



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced a \$1,353,000 grant to California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for research and design of a radical new mode of automated personal transit known as a "people mover."

The "people mover" project will be built around and through the West Virginia University Campus at Morgantown, West Virginia. Initially, the system of fully automated cars will link the university's downtown campus with its uptown engineering and medical schools, carrying passengers at speeds up to 25-miles-an-hour.

Secretary Volpe announced the project in September during an inspection of the Morgantown site. At that time, the University was awarded a grant for \$90,000 to launch the project. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory of Pasadena, California was named systems manager for the first phase of the project under a separate grant of \$160,000 from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. The lab is a branch of the California Institute of Technology and also is a part of NASA's space research program.

"The lab is one of the Nation's foremost systems management organizations," Secretary Volpe said.

"Today's grant is an extension of the September grant and will cover JPL's research and system design work through next March. The \$1,353,000 includes funds for JPL and subcontractors to design the guideway and passenger stations. The new system will be mostly-elevated, partly on ground level, and, perhaps partly underground."

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The "people mover" system is the first such project of its type but is part of a family of new public transportation modes currently under development by the Department of Transportation. The Department plans to develop, test and evaluate these new transportation systems, both for acceptability and cost factors, passing on their findings to interested city, regional and state transportation agencies.

"The Morgantown project evolved from a mutual need -- the University needed a transportation system and the Department of Transportation needed a locality to test the 'people mover' project," said Carlos C. Villarreal, Administrator of the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration which is funding the project.

"Test time for the project will be shortened because the system will be heavily-used by students changing classes hourly, rather than only twice a day by normal rush hour commuters."

The JPL will manage the entire system design and construction and will coordinate all project phases and subcontract activities, which will be awarded competitively.

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