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DADE COUNTY TO GET FUNDING FOR HIALEAH EXTENSION

The U.S. Department of Transportation today accepted the proposal of Miami, Florida to extend the planned Metropolitan Dade County rapid transit system into Hialeah at a federal cost of \$57 million.

Richard S. Page, Administrator of the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), made the announcement today at Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The agreement would provide for an eventual \$632 million for an expanded 20.5 mile system. A commitment of \$575 million was made in December 1976 for a 16.5 mile segment between Dadeland and N.W. 65th Street, with provisions that adequate yard sites be included so that the 16.5 mile segment would be fully operable.

In today's announcement, Page said, "I am convinced that none of the available maintenance and storage sites along the 16.5 mile right-of-way are, in fact, operationally or environmentally viable. At Hialeah, excellent maintenance and storage sites are available." Another major factor in approving the proposed extension, Page noted, "is an expected improvement in the job market along the four-mile segment and the improved transportation accessibility that the segment will bring to a large minority community."

Page also pointed out that, "the County will significantly increase the non-federal contribution that would ordinarily be necessary for such a project."

In another action, the Administrator noted the Department's intent to approve the County's pending application for preliminary engineering of a Downtown People Mover system in the City of Miami. "We will be prepared," Page told M.R. Stierheim, County Manager, "to permit you to use funds within the ceiling to implement the construction of the DPM only if adequate cost savings can be achieved from the rapid transit construction program and when the \$57 million in additional Federal funds becomes available."

A local source for additional information is Dr. John A. Dyer, Metropolitan Dade County Transportation Coordinator, 911 Courthouse, 75 West Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130, (305) 579-5311.

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