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Phone: (202) 426-4043

The U. S. Department of Transportation today made a \$211, 334 grant to the Model Cities Program of Atlanta, Ga., to expand and improve an inexpensive shuttle bus service for low-income residents.

In announcing the grant, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said that the new and better service "will directly benefit nearly one-tenth of Atlanta's population" which lives in the Model Neighborhood Area (MNA). The expanded service will be accomplished by adding and rerouting shuttle buses to provide more frequent and convenient stop locations within the MNA.

The \$211, 334 grant, which will be administered by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration, represents two-thirds of the total \$317, 000 project cost. Local Atlanta contributions of \$105, 667 will make up the other third.

The shuttle bus system, which began as a demonstration project in June 1969, is expected to become a permanent transit service in Atlanta if the new expanded bus service is successful. Specifically, the new service will provide low-cost circumferential bus routes through and to six communities in the MNA area, making jobs and essential community needs more available to MNA residents.

Riders on the shuttle service will pay a nominal ten-cent fare to reach destinations within their own neighborhood and will have transfer capability to other routes and locations by paying the regular fare at transfer points.

Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal of UMTA said " The improved transportation service offered to Model Neighborhood Area residents also should be of substantial benefit to the entire Atlanta Metropolitan area."

"Many citizens now without adequate transportation will have an opportunity for increased participation in more of Atlanta's services and activities," Mr. Villarreal said.

The 12-month grant also is designed so that local communities can continue the project with local financing after Federal funding is completed next March.

"This grant formula is set so that the UMTA share progressively decreases as the project moves from inception to completion," Administrator Villarreal said. "This will help to prepare for local takeover of the service at the end of the government-funded period."

The Model Neighborhood Area consists of six communities-- Grant Park, Adair Park, Summerhill, Peoples Town, Mechanicsville and Pittsburgh--all located south of Atlanta's central business district.

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For further information, contact the Public Affairs Office at UMTA, (202) 426-4043, or:

Mr. Johnny C. Johnson, Project Director
Office of Model Cities Program
673 Capitol Avenue, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30315 (404) 577-5200