

55-S-70

EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1970, 2:00 P.M.

I am delighted to be here. This is my first official trip to West Virginia since becoming Secretary of Transportation. I am reminded often and emphatically that West Virginia is indeed vitally interested in improved transportation services.

We are here today to announce the beginning of a great breakthrough in transportation. It's not something with a lot of glamour like a metroliner or a 300-mile-an-hour tracked air cushion vehicle, but it is a project that will -- in the years ahead -- certainly have a profound effect on the lives of every man, woman and child living in the great congested urban areas of this nation.

Our cities are the economic and cultural hubs of our society, yet our cities are in a state of crisis -- largely because of creeping paralysis afflicting downtown circulation and distribution of people and goods.

Too many cities are choked with congestion, with air pollution -- with too many people trying to get to too many places in too much of a hurry, utilizing inadequate, antiquated facilities. We need new thinking, new technologies.

We are today announcing a \$90,000 grant to West Virginia University to plan, develop, and construct just such a radical new mode of automated personal transportation.

This system -- which for lack of a better name we still refer to simply as a "people mover" -- will initially connect the University's downtown campus with the engineering school and the medical school.

It will provide fast, clean, efficient transportation. It will be fully automated. It will be a breakthrough -- a great step forward in our quest for better mobility and improved accessibility.

The initial \$90,000 will provide first-year funding leading to engineering design data on the configuration, location, demand characteristics and station design of the system. We have contracted with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of Pasadena, California, to serve as systems manager for this first phase. Their expertise as the Nation's foremost systems management organization will be invaluable. The University's role will be to define the system and major subsystem requirements.

For too long, transportation experts have talked about new directions, and have drafted blueprints and even built working models. But there has been a reluctance -- for whatever reason -- to go ahead and get those plans off the drawing board and into an operation demonstration project. We intend to make this an action project here in Morgantown. We will come up with a system of transportation that people will use, that will ease traffic congestion, will cut down on the rapidly-increasing volume of auto exhaust pollutants, and will set the pace for the Nation.

We are delighted to be here, and to have the chance to work in close connection with the University, the city, state government and your Congressional delegation in initiating this exciting project.

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