoffs to state engineers had been the norm for “as long as I have been in the contracting business.”²²⁴

Posies

Through the 1960s, the scope of Cramer's political power expanded. Rising in status to become the senior Republican on the House Public Works Committee, he used the Interstate system to wedge himself into national policy debates. Despite differences with public works Democrats, during the course of his highway reform years Cramer developed a strong rapport and a good working relationship with them. He would also recall in later years the bipartisan manner with which the Kennedy administration approached transportation issues, a compliment he was not to extend to the Johnson administration. In the mid-1960s, a new foe to the system would emerge, keeping Cramer occupied for years. President Lyndon Johnson brought to the executive mansion unbridled energy, an artistry of deal-making, and a solid party majority willing to spend on the Great Society. When it came to highway matters, however, Cramer found Johnson's administration inconsistent and misguided. The only thing more unconscionable to Cramer than cash, whisky, and turkeys was guns and butter. The President, according to Cramer, made several steps to compromise the interstate system, sometimes in an effort to boost his social programs, sometimes for no logical reason at all. Cramer's efforts garnered the attention of powerful Republicans such as Richard Nixon, who during his presidency frequently met with Cramer and personally endorsed the Floridian's 1970 U.S. Senate campaign.

Of all of Johnson's policies, that of beautifying highways using construction funds provided the most convenient political target. "The Highway Beautification Act of 1965," explained Cramer in 1966, "provides financing from the general funds of the Treasury for the first 2 years for the control of advertising and junkyards adjacent to Interstate and Federal-aid primary highways, and for landscaping and scenic enhancement along all federal highways." However, Johnson wanted to shift course, proposing that the Highway Beautification Act "be financed from the highway trust fund, at an average rate of more than \$200 million a year for the Interstate System alone." As a result, Cramer warned, "all money spent for beautification would be taken away from construction, and less miles of Federal-aid primary and secondary highways, and their urban extensions, will be improved." Johnson, Cramer concluded, "thinks it is more important to beautify these roads than to construct them or to make them safe and adequate for travel."²²⁵

In 1967, Cramer was not finished with the beautification question. During a February 6 speech, Cramer accused Johnson of a "turnabout on highway safety," arguing, "At the very same time that the administration is stopping badly needed highway construction, it is calling for . . . \$380 million of new obligational contract authority for landscaping, billboard control, and screening of junkyards," and "recommending that from \$1.8 to \$2.9 billion be spent over the next 10 years to make the Federal-aid highway system more beautiful." "Should it not be made more safe first?" Cramer implored. "In my opinion," he continued, "the administration is placing a higher value on posies and bushes along the highways than it is placing on American lives or on our use of highways for national defense. It will be of no benefit to the man, woman, or child who dies in an

automobile accident on an obsolete road to have enjoyed looking at posies before the crash occurred.”²²⁶

Later that year, Cramer requested “1 long minute” from the House to discuss Johnson’s inconsistent, almost amusing, stance on the beautification issue. Apparently, while the Administration was calling for the elimination of 1,014,000 out of 1.1 million roadside signs, it was also distributing information from the Small Business Administration touting billboards as “a motel’s introduction to the greatest number of potential guests.” “Thousands of owner-managers say their very existence depends directly on the signs,” said the brochure. “Many motel operators find it to their advantage to start their sign ‘campaign’ about 250 miles from the motel --- the average day’s drive for most travelers. Average highway speed is about 50 miles an hour, so a sign every 50 miles will remind travelers of your business once an hour. Your biggest sign should be the last one, the one closest to your motel (even in sight of it).”²²⁷

In August 1967, when Cramer proposed legislation “to provide for eliminating or minimizing roadside hazards,” he included as leading hazards “unnecessary signs [...] which can kill the motorists who run into them; and, certain highway beautification ‘improvements,’ such as the planting of trees.”²²⁸

Construction-versus-beautification was just one of many highway issues on which Cramer distinguished himself from Johnson. Foremost on Cramer’s agenda was preserving interstate funding and ensuring that enough funds would be available to keep the project on schedule. A 1967 report to Congress drafted by Cramer and Clifton Enfield summarized the progress of interstate funding up to that time. In 1956, to provide for the “prompt and early completion of the National System of Interstate and

Defense Highways,” Congress drafted the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Initially, the Interstate was to be completed in fourteen years, or by 1970, but that deadline was extended to 1972, or sixteen years. Thus, the Federal-Aid Highway Act called for sixteen appropriations “for the purpose of expediting its construction.”²²⁹

Hence, the federal government appeared braced for the project, but what about the road construction industry? As a precaution, in 1956, the Public Works Committee checked with the roadbuilding industry to ensure its ability to keep up with the construction program. In response, the contracting industry expanded in order to meet its obligations.²³⁰ Trusting that the federal government would be ready with needed funding, “many construction firms substantially enlarged their professional and supervisory staffs, expanded their office and other facilities, increased their work forces, and purchased additional roadbuilding equipment.” Road contractors thus placed their trust in the federal government to back them, even buying on credit or borrowing in faith that the government would reimburse them.²³¹ Cramer, for one, was determined not to let down a road construction industry that had shown so much faith in the government.

At the beginning of Johnson’s presidency, the President seemed to share Cramer’s understanding of the importance of highway funding. Claiming some credit for the enactment of the 1956 Interstate and Defense Act, signed into law when he was Senate Majority Leader, Johnson emphasized the benefits of the highway to the oft-neglected highway driver as he signed into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1964. “For much too long,” Johnson remarked,

the man who owns and drives an automobile has been treated like a stepchild. We require him to pay for the highways he uses and we require him to pay in advance. We divert his taxes to other uses but we delay the

building of the roads that he deserves. We denounce him for getting snarled in traffic jams not of his own making. We complain about what he costs us but we never thank him for what he adds to the worth and wealth of our economy. We could not get along without him, but we often talk as though [sic] we can't live with him. . . . Eight years ago, in 1956, we set out on a 16-year program to catch up with ourselves, catch up through the Interstate Highway System. This has been described as the most ambitious highway program since the days of ancient Rome. It was my privilege then to guide that program to passage as Senate Majority Leader. In every respect, it has met our hopes. It has put more than one million Americans to work. It is already saving 3,000 lives a year and, by 1972, it will be saving 8,000 lives a year. . . . It is saving dollars---\$6 billion in user benefits last year; \$11 billion a year 8 years from now; and the program is not costing the General Fund of the United States Treasury a single cent. . . . I say that this morning because I want the American motorist to know that things aren't so bad that we must sell off our public roads to the highest bidder for Uncle Sam to stay liquid.²³²

Besides omitting the relevance of the interstate system to the nation's defense, the above sentiments essentially mirrored those of Cramer throughout his congressional career. Had Johnson held to this position, Cramer might have become an ally. Although Cramer valued his party and sought victories for it wherever he could, highway development was one issue where he was willing to put aside partisan politics if he thought it would advance interstate highway financing and construction. In March 1965, for example, Congressman John Kluczynski, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Roads of the House Committee on Public Works, introduced a bill "to approve the estimate of cost of completing, and to revise the authorization of appropriation for, the Interstate System." In return, Cramer reintroduced the same bill as a demonstration of "bipartisan support for the interstate highway program."²³³ Likewise, during the 1968 Florida Senate election, Cramer and former Governor LeRoy Collins, a Democrat, found common ground on the enduring Interstate versus Turnpike question. Edward Gurney, the Republican candidate,

ran an Orlando law firm that represented the Turnpike Authority under Governor Claude Kirk and, not surprisingly, came out in favor of the Turnpike.

In the years following 1964, Johnson strayed from his previous interstate advocacy, slighting the highway user in the same manner that he previously denounced in 1964. Frequently, trusting Cramer's testimony, Johnson quietly diverted highway funds, although during at least one speech, given on November 29, 1966, Johnson openly denigrated the interstate highway program to make way for his Great Society: "We would rather postpone the construction of an office building or stretch out the completion of a six-lane super-highway than to stop the momentum of our great programs for the people that hold out a promise of hope and opportunity to so many."²³⁴

Cramer was critical, to say the least, of Johnson's method of scraping together finances for Great Society programs by taking money from the interstate system. As early as 1966, Cramer described Johnson as "devoid of leadership in providing funds to complete the system by 1972."²³⁵ In an address to the Road Builder's Association on February 28, 1966, Cramer claimed, "If necessary funds had been provided" in 1965, the system could have been completed in 1972, "except for a few isolated projects in some large metropolitan centers." To complete the system on schedule would require "rapid acceleration of construction, probably followed by a sudden deceleration," rather than in an "orderly and economic fashion." At best, the system could be completed by 1973, and without prompt action, not until 1975.²³⁶

The climax of Cramer's anti-Johnson crusade came on February 6, 1967, when the House yielded sixty minutes to Cramer to address how the Johnson Administration was jeopardizing America's highway program. According to Johnson, Cramer inferred,

harking back to Johnson's 1964 speech, America's financial situation must actually have gotten so bad that Johnson could justify "treating the American motorist like a stepchild," "diverting highway users' taxes to other uses," "perpetrating the plight of the motorist who is 'snarled in traffic jams not of his own making,'" showing "utter disregard for the fact that the Interstate System will be saving 8,000 lives a year upon completion," and, last but not least, using "every possible budget gimmick for 'Uncle Sam to stay liquid.'"²³⁷

Cramer relished quoting that last remark made by Johnson – "things aren't so bad that we must sell off our public roads to the highest bidder for Uncle Sam to stay liquid" – citing it three times in a single speech. (Cramer cited the phrase again on October 11, 1967.) As for cutting highway funds to promote social programs, Cramer pointed out that the interstate system itself served as an important social program: "What opportunity or promise of hope have you given by the cutback to the thousands of people in the construction industry who will become unemployed and to the contractors who will become bankrupted? What better program is there to help the people than to construct their highways as early as possible and save 8,000 lives a year?"²³⁸ Again, what poverty program would "employ more people and keep the economy stronger than highway construction, which requires thousands of taxpaying workers and millions of dollars in heavy construction equipment and links areas contributing to our prosperity?"²³⁹

The theme arose again as Cramer discussed the potential for disaster to road departments and building contractors in disrupting slated highway funding. "State highway departments," Cramer explained, "are large, complex organizations. Scheduling of operations, which require advanced lead times, is essential for their efficiency and

economy. Sudden changes, without notice, in the States [sic] construction programs by the Federal Government disrupt work schedules and financing plans. They render useless or lessen the usefulness of work previously accomplished. They result in additional costs and work hardships upon the State highway departments. . . . Many highway departments will have to either discharge personnel or reassign them to other departments. Already States are reporting to the Representatives in Congress that hundreds of field personnel are being laid off or reassigned.”²⁴⁰

As for contractors:

The sudden slowdown in the award of highway construction contracts is most serious . . . Many contractors cannot long survive the Federal Government’s turning the Federal-aid highway program off and on like a faucet to suit its own purposes. The cutback has suddenly decreased contractors’ workloads from the levels they had anticipated and geared up for. Because of the cutback, contractors may have little or no new work to commence as old jobs are completed. In such cases, some contractors may be able to bear the costs of carrying surplus personnel and equipment inventories, in the hope that the faucet soon will be turned on again. Others must discharge employees and dispose of construction equipment. If they are forced to discharge their supervisory and skilled personnel and to dispose of their equipment, they will be unable to respond quickly when the faucet is again turned on by the administration. Thus, urgently needed highway improvement will be even further delayed.²⁴¹

Cramer thus emphasized that to compromise the interstate system to promote the Great Society was completely irrational. By “asking for a 25-percent increase in programs to relieve poverty,” the Johnson administration “instituted a highway cutback, which will produce poverty. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of highway construction workers will be laid off. The economy will lose hundreds of millions of dollars in construction work. This does not make sense.” At the end of the hearing, Congressman Cleveland went so far as to speculate that by destroying the highway industry, the

