



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY

August 6, 1975

UMTA 75-86

Phone: (202) 426-4043

George J. Pastor, an official of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), recently told a Senate subcommittee that lack of research funds rather than lack of interest has restricted the agency's research into Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) programs.

Pastor, UMTA's Associate Administrator for Research and Development, was invited to appear before the Senate Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Transportation to answer charges stemming from a recent Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) study. The report stated that UMTA has been lax in its research programs by refusing to initiate Automated Guideway Transit demonstration programs in urban areas.

"The report's conclusions that UMTA emphasizes the long term, high technology research and development over near term efforts," Pastor said, is only partially true. "The fact there are no airport type Automated Guideway Transit in urban deployment is not the result of lack of UMTA research and development, but rather the lack of Research and Development funds for the 80 to 100 percent financing required to demonstrate relatively mature new systems technology such as the Shuttle and Loop Transit Systems."

Pastor said UMTA re-evaluated its policy for the urban demonstration of complex, high technology new systems two years ago because of the obvious high costs and attendant risks involved.

"Instead of the urban demonstration," he said, "we decided to proceed with a research and development project for High Performance Personal Rapid Transit and carry it to a preproduction prototype phase in a test track configuration for full engineering test and evaluation.

"This procedure allows us to know how well the system performs before funds are expended for operational revenue service."

Pastor agreed with the report's contention that there is no "delivery system" for getting preproduction prototypes into urban deployment, saying, "It remains the Federal responsibility to find a practical delivery system. UMTA and the Department are in the process of identifying various options for urban deployment of Automated Guideway Transit systems."

Pastor concluded by saying that UMTA will continue to work on improving delivery systems and for their introduction into revenue service. In addition, UMTA research and development priorities have been adjusted in accordance with two of the OTA report's findings: First, that an improved balance should be struck between research and development projects promising results for near-term implementation and those whose pay-offs are in the more distant future and second, that more emphasis should be given to social and economic research that could strengthen the rationale for developing Automated Guideway Transit systems.

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

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