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The efforts of the Stark County, Ohio, officials to invigorate the area's faltering public transit system received Federal support today when Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe announced a \$44,000 grant to the Stark Council of Governments.

The Council consists of representatives of five cities and 14 municipalities in a metropolitan area with an approximate population of \$375,000.

Canton is the major city in the County and other major population centers are Massillon, Alliance, North Canton and Louisville.

Public transportation in Stark County is provided by Canton City Lines, a subsidiary of National City Lines. Officials of the firm say they intend to discontinue unprofitable operations which include the Canton system.

The grant made today represents two-thirds of the cost of conducting a study to analyze future management and operational alternates for public transit in the County. Upon completion of the study public officials and the public will be able to make judgments of transit needs and prospective financing to attain them.

When making the announcement of the grant, Secretary Volpe said: "by undertaking this technical study well in advance of the expiration of the Canton City Lines' franchise, the Stark Council hopes to insure continued public transit in the greater Canton area.

"There is a common misconception that mass transit problems are confined to the Nation's largest cities. The potential crisis facing the 10,000 daily riders of the Canton system is typical of the widespread mass transportation problems which confront us on a national scale.

"The application of imagination, innovation and revitalization to the problems of mass transit is essential to the continued health of our nation's economy and is a primary mission of the Department of Transportation."

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