Administration intended to “create new classes of poverty . . . so that they can have objectives lined up for new poverty programs.” Cramer dismissed this conspiratorial accusation, concluding instead that Johnson valued “poverty squandering” over “our transportation lifelines” along with “defense, the national economy,” and “the fiber of our society.” In contrast, Cramer believed highway construction to be an effective social program in itself, better than any program Johnson brought to the table.²⁴²

Where Johnson lacked the authority to impose cuts in the interstate system, on at least one occasion Cramer accused him of manipulating Congress to do so. The accusation came on the heels of an announcement to the governors from Secretary of Transportation Alan Boyd on October 8, 1967, informing them that due to “recent Congressional discussion on substantial reductions in Federal expenditures, it may become necessary to impose ceilings on the Federal-aid highway program.” On October 11, Cramer pounced, describing Boyd’s letter as “an obvious sledgehammer tactic to bludgeon the Congress into passing the tax surcharges the President has recommended, instead of reducing unnecessary Federal expenditures.” Cramer reminded Congress that since the interstate system was funded “out of the Highway Trust Fund, not the general fund,” its money raised from “highway user taxes,” the cut-back would have “no effect whatsoever on the estimated expenditures in the administrative budget nor the deficit of about \$29 billion which the President has forecast.” Not only was the attempted raid on highway funds “unwarranted,” it was thus also “unthinking.” Cramer then went on the offensive, calling for a reduction in federal spending to the tune of \$5 billion, pointing out that Arkansas Democrat Wilbur Mills, the leader of the Committee on Ways and Means, called for a “\$7 to \$10 billion reduction in Federal expenditures” before issuing a

surtax. Among the programs Cramer wished to ax: “antipoverty, demonstration cities, rent supplements, the Teacher Corps,” and, lastly, a highway beautification program meant to acquire “land outside the highway right-of-way.” “It is a most peculiar set of priorities,” puzzled Cramer, “which would dictate the expenditure of huge sums of money for beautification and other cosmetic and luxury programs while we are facing a \$29 billion deficit, and while citizens of the United States are bleeding and dying in Vietnam and on our inadequate highway system.” Cramer cited 53,000 traffic deaths in 1966, just short of the number of Americans killed in the entire Vietnam conflict.²⁴³

Cramer went on to describe how, under Johnson’s leadership, the financing of federal highway projects had become “a yo-yo program of ups and downs.” In October 1966, the states thought they had \$4.4 billion for 1968. In November, this figure suddenly dropped by \$1.1 billion, though in July of 1967 the figure returned to \$4.4 billion. In August, 1967, the states were told they had \$4.74 billion for 1969, but on October 8, Secretary Boyd announced this could be cut in half. The program, Cramer said, could not operate smoothly with such fluctuations: “An effective Federal-aid highway program simply will not exist if it continues to go up and down like a yo-yo with every fluctuation in the economic situation. Whether the proposed cutback is put into effect or not, Secretary Boyd’s announcement that up to a 50-percent reduction is being considered has already seriously damaged the highway program. . . . Uncertainty as to what will happen in the highway program next week, next month, or next year has a severely damaging impact.”

With such uncertainty, the states would be more likely to lose faith in the program and instead rely on dreaded toll facilities. That included Florida, which was facing a possible 61 percent cutback for 1968.²⁴⁴

Umbrella

Up to this point, I have emphasized Cramer's gladiatorial spirit. However, it would be misleading to say that he always picked his battles along partisan lines, or that reelection was his prime motivation, or that the adversaries in his crosshairs were merely expedient targets. Further testimony in the congressional record reveals that Cramer mastered an encyclopedic working knowledge of the relationships between various Congressional committees and of federal bureaucracies. After a brief scan of just a few segments of his career, it is hard not to be impressed by his knowledge and forward-thinking approach to problems, nor to acknowledge the respect and deference that Cramer garnered from his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Like a skilled chess player, when drafting, amending, or criticizing legislation, he understood cause and effect, foreseeing the far-reaching consequences of congressional action. Connected, intuitive, and persuasive, his influence ranged far beyond the committees on which he officially served.

Cramer's ability is apparent during the fine-tuning of certain legislative acts during 1966 and 1967. In 1966, House Resolution 13200 was circulating through Congress, to establish a Department of Transportation, an umbrella organization encompassing, among other agencies, the Federal Aviation Agency, the Bureau of Public

Roads, and the Maritime Commission. On April 26, Cramer appeared before the Committee on Government Operations to share his views and recommend amendments drafted by the leader of the public works committee, George Hyde Fallon. While Cramer agreed with the spirit of the legislation, that it was essential that “all Federal transportation programs must be fully coordinated,” he questioned whether “the existing transportation agencies and officials” would not be able to achieve the same goal. He was also concerned that once subordinated, the lower agencies would “lose their independence or semi-independence” and “be denied a major voice at the policy levels of the Government.” The position of Federal Highway Administrator overseeing the Bureau of Public Roads, for example, was to be erased or downgraded. With the “importance of the Federal-aid Highway program . . . not diminished but . . . increased” since 1956, Cramer contended, “this is certainly no time to downgrade the position of Federal Highway Administrator.” Therefore, Cramer recommended that the administrator position, along with the existing “four Assistant Secretaries and the General Counsel,” be maintained at their present salary and status.²⁴⁵

The following year, Congressman James Colgate Cleveland of New Hampshire, an ally of Cramer’s, confirmed that with the creation of the Department of Transportation, “the Bureau of Public Roads has been almost completely eviscerated. . . . The field offices and personnel of the Bureau of Public Roads are no longer responsible to the Director of Public Roads. . . . [T]he Director of Public Roads is no longer in the chain of command; . . . has no supervision or control over the officials exercising authority delegated by him.” The range of the Bureau’s actual “Supervision and control” was limited to a region “in the eastern part of the United States” and the Inter-American

Highway in Central America. The Bureau's remaining roles, such as "technical program guidance and assistance," lacked real authority.²⁴⁶

Cramer fretted that a new Department might "infringe upon the responsibilities of Congress." What congressman would not be alarmed by the prospect of a Secretary of Transportation who could "approve or disprove" the construction of highways "without reference to any of the policy declarations presently contained in . . . United States Code" as drafted by Congress? Other members of Congress such as Congressman Frank T. Bow of Ohio, for example, were defensive of the fact that "the Interstate System was one part of the highway program where members of Congress were able to take part in determining where the money would be spent. . . . I note, for example, that over \$200 million has been spent on Interstate 77, which will connect Cleveland and Canton with southeastern Ohio, West Virginia, and North Carolina, largely if not solely on the insistence of the Members of the House directly concerned including, as I recall, our former colleague John Henderson, members of the Virginia and West Virginia delegations, and myself."²⁴⁷

What standards would a new Department of Transportation employ in the planning of roads? Cramer suspected the Department might resort to "averages or statistical data or some theoretical planning concept" that could "result in a mediocre transportation system," versus more practical approaches developed by state representatives. Cramer also warned that the legislation might "permit the Secretary to divert funds from one program to another," with only the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to conduct reviews. The wording of the bill justified his alarm, permitting "comparative evaluation of transportation projects . . . with a view to

identifying those warranting support and establishing priorities.” As proposed by Congressman Fallon, Cramer recommended limiting the role of the Secretary to making recommendations to Congress “for consideration in the formulation and economic evaluation of all proposals for the investment of Federal funds in transportation facilities or equipment.”²⁴⁸

Cramer addressed a broad range of issues during discussion of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1966. As usual, Cramer’s main theme remained the shaky financial situation of the system’s trust fund, which was “\$6 billion short of doing a 41,000-mile job even by 1973.” He and some sympathetic colleagues, Congressman H.R. Gross from Iowa and Congressman Hall from Iowa, railed against the lack of leadership in the Johnson Administration and its attempted program of beautifying highways with trust fund money. While construction costs were increasing from 2.5 to 2.7 percent annually, the “slipping” of Federal matching funds to State highway departments was creating an “embarrassing” predicament. Evolving conditions and highway standards would add even more to the cost of the project. “[F]rom one estimate to another,” admonished Cramer, “conditions change, forecast traffic volumes increase, and technology and design concepts advance, all of which result in constant upgrading of standards” such as “full widths of shoulders across long bridges, . . . more traffic lanes, additional interchanges, and depressed sections in urban areas.” “As communities grow and urban limits expand,” Cramer explained, “more interchanges are needed.” Between 1961 and 1965, 754 interchanges were added to the system. A new safety measure of four-laning the entire system yielded a \$265 million increase. All told, these changes would add \$630 million to the total cost.²⁴⁹

The public works committee lacked the authority to provide for the \$6 billion shortage. Therefore, Cramer recommended that the Committee on Ways and Means raise highway user taxes, transfer funds generated by “the 7 percent automobile excise taxes” from the general fund to the highway trust fund, “[extend] the . . . termination date of the highway trust fund,” or “[repeal] or [suspend] provisions of section 209 (g) of the Highway Revenue Act of 1956 --- the Byrd amendment --- to permit appropriations to the trust fund of advances from the general fund to be repaid with interest from later revenues to the trust fund.”²⁵⁰

Reimbursement for state-constructed highways along Interstate routes emerged as a common refrain. From New York, Congressman Howard W. Robison noted that a “rather substantial part” of the interstate completed to date had been accomplished “by virtue of the fact that some of the more progressive States,” such as New York, Illinois, and Florida, “constructed mileage prior to the beginning of the Interstate System which was later incorporated into the system.” New York, for example, contributed \$799.1 million worth of mileage. Robison wanted to know whether New York and other states would be reimbursed. Cramer responded that the completion of the entire system should precede any reimbursements, and that the issue would be dealt with in the January 1968 report to the Congress.²⁵¹

Congressman Edward J. Derwinski of Illinois then asked if “there is nothing in this bill for the acquisition of bankrupt toll roads or skyways.” Cramer replied there was not, adding, “I hope there never is any such provision in a Federal-aid highway bill. [...] Congress is constantly under appeals to bail out those projects. [...] They did bail one out

in the State of West Virginia by making it a part of the interstate highway mileage allowance to that State. But I personally am hoping that will never happen again.”²⁵²

Congressman Raymond F. Clevenger of Michigan also proposed reimbursement, and was then cross-examined by Congressman Don H. Clausen, who informed Clevenger that he should have made his proposal during previous hearings before the Federal-Aid Subcommittee or Roads Subcommittee. Cramer then asked where Congress would acquire the \$5 billion that would be needed for “paying off existing toll roads and bridges.”

Clevenger: I am prepared to support legislation to get the funds.

Cramer: Has the President made any such proposal? I am sure that he has not.

Clevenger: I cannot speak for him. . . .

