



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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UMTA 76-33

Selection of five cities to participate in the design of Auto Restricted Zone demonstrations in downtown areas was announced today by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The locations are Boston, Massachusetts; Burlington, Vermont; Memphis, Tennessee; Providence, Rhode Island and Tucson, Arizona.

Approximately 75 cities were contacted and more than 40 localities demonstrated a strong interest in the Auto Restricted Zone (ARZ) project. It is anticipated that two or more of the five cities ultimately will be chosen for Federal demonstration funding to help implement their plans.

Auto Restricted Zones are situated in congested portions of cities, such as the central business and shopping districts, where a comprehensive redesign of existing traffic patterns can create significant improvements to the flow of pedestrians and to the movement of mass transit and other high occupancy vehicles. Such areas may range in size from a few blocks along several adjacent streets to large portions of major activity centers.

An ARZ demonstration is likely to involve the relocation of major traffic streams from heavily used pedestrian areas in order to provide an improved environment with less air, noise and visual pollution, and less conflict with automobiles. The demonstration will include preferential treatment for transit services, such as special bus lanes or bus-only streets in order to make transit more attractive.

UMTA Administrator Robert E. Patricelli said, "We are very encouraged at the widespread interest, active planning and commitment which exists, particularly with respect to improving the transit service and pedestrian environment in presently congested urban centers."

"The five cities that have been selected," Federal Highway Administrator Norbert Tiemann said, "offer the highest potential for developing and implementing the type of demonstration projects desired within the scope and time constraints of the present feasibility study." He added, "These cities provide a cross section of city sizes and types so that just about any U.S. city should benefit from their experience in developing an Auto Restricted Zone."

This first phase of the ARZ program will be the cooperative development by UMTA, the FHWA and the respective cities of mutually acceptable demonstration plans. Based on these plans, two or more of the named cities will be chosen to execute an operational demonstration of the ARZ concept.

Auto Restricted Zones may be considered part of the Transportation System Management element of comprehensive transportation plans. Communities could also be eligible for Federal Matching funds to establish such zones through UMTA's operating and capital assistance program and the FHWA urban systems program. Federal-aid urban system funds are available for a wide variety of improvements including many of the costs involved in implementing ARZ's. Areas not selected to enter into this final design phase of the demonstration effort are strongly urged to pursue the development of ARZ's using these funds.

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