



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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UMTA 72-4
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As part of the Government's growing effort to save and upgrade urban transportation systems across the Nation, the U. S. Department of Transportation today made a \$523,433 grant to help improve mass transit in Clearwater, Florida.

The grant, made by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), went to the Central Pinellas Transit Authority in Clearwater. The Authority will use the funds to acquire Clearwater Transit, Inc., buy 17 new 33-passenger air-conditioned buses and 19 fare boxes, build a garage-office complex and purchase repair, maintenance and passenger service equipment.

Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said that \$392,575 in Federal funds will be immediately available to the Authority, with another \$130,858 available after the Clearwater area meets its regional planning requirements. Coupled with one-third local funding, the estimated gross project cost will be \$785,150, Secretary Volpe said.

Clearwater Transit, Inc., currently provides service for the Cities of Clearwater, Largo, Dunedin, Belleair, Belleair Bluffs and several associated unincorporated areas. The privately-owned transit company now has 15 buses, ranging in age from 13 to 23 years old.

Secretary Volpe said today's grant "will particularly benefit the many senior citizens in the Clearwater area who constitute a large segment of the population in this retirement region.



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"Not only is this part of President Nixon's multi-billion dollar effort to put Federal funds to work improving our faltering mass transit systems," the Secretary said, "but it is another accomplishment in our effort to help the elderly."

In addition, the new public bus system will provide expanded transportation services to those who cannot drive or afford a car. New bus routes are being planned to serve all of the city's major low-income and public housing areas.

UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal said the new buses for Clearwater will contain special handrails to assist the elderly to maintain stable footing. The vehicles will be better lighted inside and will have larger, easier-to-read route symbols and destination signs. In addition, a wider-than-normal distribution of passenger waiting benches and shelters will be made with \$20,000 of the grant funds.

Earlier this month, the Department of Transportation made a \$33,333 UMTA grant to the City of St. Petersburg, Florida, to conduct a demonstration planning project aimed at providing improved mobility for the elderly.

"This grant, coupled with the one to Clearwater, is in response to President Nixon's directive that priority be given to the recommendations of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging," Mr. Villarreal said.

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For further information, contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043, or the Central Pinellas Transit Authority, 315 Haven Street, Clearwater, Florida 33516 (UMTA Project No. FLA-UTG-14).

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