Cramer: This administration and the previous administrations have all recommended against toll road reimbursement at this time. So I think that the gentleman from Michigan is doing nothing more than wishful thinking. . . . I think some people who are pressing the question of toll road reimbursement ought to take equal leadership in pressing people to do something about this \$6 billion deficit with regard to the present system of 41,000 miles that has not been completed.²⁵³

Congressman Jonathon B. Bingham rose in defense of Clevenger, declaring that “the present program . . . works so as to penalize those States and communities which in the past have shown initiative enough to have roads and bridges built; now they are suffering for their energy and their investment.” Congressman Max McCarthy concurred, once again citing New York’s loss of nearly \$800 million and calling the reimbursement issue “one of the most vexing public works problems which exists in the United States.” McCarthy nevertheless conceded that reimbursements would have to wait until “after 1973.”²⁵⁴

Though Cramer despised Johnson's Great Society proposals, he approved of several spending measures that would, in the long run, reduce construction costs and also assist people disrupted by construction. He asked that the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1966 require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a "study of advance acquisition of rights-of-way for future construction" of the system. The purpose of this study was to determine the most cost-effective methods for the states to obtain right-of-way, and what the federal government could do to help finance the acquisition. Noting that the "rural countryside adjacent to urban areas is rapidly being developed for residential subdivisions, shopping centers, and industrial parks," Cramer pointed out that "State highway officials have been compelled to watch helplessly" as development proceeds and land values rise "without being able to acquire those portions they know will be needed for highway construction within a few years." State highway departments needed "legal and financial tools . . . to acquire such properties at a time when this could be done at minimum expense to the taxpayers." The "Cramer amendment," he mentioned elsewhere, which had been "on the books" for years, "provides for 7-year advance acquisition of rights of way. The States do not use it, and we want to know why." Cramer hoped that the study by the Secretary of Commerce might "chart the course" for future acquisitions.²⁵⁵

Cramer also desired the Secretary of Commerce, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, State highway departments, and other agencies, to perform a thorough study of "persons and businesses . . . displaced by highway projects." Cramer requested long-awaited assistance for property owners along the acquisition routes, who "sit around for 20 years, knowing their property is going to be taken, with no relief." He

believed these people deserved “full relocation costs, rather than the maximum of \$200 for an individual or family and \$3,000 for a business.” He also recommended “the coordination of highway construction with other types of construction” and other measures to integrate highways into the urban landscape while softening the blows on local communities.²⁵⁶

Finished with his agenda for the day, Cramer stuck around for comment on other proposals. The temperature rose a little when Congressman Cleveland proposed an amendment that would “protect parklands, national forests and historic sites that are in some instances being threatened by the building of interstate highways.” Objection came from Congressman Kenneth J. Gray of Illinois, who charged that the individual states would have ample motivation to preserve such sites. Unsure of the amendment’s “implications,” Gray believed the committee needed time to “study” the issue.

Cleveland: [W]hat earthly objection could there be to my amendment. You do not have to study four printed lines to know what they say. . . . It is a statement of policy on an important issue that has bothered many conservationists It reaffirms what is probably the law. . . .

Gray: I am a little surprised that my distinguished friend, who is a strong States righter, would once again want us to write into a Federal law what a State must or must not do Until we know what the implications are the question should be studied. . . .

Cleveland: There is no dictation here. I think you have either not read my amendment carefully or I have not made it clear as to what the intent is. I quote: “The Secretary shall cooperate with the States.”²⁵⁷

Discussion continued to heat up as several Republican Congressmen, led by Cleveland, attempted to strike out a beautification appropriation of \$493 million from the Federal Aid Highway Act. Noting that the United States Government was borrowing to pay its bills and facing interest rates fast approaching 6 percent, “unheard of in modern times,” Republican Congressman Charles Raper Jonas recalled that President Johnson

had recently urged “that the line be held and that his budget not be increased.” “I am going to support the President . . . in his efforts to curtail spending,” sniped Jonas. “I suggest his friends on the other side of the aisle should support him in this instance.” Aspiring to raise the issue above partisan politics, Republican Congressman Thomas B. Curtis pointed out that there were “many Democrats” who agreed that less essential programs such as beautification could be shelved until later.²⁵⁸

Rising in defiance, Democratic Congressman Robert E. Sweeney declared the Republicans to be inconsistent in touting the interstate system to be “imperative and in the national interest,” while, “for purposes of perhaps political tact, in the consideration of the particular amendment, the tune changes to, ‘Let us support the President and slow down spending.’” “Let us set the record straight,” Sweeney bristled, “the administration’s [original] proposal was that the highway trust fund for beautification be incorporated without limitation. . . . I would ask the Committee to reject unanimously the suggestion, which is a belated 11th-hour suggestion – that we scuttle the national effort to clean up our highways.²⁵⁹

Cramer reiterated that his intent was not to “scuttle the program,” but that he also did not want the trust fund to be raided for beautification purposes.

Cramer: [W]e have no testimony whatsoever . . . as to how much money it would take . . . for general beautification purposes. . . . I challenge anyone to show – yes, the gentleman who just rose, Mr. Sweeney – where in the record it shows how much money is going to be needed.

Sweeney: I should like to address myself to that point, but I wish to say one thing in correction of a statement the gentleman made . . . that the Cleveland amendment would not do enormous destruction to the beautification effort.

Cramer: It would not. We can do that next year.

Sweeney: I respectfully suggest, it would gut the bill.

Cramer: I refuse to yield further. The gentleman is not answering the question.²⁶⁰

House Minority Leader Gerald Ford intervened, concluding, “If you are for economy, we should try to strike from the bill the additional authorization of \$493 million.” Congressman William Howard Harsha agreed that the government “has no money of its own with which to pay for this largesse,” and thus was “driv[ing] the cost of borrowing money to an alltime high,” thereby hurting “the small businessmen, and the homebuilders” who were “trying to find adequate funds with which to meet their current needs.” Despite Republican efforts, the amendment to strike out the beautification appropriation failed, 48 to 65. Cramer left the meeting shortly thereafter, forfeiting an opportunity to comment on an amendment that would permit governors to divert highway funds into mass transportation systems, an amendment that was nevertheless handily defeated.²⁶¹

On August 31, 1966, Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1966. Fuzzy sentiments set the tone for the final hearing. Democratic Congressman Kluczynski described Cramer as “one of the great men on the minority side, . . . a very good friend of mine, who . . . knows as much about highways as anyone in the country.” Cramer responded in kind: “There is no finer and more cooperative man in the Congress than the gentleman from Illinois.” One cause for Cramer’s warmth was clear. Ford had presented a “motion to recommit the bill” that struck out the \$493 million beautification appropriation, a motion that had prevailed.²⁶²

The Missing Link

In 1965, Dick Pope, creator of Cypress Gardens, urged citizens of Bradenton to “holler” for an Interstate 75 extension from St. Petersburg.²⁶³ Conspicuously missing from the Florida interstate outlays was a connection from Tampa Bay to Miami. Construction costs continued to inflate year after year, creating a sense of urgency among road officials, politicians, and constituents. As costs increased, a succession of legislators, governors, and road officials from all around the state engaged in a heated debate on the question of how to build the “Missing Link.”

Without question, highway officials agreed that a controlled-access route should be built from Tampa to Miami, but most assumed that the Florida Turnpike Authority would construct the route. On its face, the question was simple. Two options remained: Florida could try to secure Interstate status so that the federal government would pay for ninety percent of the highway. Or Florida could build the highway as part of the turnpike. At first, it may have seemed the question was already settled. The federal government had already allotted Florida 1,100 miles of highway; Florida had already decided where to place that mileage; the Missing Link didn’t make the cut. That might have been the end of the debate, were it not for the remarks of a United States

Congressman whose prescient knowledge of interstate highway matters was impossible to ignore.

Since 1957, if not earlier, and through the rest of his Congressional career, the goal of bringing an expressway through St. Petersburg and connecting Tampa Bay to Miami was at the top of Cramer's agenda. Newspaper reports provide glimpses into his efforts. In a speech to the St. Petersburg shoe merchants, Cramer foresaw problems with the termination of I-4, which, the *St. Petersburg Times* summarized, would "put too great responsibility on state, county and city governments to provide connecting links to handle traffic." St. Petersburg needed as much expressway as possible to "channel traffic on to the Sunshine Skyway without clogging existing east-west and north-south arteries." As of 1957, 1,000 miles of interstate mileage still had not been designated, so Cramer put in a request for the Tampa Bay to Miami link, which had to compete with requests from other states "amounting to some 12,000 miles." In lieu of the states' mileage demands, the Senate Public Works Committee considered a bill adding 7,000 miles to the system, but failed.²⁶⁴

On February 2, 1962, the mileage issue made *Tampa Tribune* headlines when W. T. (Billy) Mayo, the State Road Department's Interstate Highway Administrator, claimed that Florida "stood little chance" of obtaining extra mileage for southwest Florida. His assumption was based upon a recent application for "a relatively few more miles" for a causeway at Cape Canaveral, an obvious shoe-in, Mayo figured, given the site's relevance to national defense. "If they wouldn't give us any for that," concluded Mayo, "I feel certain we couldn't get any" for southwest Florida. While Governor Farris Bryant offered no comment, press aide John Evans was pessimistic, noting the "reluctance" of

the Bureau of Public Roads to offer extra miles. Former Governor Collins nevertheless believed that the state should make “a last-ditch effort . . . before a final decision is made on building a toll turnpike in that area.” That same week, the state authorized a \$60,000 feasibility study for a Tampa to Miami turnpike.²⁶⁵

The following day, Cramer’s cherubic face appeared in the *Tribune* with a look as bold as the accompanying headline, “Cramer Sees Tampa-Miami Route Being Designated ‘Before 1968.’” Cramer predicted that “‘there isn’t any question that toward the end of the program (in 1967-68) or before,’ the federal government will re-evaluate its interstate program [and] consider additional mileage allocations.” Until then, Cramer recommended that the state initiate a free road program “on a 50-50 basis” with the federal government, but the state did not take action.²⁶⁶

It is unclear what assurances Cramer had in 1962 that the Interstate program would be reevaluated by 1968. As ranking Republican on the public works committee, he knew a lot of things no one back in Florida knew. What is certain is that he did everything in his power to make sure that the reevaluation took place according to his designs. As it turned out, his 1968 prediction was prophetic.

The task of bringing mileage to southwest Florida was no straightforward matter. It demanded the full use of Cramer’s authority and ability. It is not hard to detect in Cramer’s maneuvers some subtle and devastatingly effective measures to discreetly make way for the construction of expressways through his own district and region, yet without leaving the faucet on for too many other members of Congress to tap the same resources for their own districts. In his endeavors to preserve the authority of the Bureau of Public Roads, block appropriations for beautification, and deny until a later date reimbursements

to existing highways along the interstate route, Cramer endeavored to ensure the timely completion of the Interstate system and prevent it from being manipulated by overly-narrow, local interests, the worst-case scenario being the proverbial politician trying to route the highway through his backyard, charge a toll, and collect federal funds at the same time, with federal mileage elsewhere denied where it was actually needed.

In 1965, Cramer inserted a crucial piece of legislation into that year's Federal-Aid Highway Act that in following years would work in favor of southwest Florida. The measure called for the Bureau of Public Roads to issue a report, in January 1968 and "every second year thereafter," containing "estimates of the future highway needs of the Nation," thus providing for "an orderly development of the Federal-aid highway programs after 1972."²⁶⁷ (Responsibility for the report would eventually transfer to the Department of Transportation.)

