



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced the award of more than \$70 million to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to aid in the purchase of four metropolitan area bus companies and to assist in the financing of improvements to the acquired system.

The \$70,344,666 grant, funded by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), represents two-thirds of the \$105,517,000 total net project cost. "Acquiring the faltering private companies now operating in the nation's capital, "Secretary Volpe said, "is in keeping with President Nixon's priorities for preserving and improving transit service nationwide. Coordination of all public transit facilities under one regional authority in Washington may well be the beginning of a model system for the entire nation."

The local one-third share, \$35,172,334, will be contributed by governmental bodies within the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of Maryland on a route-mile basis. Today's action provides for the acquisition of the tangible assets of the D.C. Transit System, Inc., the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Coach Company (WV&M), the Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington Transit Company (AB&W) and the WMA Transit Company (WMA).

Carlos C. Villarreal, Urban Mass Transportation Administration Administrator, said "this public acquisition will enable WMATA to provide a fully coordinated mass transportation system to the region.

Fare systems will be integrated and transfers between routes will be available. The result will be better equipment and maintenance, improved service, and a more comfortable ride for patrons. Future benefits include integration of bus service with the Metro system."

In addition to the estimated \$50.7 million cost of acquiring the four private companies, the project also includes the purchase of 620 new 40-47 passenger air-conditioned diesel buses. Of these, 508 will replace buses over 14 years of age presently in use. The fleet size will be increased by 112. Also, the project will refurbish 825 existing buses and includes repainting of some 500 buses. Low-Sac Needle injector modifications on 1100 buses will contribute to a reduction of noxious emissions.

All new buses will be equipped with two-way radios for more reliable service and with public address systems for use in announcing destination and transfer points and for making special instructions and information available to transit patrons. Passenger boarding will be expedited on the new buses through the use of new open-throat fare boxes. Modernization of garage facilities is expected to result in better overall performance and generally improved maintenance.

To assist transit users, the project includes the purchase and installation of new bus stop signs and consolidated informational facilities. Two hundred new bus stop shelters will be erected at selected stops for added passenger comfort.

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For further information, contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043, or the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), 950 South L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024. (UMTA Project No. IT-03-0019)