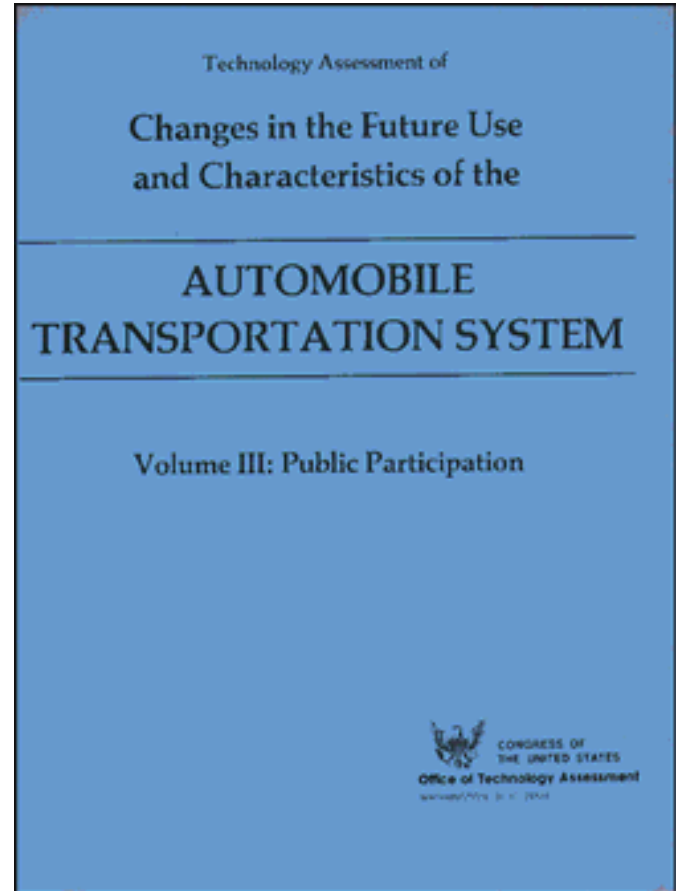


*Technology Assessment of Changes in the
Future Use and Characteristics of the
Automobile Transportation
System—Volume III: Public Participation*

October 1979



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Foreword

An assessment of the future use and characteristics of the automobile transportation system was undertaken (1976-78) by OTA at the request of Senator Warren G. Magnuson, then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The study addressed issues and policy options pertaining to mobility, energy, environment, safety, and cost and capital. The time frame was both near-term (through 1985) and long-term (into the next century).

The specific objectives of the study were:

- to describe the factors that influence the characteristics of the automobile system, its use, and services supporting its use;
- to identify and characterize potential changes in automobile use and characteristics;
- to assess the potential near-term and far-term effects of various alternative Federal Government policies relating to automobile use and characteristics; and
- to present the findings in a form useful to Congress and the public.

The results of the technical analysis, carried out by the OTA Transportation Program with the help of an advisory panel, consultants, and contractors, were published in February 1979 in a two-volume report. The first volume is a summary of the findings. The second contains a detailed discussion of issues, policy options, and estimated effects. Volume II also contains a description of expected technological developments through 1985 and by the end of the century.

This report—volume III—presents the findings of a nationwide public participation effort conducted in 1978 in conjunction with the assessment. The intent of the public participation program was twofold:

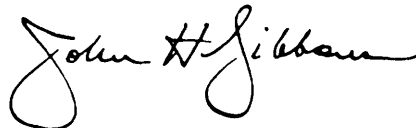
- to solicit commentary on the issues, alternatives for personal transportation, and Federal Government policy options; and
- to facilitate the public's participation in OTA's technology assessment process.

Essentially, this report is a synopsis of what people said. It is illustrative of attitudes and viewpoints of a wide variety of Americans. The discussion is deliberately informal, and verbatim quotes are used frequently so as to capture both the substance and the tone of the respondents' remarks as accurately as possible.

Chapter 1 highlights the major viewpoints expressed on issues and options in future personal transportation. Chapter 2 contains background information on the "car culture," the origin of automobile assessment, and the role of public participation in the technology assessment process.

The core of the report—chapters 3 through 7—is a compilation of comments about mobility, costs, energy, environment, and safety from people throughout the country. The order in which they are presented is indicative of the degree of concern expressed by the respondents, i.e., comments on mobility appear first since this issue appeared to be the primary concern of most of the participants.

The last part of the report—chapter 8 and appendixes—describes the rationale, methodology, and materials used in the public participation program for the automobile assessment.



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The OTA Automobile Assessment Advisory Panel provided valuable advice, critique, and assistance to the OTA staff throughout this assessment. Their participation, however, does not necessarily constitute approval or endorsement of this report. OTA assumes sole responsibility for the report and the accuracy of the content.

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