Once signed into law, Cramer put a great deal of effort into steering the report, exploiting to the fullest his position in the public works committee. Much effort went into ensuring that the new Department of Transportation cooperated with the states, rather than devolve into a maverick technocracy, as previously discussed. On April 28, 1966, Cramer voiced his concern: "There have been disturbing rumors during the past few months that the States might not be permitted to fully participate in the formulation of plans for a program for improving the Nation's highway systems after 1972." It would probably have been fairly easy for one or more State Road Departments to slip through the cracks of the proposed study. Cramer was not about to allow Florida to be one of those states. Although the study was signed into law on August 28, 1965, Cramer learned on February 25, 1966 that Floyd B. Boyen, chairman of the Florida Road Department,

had still not received a federal request to “formulate any recommended future improvement program” for Florida.²⁶⁸

On March 15, 1966, Cramer wrote to Federal Highway Administrator Rex Whitton, saying, “I am quite disturbed to find that apparently the Bureau of Public Roads has not requested the State road department to formulate a recommended improvement program.” On April 19, Whitton testified before the House Public Works Subcommittee on Roads. “During interrogation by me,” Cramer recalled, “Mr. Whitton stated that the Bureau of Public Roads was in the process of formulating guidelines to be followed by the States in submitting their recommendations,” and that “the guidelines would be submitted to the States early enough to permit them to make proper studies.” Somewhat reassured, but not easily cajoled, Cramer reminded Congress of the crucial role of the states in shaping federal highway programs: “Improvement of Federal-aid highways, ever since the commencement of the Federal-aid highway program in 1916, has been carried out cooperatively by the Federal Government and the States. This partner relationship has worked exceptionally well and has been the model emulated by other programs. The present highway program, including construction of the Interstate and Defense Highway System, enacted into law in 1956, was a result of joint studies, planning, and recommendations of the Bureau of Public Roads and the State highway departments. It is essential to the public interest that future highway programs continue this partnership concept.”²⁶⁹

In a corresponding letter to Cramer, Whitton provided an update on the state of the Bureau’s review. It is worth noting that Whitton’s description of the review process closely matched Cramer’s worst fears of how a new Department of Transportation might

conduct studies, such as resorting to “averages or statistical data or some theoretical planning concept” that could “result in a mediocre transportation system.” The situation was precarious enough under the current system. Understandably, Whitton requested that the states “classify” all their roads based on the “functions they perform . . . on a consistent basis throughout the country.” But before the states could do that, they had to wait for federal officials to develop assessment standards. Using congressional guidelines, the federal government would then designate where new roads would be built. Hence, Congress still had a part in planning new routes, but it was becoming more indirect. Assisting the evaluation, said Whitton, the government would “have the advantage of an analytical tool [...] that will permit a mathematical simulation of travel based on estimates of future population and economic growth and distribution.”²⁷⁰ Such an analytical tool probably did not inspire confidence in members of Congress such as Cramer, confident that the individual states had a pretty good idea where new highways were needed. Cramer would have to find creative ways to work the system to his advantage.

In 1966, Cramer pointed up the need for a “Tampa-St. Petersburg-Miami” expressway during the Federal Highway Act of 1966 hearings. In the process, he skillfully insisted that existing state toll roads along interstate routes should not be reimbursed. The measure was effective at reserving funds for un-built routes such as those he desired, considering that toll roads undoubtedly comprised the bulk of state constructed expressways. The measure was also, at least on the surface, ethically benign, that is, not overtly self-serving, no matter to what degree he was actually shaping federal policy to serve his own district.²⁷¹

With the January 1968 deadline approaching, 1967 was a crucial year for any state hoping to gain extra mileage. On January 16, 1967, Cramer reminded Congress that the Department of Transportation's report was to "include specific route designations for any proposed increases in mileage on the Interstate System." With that in mind, he introduced three bills. The first called for "the construction of an interstate highway from the Interstate 75 terminus at Tampa, Fla., and from the Interstate 4 terminus at St. Petersburg, Fla., through Bradenton, Sarasota, Venice, Punta Gorda, Fort Lauderdale, and Homestead." "In my opinion," he reasoned, this "missing link is one of the most obvious inadequacies in the Interstate System. . . . There is no interstate route whatsoever linking the west coast of Florida with the lower east coast area, despite the fact that the west coast would be the shortest route from many Midwestern and Eastern cities to the Fort Lauderdale-Miami area. In addition, the west coast of Florida is one of the fastest growing areas in the entire nation. Interstate 75, which links such populated areas as Atlanta, Birmingham, Chattanooga, St. Louis, New Orleans, Dallas, and Chicago, with the west coast of Florida presently deadends in Tampa. Interstate 4, which links many populous areas of the eastern United States to the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area, presently deadends in St. Petersburg. I therefore feel it essential that a new interstate highway be constructed so that the interstate traffic presently terminating in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area can be funneled down the lower west coast to the Fort Lauderdale-Miami area."²⁷²

Cramer's second bill, which never made it off the ground, "provided for the construction of Interstate 65 from Montgomery, Alabama to Ocala, via Tallahassee."²⁷³ A third bill was intended to prevent toll interests from building on designated interstate

routes, a measure that would prove of crucial importance in Florida. Any tolls installed on the interstate would have to be in the interests of the public and would also require permission from the Secretary of Transportation.²⁷⁴

On November 9, 1967, he introduced a crucial measure, requiring the Secretary of Transportation to “give due regard to the extension of routes which now terminate within municipalities that are served by a single Interstate route so as to provide traffic service entirely through such municipalities to connect with an arterial highway beyond the boundaries thereof. This . . . provision is to remedy the situation now existing in some municipalities where the Interstate System terminates within a municipality and will dump large volumes of traffic on a city street system that is inadequate to accommodate movement of such traffic in and through the municipality.”²⁷⁵ This condition made St. Petersburg and Tampa prime candidates for additional mileage, given the termination of Interstate 75 in Tampa and Interstate 4 in St. Petersburg. Cramer thus put Southwest Florida on the front burner without even mentioning the region by name. On January 2, 1968, this measure was signed into law in the Howard-Cramer Act, which also added 200 miles to the Interstate system to be shared between Florida and New Jersey.²⁷⁶

Although the Howard-Cramer Act favored cities like St. Petersburg and Tampa where federal expressways dead-ended, it did not specify that the additional mileage would go specifically to these cities. According to Congressman John L. Mica, Cramer “crafted” the 1968 Federal Aid Highway Act to southwest Florida’s advantage. Not only did Congress demand that the Secretary of Transportation privilege the Tampa Bay area in allotting the extra 200 miles, Congress also added another 1,500 miles to the interstate system, for which Congress insisted the Tampa to Miami route should receive prime

consideration. Mica described Cramer's management of the 1968 Federal Highway Act as "the capstone of his service on the Public Works Committee."²⁷⁷

Once again, Cramer earned the warm esteem of his colleagues, including Clausen: "I believe, in all sincerity, that the gentleman from Florida is respected by members of the subcommittee as much or possibly more than any other Member on either side of the aisle. Certainly, no one has been a better student, become more knowledgeable, or demonstrated the ability to articulate our road and highway message to the Congress or the Nation, than the ranking Republican on the Public Works Committee --- Bill Cramer. I am sure that future generations of Americans will come to appreciate the work he has done and the contributions he has made to our nation's road and highway system." In addition, Speaker of the House John McCormack "came down from his rostrum to personally congratulate Cramer and . . . was quoted as saying: 'Bill, this has been one of the most statesmanlike presentations that I have observed since coming to the Congress.'"²⁷⁸

Back in Florida, Cramer pressed the issue with Boyd.²⁷⁹ However, when Cramer boasted of increasing the state's mileage, critics responded with doubts and concerns that the congressman might actually be placing Florida's road programs in jeopardy in the name of politics. Cramer assumed that the signing of the 1968 Federal Aid Highway Act would "slide into reality" the construction of the missing link, especially given the fact that Boyd was a Floridian. However, the *Tampa Tribune* reported that "unnamed 'high officials'" had warned "state officials that assignment of the additional mileage will be on a substitute basis; therefore, the 1,500 additional miles created by Congress was only "theoretical;" "to get a Tampa-Miami Interstate 75 Florida will have to give up an equal

dollar volume on other interstate roads,” such as I-10 and I-95. The American Association of State Highway Officials shared this interpretation of the 1968 Act.²⁸⁰

Given the Interstate system’s tight budget, such fears were not irrational. The *Tribune* reported that funding would decrease from \$4 billion every year “through 1973” to only \$2.25 billion for 1974. Without an increased appropriation for 1974, warned state officials, “someone will have to decide where the available money can best be spent.” Hank Drane, political editor for the *Jacksonville Times Union*, was also worried: “It would be unfortunate ... for I-95 or I-10 to become the missing link.” The *Tribune* also voiced concern that designation of I-75 from Tampa to Miami could be just as harmful to southwest Florida’s highway development, given the delays, budget limits, and complex protocol of the interstate program. The Turnpike Authority, it was argued, could get the job done much faster, because, unlike the Interstate program, it was not required to purchase all the right-of-way and relocate individuals in the path of the highway in advance of construction. While the state could construct the road “in about five years,” it was estimated, the federal government would not complete the job until 1985.²⁸¹ Later that year, Cramer denied the charge that the federal government would take a lot longer to construct the highway, claiming that right-of-way could be quickly bought and contracts begun in 1970, with the help of \$300 million in federal funds.²⁸²

As a new toll versus free debate emerged, the ‘will of the people’ became a contested topic. “To most of the communities south of Tampa Bay,” claimed the *Tribune*, “the debate over tolls or no-tolls is academic. Community leaders say they want the road built—built by whatever means possible, and finished not later than yesterday.”²⁸³ According to a *St. Petersburg Times* report, however, that was not

completely true. While Richard A. A. Martin, chairman of the Highway Committee for the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, assisted the Turnpike Authority with its feasibility studies, he openly hoped for delays in the Turnpike's progress. "The longer the study time," Martin reasoned, "the more time Mr. Cramer . . . has to get us an interstate."²⁸⁴

In the weeks following the 1968 general election, prospects for a federally funded I-75 in southwest Florida finally came to fruition. On November 24, 1968, the *Times* reported that Federal Highway Administrator Lowell K. Bridwell would announce the fate of Florida's missing link, which was competing with 20 other routes totaling 10,000 miles, for a share of the added 1,500 miles. Practically quoting Cramer, Bridwell hinted that the Tampa Bay-Miami route was one of the "obvious and serious gaps" in the Interstate system. Even if Cramer did not have his way during the remaining months of the Johnson Administration, he was predicted to have "a pipeline into the White House," given his "early and ardent" support of the Nixon campaign. Nixon, it might be added, was "a frequent visitor to Miami and has a substantial investment in real estate there." "I'm fully confident we'll get the mileage," said Cramer, "either under the present administration or under the new one."²⁸⁵ Days before Boyd was expected to announce the recipients of the additional mileage, Cramer viewed the event as a test of congressional authority. "I understand the recommendations are on Boyd's desk," he said on December 10. "If the congressional mandate is followed, I-75 has to be included."²⁸⁶

Mickey Mouse Road

On December 13, 1968, Boyd approved a “252-mile extension” for southwest Florida’s missing link, although Florida was denied a 52 mile extension of I-95 through Homestead to connect it with I-75. Florida fared nearly twice as well as any other state, with 138.5 miles allotted to Texas, 130 miles to New York, 109 miles to California, 105.8 to Wisconsin, 38.8 to Georgia, and 19.2 to Alabama. The *Times* celebrated Cramer’s “legislative coup,” noting how he “tailored a piece of legislation to fit Florida’s need for a Tampa-Bay-Miami interstate link.”²⁸⁷ “This is one of the happiest days we’ve had in this office,” proclaimed Cramer’s administrative assistant, Richard Haber, who reportedly “beamed with pride.”²⁸⁸ The *Tribune* also acknowledged Cramer’s allies, including Representatives Sam Gibbons of Tampa, James Haley of Sarasota, and William Rogers of Palm Beach, all Democrats.²⁸⁹

An editorial in the *Tribune* proclaimed, “All Florida will profit from this expansion of the high-speed highway network but Tampa and the West Coast will be especial beneficiaries. Present routes southward from Tampa to the thriving cities of Bradenton, Sarasota, Fort Myers and Naples are congested and often hazardous. Poor roads retard the development of all. Tampa, sitting at the crossroads of two Interstate highways, I-75 and I-4, will have an advantage few cities enjoy. This fast and cheap accessibility to other parts of Florida and the nation will be an economic asset of

tremendous value.”²⁹⁰

The *Tribune* editorial also touted Boyd’s designation as “an encouraging example of bi-partisan effort,” the kind that “Floridians expect.” “For the motorist caught on one of the crowded two-lane roads leading to Miami is neither Democrat nor Republican; he’s just a disgusted driver.”²⁹¹

Following the immediate rush of excitement, Floridians began scrutinizing Boyd’s approved route, finding many aspects of it unusual and unsavory. The criticisms were numerous and widespread; and the reaction was immediate and fierce. Of particular concern was the omission of a proposed beltway along the eastern side of Tampa Bay. The beltway was designed to avoid the Tampa business district, through which it was deemed “impractical and too expensive” to build, according to Jay W. Brown of the Florida Road Department. Rather, a longer, circuitous I-75 beltway would begin north of Tampa, extending eastward around the city before progressing to Miami.²⁹² Upon discovering the omission of this eastern loop, the *Times* described how southbound traffic on I-75 would face two unsavory alternatives: continue driving on U.S. 41 to Palmetto, or “face the Skyway toll” on the western beltway through St. Petersburg. (The Interstate route just past the southern end of the Skyway also included three to five miles of non-limited access highway, a definite hazard. State Road Board Member Donald R. Crane, Jr. noted, “That’s being four-laned now, . . . but maybe we better buy limited access property there.”)²⁹³

The *Times* speculated that Boyd’s omission must have been a political oversight. A report, entitled “Interstate 75: ‘Missing Link’ in Political Thought?” noted that Boyd’s decision made the western route through Pinellas County the principal path to Miami.

