



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced a \$256,483 grant to the Twin Cities Area Metropolitan Transit Commission to put Minneapolis' Nicollet Mall minibus service into full operation.

The Federal grant, made by the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration, will provide the Transit Commission with two-thirds of the cost of buying 16 new minibuses, 3 used suburban buses and related equipment.

Nicollet Mall, located in downtown Minneapolis, is a 13-block stretch of retail stores bounded on the north by high-rise apartments and on the south by a convention center. The minibuses will operate along the Mall and laterally to peripheral parking areas.

The 53-passenger suburban buses, built in 1967, will be used to continue a service between downtown Minneapolis and the communities of Mound and Wayzata. The coaches will be purchased from the present operator of the Mound-Wayzata line.

UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal said the grant "helps accomplish two important UMTA missions -- improving existing bus service into growing suburban areas and encouraging use of public transportation in the center city by providing improved circulation in heavily congested areas.

"We need to make immediate improvements to help lessen downtown traffic congestion," Villarreal said. "Rapid transit, express bus systems and other improvements require a much longer time to design and install. This grant should provide immediate relief.

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