



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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DOT -- 22671
Phone: (202) 426-4043

Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced a grant of over \$2 million for the purchase of 30 additional air-conditioned buses for the Shirley Highway exclusive bus lanes and the development of fringe parking lots in that Northern Virginia corridor.

The \$2,243,568 grant was made by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. NVTC has a contract with the AB&W Transit Company to operate buses on the Shirley Busway. The total cost of the demonstration project is now about \$7 million, which includes additional highway construction costs for the busway and the purchase of 30 new-type buses already in operation under Phase I.

"This grant represents Phase II of a five-phase demonstration project to test the effect of operating buses on an exclusive right-of-way," Secretary Volpe said in making the announcement. Phase II will extend the project until September 1973. The full project is expected to last four years and cost over \$9 million.

Since September 1969, when the first section of the 12-mile busway was put into operation, ridership on the exclusive bus lane has increased 167 percent. Over 20,000 rush-hour commuters now use the 12-mile busway each day, allowing Northern Virginia residents to get to and from the jobs in Washington up to 30 minutes faster than they would if they had to drive in bumper-to-bumper rush-hour traffic, Secretary Volpe said.

Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal of UMTA said that the 30 new buses will be similar to those purchased in Phase I and will include the latest anti-pollution devices as well as comfortable seating, ample leg room and colorful interiors.



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"The development of fringe parking lots is another key feature of Phase II," Administrator Villarreal said. These lots will be located near future Metro stations so as to provide convenience for present day commuters and fit into future transportation plans for the Shirley Highway Corridor.

One of the fringe parking lots is being planned for an area near Shirley Highway and the Capital Beltway (Route 495) along Back Lick Road (Route 617). Other park-and ride areas are expected to be developed as the project progresses, Administrator Villarreal said. The lots will encourage commuters to leave their cars in the suburbs and use mass transit to and from Washington, Mr. Villarreal said.

The 30 buses purchased under the Phase I UMTA grant were put into service on June 14, 1971, about 60 days after the final segment of the busway was completed. These buses have been assigned mainly to the most overcrowded routes and, in most cases, travel over shortened routes to reach Shirley Highway. This provides more seats for all commuters and a shorter trip time for those living further out in the suburbs.

Cooperating in the Shirley Highway demonstration experiment are the Virginia and District of Columbia Highway Departments, the Federal Highway Administration, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the AB&W Transit Company of Alexandria and the WV&M Coach Company.

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

Mr. Ronald Fisher, Project Manager
Shirley Highway Demonstration Project
UMTA (202) 426-0080
UMTA Project No. INT-MTD-23

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