Quoted in the report was an anonymous, “politically astute [Republican] Floridian on Capitol Hill,” who puzzled over why Boyd, a Democrat, would reward a Republican Congressman’s district when he could have just as easily reward Democrat Sam Gibbons of Tampa, who desired the expressway on the eastern side of Tampa Bay. “Well,” responded Boyd, “it wasn’t a politically motivated decision. [...] Most of that mileage went to states with Republican governors and a lot of Republican congressmen and senators. We didn’t do it on a political basis. We did it on a basis of need as we saw it, based on the criteria which were in the act. Politics didn’t enter into it.”²⁹⁴

A second set of dilemmas surrounding the southern part of the I-75 extension erupted in consternation throughout southern Florida. First, at its terminus, I-75 would link to “the overloaded Palmetto Expressway in northwest Dade,” described as “a death row for motorists” and “among the major traffic engineering disasters of a county with the first or second largest automotive vehicle registration per capita in the nation.”²⁹⁵

Said an editorial in the *Miami Herald*: “It would be difficult to find a professional highway engineer in South Florida who would recommend dumping more traffic into the Palmetto Bypass as the Boyd plan would do with the southeast terminus of I-75. We suggest that the Secretary of Transportation find out how many people have been killed on the bypass before he ties it into the Interstate system.”²⁹⁶

The Palmetto Expressway predicament was symptomatic of a much larger problem. The State Road Department had asked for I-75 to run alongside the Tamiami Trail. Boyd’s Department ignored that request and switched the route to Alligator Alley. Initially, Boyd’s announcement appeared, to some, to have marked the end of Florida’s Tampa-to-Miami toll route endeavors. “Now such a toll road cannot be built without

specific permission of the U.S. Department of Transportation,” reported the *Tribune* after Boyd’s announcement, citing a “sleeper clause” in the 1968 Federal Highway Act barring the construction of “any toll road in the same traffic corridor as an interstate” without federal approval.²⁹⁷ However, the *Times* and a vitriolic editorial from the *Miami Herald* offered a different interpretation. “The plan,” warned the *Times*, is to four-lane ‘Alligator Alley,’ a toll road from Naples to Fort Lauderdale, and make it part of the interstate extension --- possibly with the toll still intact.”²⁹⁸

In addition, Boyd’s rejection of the US 41 route desired by Cramer, an “outraged” State Road Board Chairman Michael O’Neill, and many others, dealt southern Florida an I-75 that would stray far north of “the huge jetport under construction west of Miami.”²⁹⁹ Exclaimed the *Herald*: “One of the reasons for locating the new South Florida jetport just north of the Tamiami trail was the expectation that I-75 was coming through to serve as a high-speed, limited access highway for both private cars and public transportation serving air travelers. [...] [W]e would not be surprised if it turns out that the [Turnpike] authority is right now thinking about building a toll road between the jetport and Miami. That would be a money grabber to rival Miami’s airport expressway that took in \$188,530 last month in dimes.”³⁰⁰

Extending criticisms beyond Boyd’s decision, newspapers from around the state launched attacks against Boyd himself, along with the Turnpike Authority and its beneficiaries. Florida’s prominent new Disney establishment meanwhile armed critics with a novel form of epithet. While the *St. Petersburg Times* likened the Turnpike Authority to “the Beagle Boys watching Scrooge McDuck’s money, the *Miami Herald* complained of the “Mickey Mousing of I-75, all at the expense of the taxpaying

motorist.³⁰¹ “This hapless chap pays once in state and federal gasoline taxes, next in surcharges to fund the Interstate program, and thirdly, though perhaps not finally (they get you coming and going) in toll charges.”³⁰²

AAA Motor Clubs of Florida complained that the I-75 extension “critically ignores the worst needs of population centers while protecting the ever-eager bond schemers with two built-in toll traps. . . . The Boyd plan, is brazen, bizarre and is an affront to every citizen and community on the west coast of Florida. . . . Mr. Boyd’s proposal ignores the will of Congress and the desire of the people of Florida during the dying days of the Johnson administration.”³⁰³

In addition to the above criticisms, “enough to hurt a few eardrums in Washington,” the *St. Petersburg Times* circulated a more serious allegation.³⁰⁴ Citing a source close to Boyd, the *Times* claimed that Boyd had actually intended “to veto any mileage for Florida.” When apprised of Boyd’s demand, Federal Highway Administrator Lowell K. Bridwell and Director of Public Roads Frank Turner purportedly “protested to Boyd” on the grounds that Congress insisted on providing for Florida’s missing link. In reply, Boyd told the officials to “approve only the minimum necessary.” Unsure of Boyd’s “motive,” the *Times* pointed out that the Interstate expansion “engineered by Republican Cramer was opposed by the Democratic Administration.”³⁰⁵ Boyd described the whole scenario as “ridiculous,” insisting “that he had no feelings whatsoever about the Florida project.”³⁰⁶

Reacting to Boyd’s omission of the eastern loop, the Hillsborough County Commission quickly turned to the Turnpike Authority to construct the eastern bypass as part of a comprehensive road development plan including six other expressways.

However, most, including State Road Department officials who withheld their appeals to the Department of Transportation, agreed that the prudent course of action was to wait until the accession of former Massachusetts governor John Volpe, “an old friend of Cramer,” the new Transportation Secretary under President Nixon. Then, Cramer would have a good opportunity to appeal for the eastern loop and reroute I-75 along the Tamiami Trail. “I cannot understand nor do I approve of the DOT’s deletion of the Tampa bypass connecting Interstate 75,” said Cramer. “I have already put into motion the necessary expressions of interest in revising this decision. . . . With a total of approximately 58 miles presently still unallocated, I believe it may be possible to get the needed mileage (approximately 32 miles) added to include the Tampa bypass. The *Times* added, “If it isn’t possible to get it approved . . . [Cramer] will get it incorporated in the 1970 Federal-Aid Highway Act.”³⁰⁷ The state of Florida had perhaps another ‘ace in the hole,’ having elected Nixon in 1960 and 1968, “the 210,000 vote margin the state gave him [in 1968] comprised about half his national popular vote lead over Hubert Humphrey.”³⁰⁸

On the opposing side, Turnpike Chairman Charles W. Rex also planned to appeal to Volpe to “scuttle the interstate for a toll road.” Volpe, said Rex, “is governor of Massachusetts and they’re very toll road conscious.” The *Times* emphasized Rex’s sardonic sense of humor. Looking forward to a December 17 Hillsborough County meeting, Rex planned to ask the pro-Interstate, State Road Board Chairman Michael O’Neill to explain Boyd’s decision and “watch his face turn red.”³⁰⁹

The most glaring problem with Boyd’s designation of I-75 along Alligator Alley was that, thanks to Cramer’s legislative endeavors, its routing along a toll route was

unlawful. According to Cliff Enfield, who now served as minority counsel for the House Committee on Public Works, the Department of Transportation had three options: “Change the law, get the toll removed (this would be up to the state) or move the route.”³¹⁰ Boyd believed the routing was legal, though his reasoning is unclear. According to the *Times*, Boyd believed that Florida might “be required to pay off the toll road bonds before it could obtain the interstate construction money,” an action that would likely benefit toll-way bondholders, assuming the Turnpike interests could be compelled to relinquish the route.³¹¹ Earlier in the debacle, a *Tribune* editorialist posited the notion that Boyd’s “cheerful blueprint” for Alligator Alley could be put into action: “It can be aided in . . . studies already done by the Turnpike Authority. Governor Kirk, we trust, will instruct his Turnpike board to turn over to his [largely pro-Interstate] Road Board whatever data will be helpful.”³¹²

Amidst the fray, the 1969 event pointed up the need for a reorganization of Florida’s transportation governance. John Pennekamp of the *Miami Herald* emphasized problems stemming from the conflicting agendas and “lack of coordination” between the Turnpike and the Road Board. “[I]n spite of the fact that Dade County is by far the biggest gasoline tax contributor to the Road Department, and most of the tollway traffic is generated here,” the region’s contributions were not reflected in the local road quality, with “residents riding jam-packed on two-laned highways, some the busiest in the South.” Pennekamp concluded: “Certainly one coordinated department would serve better than viewpoints as widely separated as . . . the two chairmen.”³¹³ Months later, in July, 1969, Florida created a Department of Transportation, with some measure of authority over the Turnpike Authority, and abolished the Road Board.

Despite Florida's optimistic outlook with Nixon in office, nearly a year passed with the state still in uncertainty over the fate of its expressways. The only good news for the Interstate was that the Turnpike Authority could not legally build along the Interstate route without Volpe's approval. Cramer said he would be "amazed and shocked" if Volpe approved. Cramer also persuaded Volpe to "set aside" Boyd's Alligator Alley designation while the Florida Road Department submitted new recommendations to the Federal Highway Administration. "Then," said Cramer, "it is just a matter of getting approval of the secretary and the federal highway administration," a process that would take three or four months. Cramer was also "hopeful" about the eastern loop, especially since it looked as though the District of Columbia might forfeit some mileage.³¹⁴ Governor Kirk was apparently of two minds, "talk[ing] off and on of building a toll road" along the bypass, but "back[ing] off after Cramer . . . insisted the bypass would be restored." Kirk also ordered a "moratorium . . . on new interstate highway construction contracts," described by his administration as a measure to "fight inflation."³¹⁵

With regards to highway legislation, including the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1969, nothing of great import stands out in Cramer's remarks in the 91st Congress. Numerous other members of the Public Works Committee shared his desire for ample appropriations to provide for the additional Interstate mileage, so he merely backed such proposals with his support.³¹⁶ Likewise, with a Republican Secretary of Transportation, there was no need at the moment, and perhaps it would have been pretentious at the time, to direct the actions of the Department of Transportation. On October 7, 1969, the *Times* reported that Volpe and Cramer would jointly announce federal authorization for a \$60 million, 47-mile Tampa bypass. For the time being, the Turnpike Authority would be

barred from building along the route, which would eventually be constructed, toll-free.³¹⁷

Contrary to the jetport interests, Interstate 75 from Tampa to Miami would be constructed along the Alligator Alley route, but without tolls.

