



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Most people grit their teeth and put up with the inconvenience of travel in the cities because they are not aware of how conditions could be improved. However, city governments are realizing that they must seek fundamental changes in transportation patterns or watch their business districts strangle in traffic.

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration was set up in 1964 and recently placed under the wing of the Department of Transportation to help the cities take advantage of new concepts of urban movement. Now cities can turn to a single Federal agency for consultation and financial assistance as they buy updated transit equipment, set up new systems, and reorganize existing programs and facilities. They know that to rely solely upon the automobile is to invite a social disaster compounded of congestion, ugliness, pollution, and urban decay.

Under the direction of a career public servant, Paul Sitton, the UMTA dispenses capital grants for coordinated metropolitan efforts to improve transportation systems as a whole. Demonstration grants are available for experimental transit equipment or techniques. Universities and research companies are eligible for assistance to develop untested systems and new principles of organizing and controlling mass transportation networks. UMTA's principal concern is to provide seed money for the upgrading of transportation in urban environs.

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Since the relocation of UMTA within the Department of Transportation, grants totaling \$65,433,620 have been made to 38 communities and to organizations and individuals in 23 states.

There is wide variety in the type and geographical distribution of grants. For example, a grant was made to study the use of minicars, small rental vehicles for use on short trips within Philadelphia's central city. The system may serve as the model for future automatic transportation systems elsewhere.

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) the Nation's first new subway system in more than 40 years, was granted \$28 million in November, bringing Federal grants there to \$80 million. The BART system will demonstrate advances in transit facilities, design and equipment and may serve as a model for other cities in the United States and abroad.

Grants have been made to other communities ranging in size from New York City to Waterloo, Iowa. New York will use a \$1.02 million grant to underwrite 50 percent of the cost of face-lifting the half century old 49th Street subway station in mid-town Manhattan. A grant of \$31,800 to the City of Waterloo, Iowa will be used to buy four minibuses for use in the city's downtown loop.

Past urban transportation grants have made it possible for cities across the Nation, planning organizations, and the transit industry to test a variety of transport innovations. Grants have supported the test of a water-borne air-cushion vehicle in Oakland, new measurement systems of tunnel construction in Boston and the establishment of a public transportation system as part of community facilities for the new town planned at Columbia, Maryland.

Other projects have studied transportation needs of low-income residents of the St. Louis inner city, tested home-to-destination-and-return bus service in Flint, and developed and field-tested a simulation model that the New York State Department of Public Works will use to plan urban transportation facilities.

As a result of earlier programs, in Pittsburgh, the Port Authority has received a grant to develop techniques for advertising and promoting mass transportation facilities in a large urban area. In the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, urban transportation funds made it possible to test the use of script in lieu of cash for bus service. Seattle tested a system of "Blue Streak" reserved bus lanes and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute studied training techniques for transit management.

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Since UMTA's establishment on July 1, 1968, \$58,401,750 in capital grants has gone to 14 cities in 14 states. UMTA has granted \$4,788,275 for research, development, and demonstrations during the current fiscal year, substantially more than in past years. Technical studies during the last five months have been granted \$2.1 million, and grants for managerial training have amounted to \$37,722.

UMTA anticipates expansion of its programs in the years ahead. In research, development, and demonstration programs, for example, efforts will be directed toward the promotion of user and community acceptance. UMTA will also use Federal grants to stimulate private investment in promising areas of technological innovation. In addition, UMTA will try to find ways around some of the institutional bottlenecks that in the past have impeded transportation innovations in urban areas.

Future university research and training programs will be directed toward attracting graduate students to programs of study in urban mass transportation. Managerial programs will be expanded to increase training of personnel for managerial, technical and professional positions in urban mass transportation.

In addition, UMTA will promote greater use of Federal loans to assist State, local, and regional public bodies to acquire, build, and improve the capital equipment of urban transit systems.

Mass transportation is vital to a dynamic urban economy and environment. Planners, municipal executives and downtown merchants have all come to realize that urban highways cannot satisfy the full range of urban transportation needs. In addition to the vast numbers of Americans who use mass transportation facilities out of choice, there are some 30 million Americans -- young, old, poor and handicapped -- who must have public transportation service which is fast, safe and comfortable.

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration as a vital element in the Department of Transportation will continue to promote better urban transportation for all Americans.

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