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DOT AID TO BALTIMORE RAIL TRANSIT NEARS \$423 MILLION

A \$74,187,200 grant for construction of the new Baltimore, Md., rapid transit system was announced today by Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams.

The Secretary noted that with today's grant a total of \$422,938,400 in federal funds has been made available toward completion of an eight-mile segment of the planned 26-mile system. A total federal commitment of \$572,660,000 has been made by the department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration to build the first eight-mile segment.

"The Baltimore Rail Transit System is the very first in the nation designed to be free of barriers for use by handicapped persons," the Secretary said. "The city's elderly and handicapped persons will have complete accessibility to the system," he added.

Each of the system's nine stations will have a service-passenger elevator and passengers can request the elevator by either pushing a button or using a two-way audio system. All buttons will be located at a level which can be reached from wheelchairs. A speaker system, also to be installed, will allow for communication between the passenger and station agent.

Other features of the new system include 48-inch wide walkways with gentle slopes, braille-equipped dial telephones, handrails and textured surfaces on platform edges, pedestrian crosswalks and other areas hazardous to persons who are weak of sight or blind.

Today's grant includes funds for train control and communications equipment, procurement and installation of escalators and elevators, real estate acquisition and construction of the Rogers and Reistertown Plaza stations.

A local source for further information is Mr. Walter Addison, Mass Transit Administration, P.O. Box 8755, Baltimore-Washington International Airport, Baltimore, Maryland 21240 (301) 383-3434. (MD-03-0004-05)

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