Southern Strategy

As an accomplished public works legislator, Cramer was hopeful that Florida would welcome his bid for the United States Senate. He was in line to accept the Republican nomination for the ailing George Smathers's seat in 1968, which would indeed have been an opportune time for Cramer to campaign. Along with his public works endeavors, Cramer's recent accomplishments on the Judiciary Committee had won widespread approval from conservatives, who were quite happy with the recent passage of his anti-riot legislation in 1967. Instead, he yielded the opportunity to Edward J. Gurney.³¹⁸ As early as March 1965, Gurney had been considered as a candidate for governor for the 1966 election, receiving "strong sentiment" throughout Florida, according to GOP National Committeewoman Helene Morris.³¹⁹ While Claude Kirk became the Republican nominee, Gurney entertained thoughts of running in the 1968 Senate race as early as December 1965.³²⁰ It was not long after Gurney won the 1968 Senate race that Republicans looked forward to taking the remaining Senate seat in 1970. Cramer was "seriously considering" running for Senate, and Gurney was supportive. In January 1969, Gurney predicted that Florida Republicans, led by the state GOP Chairman William Murfin, Kirk, Gurney, and three Congressmen including Cramer, were "going to go into the 1970 election in Florida completely united and unified."³²¹

“Frankly,” remarked Cramer, “I was a little surprised at the amount of enthusiasm, which seemed universal, that I encountered at . . . Ed’s victory reception. . . . [B]ut I don’t have to have the job on the other hand. I have a good berth in the House and I am certainly not going to give it up unless I am pretty certain I can win.”³²²

At an April 9 meeting, Cramer aide Jack Insko remarked that it was “amazing how the Gurney people are coming across to us.” Asked whether he would rather run against Farris Bryant, Sam Gibbons of Tampa, or Paul Rogers of West Palm Beach, Cramer replied, “if you wish to talk philosophically, then I would hope to be in a position – as the senator (Gurney) was – to run against a liberal.”

Gurney offered supportive remarks. Cramer “looks like a pretty live prospect,” said Gurney. “All the people who worked for me, I am sure, will pretty much support Congressman Cramer.” Louis Frey, freshman Congressman from Orlando, was considering the seat, but was waiting to see what Cramer would do.³²³ Later that year, Ray Osborne campaigned for the seat.³²⁴ With or without Gurney’s support, Cramer was by far the strongest Republican contender. Asked whether he would support Cramer in a primary, Gurney assumed Cramer would run unopposed and there would be no primary.³²⁵

In May 1969, rumors spread that the Republicans might “Dump Cramer.” Gurney replied, “I’m a party leader, . . . and I will have no part in dumping anyone. I don’t know where these rumors are coming from.”³²⁶ A letter from Gurney to Cramer indicates that as late as March 24, 1970, the two politicians shared warm relations.³²⁷ Then, on April 20, Gurney unceremoniously dumped Cramer in a press release that neglected to even mention the Congressman’s name.³²⁸ By the following month, Gurney was promoting a

“nation-wide drive to raise 1-million dollars” for a new Republican contestant, Harrold Carswell, a move that disturbed many Republicans. “What is good for [...] a faction of the Republican Party in Florida,” responded Dorothy Swanson of Winter Park, “is not necessarily good for the Republican Party nation-wide. . . . [T]his investment . . . couldn’t be a more effective scheme to promote internal friction than if the Democrats had thought it up. . . . [D]uring my primary campaign for State Committeewoman in 1966 . . . Rep. Gurney told me he never had and never would, take part in primary campaigns and added, ‘You know me better than that.’ I believed him. But now it appears that the sterling qualities of statesmanship were only a plating over the cheap brass of power politics. It is disillusioning.”³²⁹

Carswell was a quintessential post-office Republican of the South, defined by legal scholar Bruce H. Kalk as office seekers “[d]edicated to seeking postmasterships and federal marshallsips whenever the GOP was in power” who bore little chance of being “selected on merit alone.” Kalk offers a devastating account of Carswell. During the Eisenhower administration, Carswell was appointed federal attorney and, with Cramer’s recommendation, federal judge for the Northern District of Florida.³³⁰ Carswell, “reluctant to exert himself,” managed to have the lowest caseload in the Fifth Circuit, yet his backlog grew to the extent that Congress had to create another judgeship for his district.³³¹ Nevertheless, in 1969, President Nixon appointed Carswell to the U.S. Court of Appeals.³³² An “ill-closeted segregationist,” Carswell seemed a good fit for Nixon’s southern strategy and was nominated for the Supreme Court in January, 1970. However, even the President was shocked when he discovered that earlier in his career, Carswell had sold property with a whites only covenant and chartered a whites-only booster club

for the Florida State University football team.³³³ Carswell's nomination was scuttled, but his career in politics was not quite over. Regardless of his previous endorsements of Cramer, Gurney suddenly endorsed Carswell in the 1970 Florida senate primary:

Sometimes dramatic events can verge to an inevitable happening and such is true of Judge Carswell's candidacy to the U.S. Senate. President Nixon pledged to the people to change the balance and direction of the Supreme Court. Twice his will has been slaughtered by the Senate, pressured by the very liberal forces of this country. The Carswell and Haynsworth nominations were much more than Supreme Court nominations, they were massive confrontation struggles between the very liberal activists against the majority of the nation – the silent majority, if you will. The time has come to take this contest to the people in the elections of 1970. Judge Carswell has offered himself to go to the Senate and help the President fight this battle for progressive conservative government. Judge Carswell is committed to a cause; it's right, it's just, it must be fought for, and it will be won. I congratulate Judge Carswell, I offer him my support and I urge all people of Florida, Republicans and Democrats, to join this cause for progressive conservative government and send Harrold Carswell to the United States Senate.³³⁴

The *St. Petersburg Times* played its part in the race. Despite sharing with Cramer an almost identical highway construction agenda, Democrat Nelson Poynter did not support Cramer, and his paper played up the contest between Cramer and Carswell. A lengthy *Times* profile described Cramer as “Little Boy Conservative with his thumb in the hole in the dike, trying to prevent the erosion of change.” At first, the profile put forth the appearance of dealing evenhandedly with Cramer: “Friends will find mirrored in the record the image of a man who is flexible, conservative, staunchly Republican, and jealous of the rights of the states. Foes will see instead a man who is illogical, negative, abrasively partisan, and racist.”³³⁵

At last, the *Times* landed on a central point: “This much is clear: Cramer's greatest consistency is his inconsistency. He will oppose a new departure today, but if

time brings popularity to the program, he will not just support it but embrace it. [...] He will fight a proposal if it comes from a Democrat in the White House, but back the same idea without a blush if a Republican asks his support.”³³⁶

From there, it got personal: “His public ethics are those of a private businessman. Cramer makes no effort at hounds-tooth cleanliness, nor to avoid the appearance of evil. Since coming to Congress in 1955, he has stated unequivocally that his income from his St. Petersburg law firm is nobody’s business, headed a laundry that did business with the government, managed to avoid prosecution on a minor hit-and-run charge that followed a cocktail party, and driven a luxury car provided under a very favorable leasing arrangement by the Ford Motor Company.”³³⁷

While the article provided details on the more controversial aspects of his career, the Times only had a few points to make about Cramer’s accomplishments on the Roads Subcommittee: that back in 1959, he voted against a highway safety measure before becoming a highway safety advocate; and that since 1956, Cramer had “supported highway construction legislation,” to say nothing of the many proposals he initiated and the remarkable interstate mileage he helped appropriate for Florida and the rest of the nation.³³⁸

Cramer won 62.5 percent of the primary vote, but lost the general election to Democrat Lawton Chiles by a 7.7 percent margin.³³⁹

Breaking New Ground

Gurney's endorsement of Carswell coincided with the April 21 commencement of the 1970 Federal-Aid Highway Act hearings. Cramer later said, towards the end of his last year in Congress, that he had been "determined," with the bipartisan cooperation of his colleagues in the Public Works Committee, "to break new ground." "Incidentally," the retiring Congressman said, "I had to break with my administration, the present administration, in order to do so."³⁴⁰

It is interesting to observe the evolution of Cramer's highway agenda through the course of his career. During his early years, an unsympathetic critic might presume that to Cramer, the Interstate System was an end in itself, that the Congressman was merely a talented monomaniac who would continue legislating barebones expressways ad infinitum. According to the *Times*, it took him a while to come around on highway safety, and he made every effort to shelve beautification efforts. But throughout the course of his career, and especially from 1968 onward, the legislator can be seen acknowledging and, with his characteristic sharpness, strategy, and prioritization, thoughtfully addressing an increasingly complex array of challenges. It is not as though Cramer suddenly became aware of these challenges and then abruptly reacted. Rather, he had been schooling himself on various transportation issues for years. He was simply unwavering in his priorities. Until Eisenhower's first priority was accomplished, to

expend energy on other projects would have been profligacy. Later, as the primary agenda neared completion, Cramer began ushering his characteristic energy and spirit into new projects.

Although there is little if anything in the congressional record in the way of overt dissent from the Nixon administration, Cramer's fighting spirit had obviously returned. He openly regretted giving up his cherished role on the roads subcommittee, and he was determined to make the most of his final year. As for the administration, the White House apparently did not approve of Cramer's scope of the challenges ahead. On May 14, while Gurney was launching his million-dollar fund-raising campaign, Cramer and fourteen legislators introduced a bill to ensure that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 would meet the nation's changing demands. First on the agenda, as usual, was ensuring that the interstate, which so far was 70 percent complete, received necessary funding. Already, the remaining construction was expected to cost the government \$13.7 billion more than estimated in 1968. To accommodate inflation, Cramer called for \$17.12 billion for 1972 to 1976.³⁴¹

Cramer still considered the interstate system "the backbone of the entire highway network of this country," and he wanted to see the nation complete the system before shifting "major attention to other highways." However, with roughly 900,000 miles in total Federal-Aid Highway Systems, the Interstate made up "only a small part" of America's highways. As soon as the Interstate System was completed, America had its work cut out in bringing all other highways up to government standards.³⁴²

Cramer urged Congress to look far ahead and implement an "after 1975" highway program, "so that necessary planning could be undertaken timely, and costly stops and

starts avoided in the transition from the current highway program to the one that will follow.” However, since Congress was not yet furnished with adequate, up-to-date information to develop such a plan, Cramer called for the Transportation Department “to develop, in cooperation with State highway departments and local governments, and to report to Congress in January of 1972, . . . detailed recommendations for a continuing Federal-aid highway program for the 15 year period from 1976 through 1990.” Until then, Cramer proposed immediately channeling funds into primary and secondary highways “for a spot improvement program to eliminate, on a priority basis, safety hazards.” His bill also called for the federal funding of “training programs to provide equal employment opportunities” during lulls in highway construction.³⁴³

The Congressman who had accomplished so much for federal expressways was also now calling attention to the need to “promote the improvement and use of urban highway public transportation systems.” He understood that mass transit would be a difficult sell for most motorists, but figured that if “comfortable, convenient, attractive, and safe buses operate over well-planned routes and on schedules that meet the needs of the people, many persons in metropolitan areas who drive,” people might be convinced to take the bus. In contrast to the period of interstate construction wherein the states had to strain to conform to federal standards, Cramer believed that Federal-aid highway programs should be “more flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of individual communities,” recommending a combination of highways and mass transit systems. However, not wanting to see money poorly spent, Cramer’s bill would allow for alternative uses of highway funds only if the alternative system was at least as effective as, and no more expensive than, a highway – a tall, perhaps even prohibitive, order.³⁴⁴

On November 25, 1970, Cramer made his final Congressional speech on behalf of highways. Here, Cramer mentioned that the long-range future highway programs he introduced in April were the crux of his “break” with the Nixon Administration. In order to “break new ground,” senior members of the Roads Subcommittee had learned that it did not matter whether a Republican or a Democratic controlled the White House; this special group would always have to push hard to make sure that America’s transportation demands were met.³⁴⁵ Cramer ran the gamut of issues that the 1970 Federal-Aid Highway Act needed to address. The alleviation of “urban congested areas” demanded a “highway oriented mass transit program.” He also called for “an indepth study of the problems relating to alcoholism” and safety measures on highway construction sites.³⁴⁶

Several members of the Roads Subcommittee were very close to Cramer and were sad to see him leave. Their remarks suggest they held him in very high esteem. Don H. Clausen, who played a prominent role in the shaping of the bill, credited Cramer as a “champion of building a better America.” Congressman Kluczynski of Illinois, Chairman of the Roads Subcommittee, described Cramer as “a brilliant, able lawyer, and a very effective legislator.” Congressman Ed Edmondson of Oklahoma described Cramer as “one of the hardest-working” and “one of the ablest debaters,” demonstrating “mastery of detail,” “scholarship and workmanship in the preparation and finalizing of the legislation that comes to the floor of the House.” Recalling past debates, Congressman John A. Blatnik of Minnesota admired Cramer as “an antagonist as well as a protagonist.” Out of their “combined conflict,” they “came out with good propositions . . . that have been repeatedly sustained . . . by record-breaking majorities.” Cramer reciprocated his appreciation for his fellow members on the Public Works Committee.³⁴⁷

Yes We Can

On 9 March 1965, Governor Haydon Burns commemorated the completion of Interstate 4. No interchange had been built where the highway intersected the Sunshine Parkway, rest areas had yet to be built, and St. Petersburg cried out for an extension to the Sunshine Skyway, but Interstate 4 was nevertheless ready for traffic.³⁴⁸ Though gaps still existed as late as 1969, much of Interstate 75 from Michigan to Tampa was open to traffic as early as 1965. After completing a 3.3-mile gap in Tampa, Florida would be the first state to complete its share of the highway. Of course, construction of the Tampa to Miami route pushed back I-75's overall completion date.³⁴⁹

By May 1971, Interstate 75 from the Howard Frankland Bridge to St. Petersburg's 9th Street had been completed while work commenced on an overpass over Gandy Boulevard.³⁵⁰ However, the environmental movement was beginning to complicate matters for the rest of I-75. In 1968, officials thought that construction could begin as early as 1970, but by 1971, the Florida Department of Transportation was compelled to develop environmental plans for 32 federal agencies. Millions of dollars worth of plans had to be reassessed for environmental impact. Handing existing plans to the Turnpike Authority to avoid federal regulations was still a possibility, but at last in 1973 the missing link received environmental approval. Meanwhile, successive presidential administrations threatened to cut highway budgets, and the mid-1970s fuel crisis undercut

gasoline tax revenues. According to state officials, I-75 would not be completed until, at best, 1980.³⁵¹ By 1975, surprisingly little progress had been made. Due to funding problems, one pessimistic prediction placed the completion date as late as 2009.³⁵² In 1978, bridges across the Manatee River and the Peace River were under construction, along with other segments of Interstate 75 from Tampa Bay to Naples.³⁵³ Piece by piece, the missing link reached completion in the 1980s.

The impact of Florida's expressways was immediate and widespread. In I-4's first year, 40,000 cars passed by downtown Orlando each day, and eventually Central Florida became "among the most sprawling places in America."³⁵⁴ Interstate 75, said the *St. Petersburg Times*, created a "revolution in Florida's economy." At the intersection of I-75 and I-10, a 100-unit hotel went up in Lake City, a city self-described as the "New Gateway to Florida." Likewise, Wildwood dubbed itself the "Gateway to South Florida." New businesses established themselves along Gainesville's three I-75 exits, and the highway became the "spine" of the city's development. Meanwhile, businesses along old highways such as US 41, US 27, and US 301 struggled to adapt to the circumstances, with service stations switching to local car maintenance and motels enticing tourists to stay for longer periods of time. Many businesses simply folded.³⁵⁵ Along US 1, old shopping centers devolved into "oversized neighborhood centers with identity crises," whose owners found it difficult to retain tenants.³⁵⁶

The environmental impact of the superhighways was incredible. Opponents fought the routing of every highway, often to no avail. In Manatee County, the Izaak Walton League fought unsuccessfully to save a cypress stand in the path of I-75.³⁵⁷ A Governor's Task Force under Reubin Askew listened to appeals to save the western edge

of the Loxahatchee Slough along I-95.³⁵⁸ Near Tequesta, residents registered a 281-acre bird sanctuary with the Florida Audubon Society to save the land from I-95.³⁵⁹

Oftentimes, engineers had to choose between building through undeveloped environments or through residential areas. Many homes were lost, and countless others, many of them built in formerly pleasant neighborhoods, had to deal with the noise and unsightliness of superhighways. With every routing and rerouting, there were winners, losers, and uncertainty.

Like other baby boomers, in the 2000s, the superhighways conceived and brought into being during the 1950s have been reaching their fiftieth anniversary. Retrospective articles described how interstates have “remade the country’s social and economic landscape,” some believe for the worse. In contrast to traditional two-lane highways, the superhighways have been deemed “soulless” and “tedious.” In exchange for roadside regional character, the nation acquired fast food chains.³⁶⁰ Interstates have become synonymous with divided cities, oil dependence, rampant sprawl, pollution, and environmental degradation. Meanwhile, the demand for new highways has outpaced the nation’s road building capacity, and the average driver spends about 38 hours per year stuck in traffic.³⁶¹ In Florida, as in many other parts of the country, chronic traffic jams characterize many stretches of highway. Central Florida’s I-4 boasted the nation’s ninth worst traffic congestion in 2006, where the smell of orange blossoms has been supplanted by “the smell of idling engines,” and the perpetual existence of detours and closed lanes due to road improvements have “tried the patience of even the most forgiving commuters.”³⁶² Many other expressway segments have become notorious. The site of numerous fatal accidents with mysterious causes, I-75 from Alachua to Ocala became

known as “a sort of Bermuda Triangle.”³⁶³

While federal expressways have been maintained, widened, and improved, their dependence on unpopular revenues such as gasoline taxes did not allow them to grow quite like the toll highway system now known as Florida’s Turnpike. In the 1980s, after paying off the bonds to the original turnpike, the legislature voted in 1990 to widen the original parkway and build new highways with the surplus toll revenue. Since then, the Turnpike took over of the failing Sawgrass Expressway in Broward County, then financed construction of another 150 miles of urban expressways in the Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Lakeland areas. With a total of 460 miles of highway, 2.1 million vehicles drove on Florida’s tollways in 2006, generating \$643 million.³⁶⁴ Metropolitan areas continue to rely primarily on tolls to finance new expressway projects.

In 2006, the Turnpike received what may be the most controversial highway proposal in the state’s history, a \$7 billion, 152-mile expressway pushing through an undeveloped interior strip of Florida. The Heartland Parkway began as a project of the Heartland Economic, Agricultural and Rural Task Force, or HEART. Created in 2005, HEART’s membership included Lykes Brothers, Collier Enterprises, and State Senator J.D. Alexander of Lake Wales, in short, of “a pedigree of Florida’s landed elite,” with each member owning significant tracts of land in the Parkway’s path. Editoralist Howard Troxler drew a satirical map of the proposed highway, which included exits to the Tampa Bay Sprawlway, Sprawladelphia, and Sustainablemixeduseburg, while zigzagging and swirling through the properties of its backers. Before leaving office, Governor Bush’s Secretary of Transportation Denver Stutler submitted an “action plan” which included the Heartland Parkway, but Governor Charlie Crist’s administration has opposed the

Parkway along with the entire “Future Corridors” program, composed of nine new expressways covering more than one thousand miles throughout the state. Crist later described the Parkway as a “road to nowhere,” and said that when appointing Transportation Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos, he sought someone who would improve existing expressways in South Florida, particularly I-95, I-75, and I-4, rather than blaze new trails through undeveloped areas. HEART attorney Rick Dantzler has argued that the Parkway could be used to “organize” Florida’s inevitable growth, but Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thomas Pelham disagreed with Parkway proponents, arguing that their highway proposal “should not be driving land-use planning,” but that a comprehensive land planning should “determine the appropriate transportation.”³⁶⁵

The Urban Land Institute has named west-central Florida one of the United States’ eight emerging “super cities.” Ignoring the laments of those who believe Florida already has enough people, metropolitan planners continue to look for ways to accommodate yet more growth. In 2007, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council gave experts a pile of Lego blocks and a map with the goal of finding ways to accommodate 3.2 million additional residents by 2050. The Planning Council ignored county lines, seeking regionwide transportation plans and possibly a rail system.³⁶⁶

While comprehensive planning in the Tampa Bay area poses challenges, coordinating municipal and county governments can be next to impossible. For example, Senator Alexander has resisted efforts to bring Polk County into Tampa Bay’s planning process, claiming, “The interests of Tampa Bay are different ... than the interests of Polk County,” whose destiny he saw tied to inland counties where the Heartland Parkway would run.³⁶⁷ Polk was not the only county to resist incorporating certain Tampa Bay

transportation developments. In 2007, Hillsborough County completed a \$2.2 million highway to the Pasco County line to ease traffic on Bruce B. Downs Boulevard, but Pasco balked on a promise to connect to the road, and so it dead-ended just before reaching Kinnan Street. Assistant County Administrator Bipin Parikh explained he did not want other streets to become overburdened, like Pasco's Cross Creek Boulevard.³⁶⁸ In the future, how will regional transportation planners gather official consensus? And what will they do if they cannot?

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At the end of his last term in Congress, Cramer remarked, "If we do not ship the goods in America, if we do not accommodate the moving people in America, America will be stymied and will be stultified, and it will die."³⁶⁹ What shape will future transportation systems take? In past decades, with an abundance of fossil fuels, highways have provided an essential source of freedom. With rising fuel costs and an uncertain economy, will cars and highways continue to offer freedom, or will they prove an unsustainable form of transportation?

As I write, an election cycle has come to an end. Barack Obama will be the next President, and the Democratic Party has increased its majorities in the House and Senate. Great challenges lie ahead as the nation faces "two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century," but in his first speech as President-elect, Obama has infused the nation with a simple mantra. "Yes, we can."³⁷⁰ It may be that there has never been a better opportunity for Americans of all stripes to let go of past prejudices, to come together and dream, to let everyone's voice be heard, to nurture democracy, to create a more exceptional nation, and to extend and sustain peace and prosperity around the

world. Yes, I daresay, we are.

In this world of possibility, it is difficult to know what we should hope for? In Florida, a series of ambitious transit proposals have repeatedly been sidetracked. The prevalence of low-density sprawl has made the establishment of profitable, effective transit routes virtually impossible, and rail systems linking Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Miami have been derailed. Despite worsening traffic conditions, it is still more convenient for most people to drive cars than ride buses. Compared to riding a bike or a bus, cars enable people to go more places faster and to bring more stuff with them. For several years, I have managed to get by with a bicycle as my primary means of transportation. Living in downtown St. Petersburg, this has been made possible by the fact that home, school, work, friends, and other necessities such as food are all in close proximity. However, it is hard to imagine trying to survive anywhere else in the Tampa Bay area without a car. Despite St. Petersburg's cycling possibilities, cars still rule the streets.

Despite decades of setbacks, now is the time to think big. In Florida, virtually everyone agrees that the transportation systems need revamped, but there is a great divide on what path to take. Metropolitan areas are likely to welcome regional planning, mass transit, and federal funding. Meanwhile, against the will of many of their constituents, representatives of outlying areas such as Polk County may unfortunately cling to traditional, non-constructive highway planning concepts. The temptation is still strong for powerful landholders to coordinate highways through their properties, collect tolls, and increase their fortunes. In the 1950s, this may have seemed a reasonable approach,

but since then, Floridians have learned the importance of reigning in development and preserving wilderness areas. Low-density sprawl is the direct consequence of unrestrained highway initiatives. To prevent this outcome, conscientious Floridians should be prepared for an arduous battle, especially if Governor Crist's successor embraces an ambitious highway program.

Unless we wish to court disaster, future transportation systems must be very different from the expressway networks of yesteryear. Setting into motion a plan for responsibly addressing the nation's transportation needs, Obama has acknowledged that highways alone will not serve the needs of today. New highways encourage urban sprawl and heighten dependence on personal automobiles, increasing fuel consumption and making it difficult for people who cannot afford vehicles to get to work. As states develop transportation systems, mass transit will be an absolute necessity as fuel conservation will be a required element for federal funding. Tax incentives must be created for those who walk, bike, or ride a bus rather than drive a car. Already, the Obama campaign has stated the intent of creating "a robust federal infrastructure investment program" for future transportation systems. As a financial supplement, a new National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank is slated to provide \$60 billion over ten years for transportation projects.³⁷¹

A surprising, unanticipated outcome of this study of expressway development is that it has yielded a model for understanding problems that may be encountered in future developments, and for assessing whether their execution will run smoothly. In fact, the

situation today is not all that different from that of the 1950s. In common with mid-20th century expressway construction, Obama has stated that his initiatives will create more than a million jobs, thus offsetting the current slump in construction work and refueling the economy.³⁷² As in the 1960s, measures should be put in place to ensure that funding remains ample and consistent from year to year, leveling the peaks and valleys frequently encountered in the construction industry.

Just as there will be federal initiatives, city, county, and state governments will also have proposals, along with private organizations. As in the past, there will undoubtedly be conflicts. With the help of elected officials, appointees, government workers, and the media, the public will play a crucial role in deciding what proposals work best. As I have tried to demonstrate, William C. Cramer exemplifies how representatives can use their authority to bring integrity to transportation programs in Florida and throughout the nation. He took his job very seriously. He had a brilliant understanding of how to make transportation bills work according to design, in the best interests of the public, often against the wishes of state leaders with less egalitarian aims. His party never won a majority in the House during his tenure, but through keen, diligent service, Cramer was able to accomplish a great deal. He demonstrates how minority Republicans today can play a lead role while healing the partisan divide, and his example may serve as a beacon for all transportation planners.

Notes

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¹⁰⁵ Wilfred Owen, *The Metropolitan Transportation Problem*, 39, 41.

¹⁰⁶ Mark H. Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics: 1939-1989*, Revised Edition, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1990), 97.

¹⁰⁷ Whitney Goit to LeRoy Collins, 21 Sept 1954, Library of University of South Florida, Tampa, LeRoy Collins Papers, Box 149, Roads Correspondence.

¹⁰⁸ LeRoy Collins to Whitney Goit, 27 Sept 1954, Library of University of South Florida, Tampa, LeRoy Collins Papers, Box 149, Roads Correspondence.

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¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

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pointed out that tunnels could double as bomb shelters. “Under-Bay Tunnel Bomb Shelters?” *St. Petersburg Times*, 16 Dec 1957.

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¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

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- ¹²⁹ Wallace G. Rouse of Wallace G. Rouse Company to LeRoy Collins, 10 Dec 1954, Library of University of South Florida, Tampa, LeRoy Collins Papers, Box 149, Turnpike Part 2.
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¹⁶⁶ Letter from Wilbur Jones to Farris Bryant, 3 Feb 1955, Library of University of Florida, Gainesville, Farris Bryant Collection, Public Roads and Highways Committee, Box 14, File 13.

¹⁶⁷ "Freeway Route Hit," *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969. Cramer: "I-75 is a vital link in the national system of defense and interstate highways. Let's not forget that during the Cuban missile crisis, when south Florida was jammed with military convoys, the greedy toll takers even charged our own soldiers riding in Government vehicles, who were using Florida Toll Pike facilities to come to our own defense."

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Clifton Enfield to William C. Cramer, 25 July 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961. Clifton Enfield describes the broader acceptance of the policy: "This policy has prevailed continuously since its enunciation and as far as I know is still the policy of the Department of Commerce. This policy has

also been made known to the Congress, and it apparently has received Congressional approval by acquiescence. It was fully brought to the attention of Congress by a report to the Subcommittee on Public Roads of the Committee on Public Works of the United States Senate by the Comptroller General of the United States, in connection with his review of cost estimates for completion of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, which report was submitted on May 16, 1958.

¹⁶⁹ Letter from Clifton Enfield to Cramer, 25 July 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁷⁰ Letter from N.G. Sherouse to A.S. Herlong, 3 July 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁷¹ Cramer Press Release, "The Plan for the Sunshine State Toll Parkway Extension and its Effect on Florida's Free Interstate System," undated, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁷² Letter from N.G. Sherouse to Cramer, 27 July 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

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¹⁷⁶ Cramer Press Release, 6 August 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Ellis L. Armstrong to Cramer, 15 Nov 1960, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁷⁸ Testimony of Cramer, 21 August 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961. Cramer cites the Comptroller General in his Review of Cost Estimates for Completion of the Interstate and Defense Systems in January of 1958

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¹⁸⁰ Cramer Press Release, "The Plan for the Sunshine State Toll Parkway Extension and its Effect on Florida's Free Interstate System," undated, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

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¹⁸² Cramer Press Release, "The Plan for the Sunshine State Toll Parkway Extension and its Effect on Florida's Free Interstate System," undated, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁸³ "The Agreement Says No Competing Roads," *St. Petersburg Times*, 15 Sept 1961.

¹⁸⁴ Cramer Press Release, 19 September 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁸⁵ Cramer Press Release, “Effect of Florida State Toll Turnpike on Interstate 95,” 23 July 1961, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Highways, 1959-1961.

¹⁸⁶ “Report to the People of the 8th District of Florida,” 21 October 1966, *House Congressional Record*, 27458.

¹⁸⁷ “Storm Clouds, Address by Hon. William C. Cramer [...] at the annual convention of the American Road Builders’ Association, Denver, Colo., 23 Feb 1966. Quoted in “Representative Cramer Makes Highly Important Speech on Nation’s Highway Problems,” *House Congressional Record*, 28 Feb 1966, A1006.

¹⁸⁸ “Federal-Aid Highway Reform Act,” *House Congressional Record*, 24 Jan 1963, 907-10.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

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²⁰¹ “Supplemental Views,” 16 Jan 1962, 11.

²⁰² Ibid., 4-5.

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²⁰⁴ Ibid., 10.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 18-19.

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²²⁰ James Wright, “Highway Robbery: Fraud In Road Building Is Wasting Millions,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 Nov 1963, 19-21.

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²²⁶ “Highway Program Jeopardized by Johnson Administration,” *House Congressional Record*, 6 Feb 1967, H 1015.

²²⁷ “On Highway Beautification – Small Business Proposes Billboards for Motels,”
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²²⁸ “Legislation to Remove Traffic Hazards from our Highways,” *House Congressional Record*, 28 Aug 1967, H 11357. Other hazards included “guardrails that constitute hazards themselves because of improper location or installation; guardrails that protect highway structures from damage rather than motorists from death; culverts and bridge piers so located as to kill people who, perhaps momentarily, lose control of their car and leave the paved traveled way; ditches and cut and fill banks so steep and so close to the highway as to make it virtually impossible for a driver to avoid overturning if he leaves the traveled lanes; [...] ‘no hitchhiking’ signs [...] and the erection of ‘motorist service signs’ inside the highway right of way.”

²²⁹ “Highway Program Jeopardized by Johnson Administration,” *House Congressional Record*, 6 Feb 1967, H 1021.

²³⁰ Ibid.

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²³³ “Interstate Highway Authorizations Bill to Complete the System on Schedule – H.R. 6391,” *House Congressional Record*, 17 March 1965, 5142.

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²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18263.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18264.

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²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

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²⁶⁷ Summary provided in: “Additional Highway Segments Need to be Added to the Interstate System This Congress,” *House Congressional Record*, 16 Jan 1967.

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²⁷⁴ “Toll Facilities on the Interstate Highway System,” *House Congressional Record*, 16 Jan 1967.

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²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

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- ²⁹⁴ “Interstate 75: ‘Missing Link’ In Political Thought?” *St. Petersburg Times*, December 29, 1968, Charles Stafford.
- ²⁹⁵ “Mickey Mouse Road Not Answer on Tampa Link,” originally printed in *Miami Herald* editorial reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969, 7.
- ²⁹⁶ “Only the Bond Hustlers Like Mr. Boyd’s Tollway Sandwich,” *Tampa Tribune*, 28 Dec 1968, originally in *Miami Herald*.
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- ²⁹⁹ Ibid.
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³⁰² “Mickey Mouse Road Not Answer on Tampa Link,” originally printed in *Miami Herald* editorial; reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969, 7.

³⁰³ “Freeway Route Hit,” *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969. Amidst the biting criticisms of the Florida Turnpike printed in the *Florida Explorer*, the Turnpike ran the following advertisement: “Talk about golf! There’s a total of 60 regulation courses within a ten-minute drive of Turnpike exits. Reach them faster, smoother, safer on Florida’s ‘Main Street’ . . . FLORIDA’S TURNPIKE. Along the way, convenient service plazas feature good food, car service, citrus and gift shops . . . and playgrounds where kids can unwind. We’ll even wash your car FREE at our Okahumpka Service Plaza. It’s all part of the delightful difference when you drive down our Main Street . . . FLORIDA’S TURNPIKE.”

³⁰⁴ “Faint Heart Never Won,” originally in *Tampa Tribune*, reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969.

³⁰⁵ “Boyd Blamed For Route Linking ‘Alley,’ Freeway,” originally in *St. Petersburg Times*, reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969.

³⁰⁶ “Interstate 75: ‘Missing Link’ In Political Thought?” *St. Petersburg Times*, December 29, 1968.

³⁰⁷ “Volpe Asked To Change Route,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 8 Jan 1969.

³⁰⁸ “Faint Heart Never Won,” originally printed in *Tampa Tribune* editorial, reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969. “I-75 Spur Among 7 Tampa Expressways in SRD Plans,” *Tampa Tribune*, 8 Jan 1969. “Boyd Blamed For Route Linking ‘Alley,’ Freeway,” originally in SPT, reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969.

³⁰⁹ “Toll Barriers Might Mar I-75 Extension To Miami,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 17 Dec 1968.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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³¹² “For I-75, Bi-Partisan Victory,” *Tampa Tribune*, Date Unknown, within weeks after 14 Dec 1968, Editorial.

³¹³ “Two-Lane Thinking On Roads,” originally printed in *Miami Herald*, reprinted in *Florida Explorer*, Jan 1969.

³¹⁴ “Cramer Calls Toll I-75 Virtually Impossible,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 10 Apr 1969.

³¹⁵ “Bypass Okay Expected,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 7 Oct 1969.

³¹⁶ “Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1969,” *House Congressional Record*, 25 Nov 1969, H11360-9.

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At the time, Cramer was already in the midst of a Republican primary contest against Lieutenant Governor Ray Osborne. “Political watchers” puzzled over why Cramer did not delay the bypass announcement until a more opportune moment in his campaign. The *Times* followed this campaign news with the tantalizing lead of an anonymous “insider:” “There’s more to come.”

³¹⁸ Interview with Sara Cramer, 3 March 2008.

³¹⁹ *St. Petersburg Times*, 30 March 1965.

³²⁰ “Gurney Eying Florida Seat in U.S. Senate,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 Dec 1965.

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- ³²¹ “Gurney Sees Cramer In ’70 Senate Race,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 8 Jan 1969.
- ³²² *Ibid.*
- ³²³ “Republicans Deprecate ‘Dump Cramer’ Talk,” *Tampa Tribune*, 25 May 1969.
- ³²⁴ “Bypass Okay Expected,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 7 Oct 1969.
- ³²⁵ “Gurney Predicts Cramer Senate Victory in 1970,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 10 Apr 1969.
- ³²⁶ “Republicans Deprecate ‘Dump Cramer’ Talk,” *Tampa Tribune*, 25 May 1969.
- ³²⁷ Letter from Edward Gurney to William and Alice Cramer, 24 March 1970, University of Tampa Library, Cramer Collection, Senate Bid.
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