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UMTA 78-56
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DOT REAFFIRMS TRANSBUS MANDATE AND ISSUES NEW SPECIFICATION

Richard S. Page, Administrator of the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration, today issued a new specification and policy statement for future transit bus procurement.

The policy statement issued today reaffirms the original mandate that thirty-five to forty-foot transit buses purchased after September 30, 1979, satisfy the requirements for accessibility for elderly and handicapped persons.

However, Page said the effective date will be reassessed in the near future when manufacturers' initial delivery commitments will be known.

After 15 months of intensive review and public comment, the department has concluded that key requirements for Transbus will continue to include a maximum 22" floor height, capable of lowering to at least 18" at the front door, low steps, wide front door, and tandem rear axles. In addition, manufacturers must offer a choice to bus buyers of either a front door ramp or front door lift for elderly and handicapped service, Page said.

Page noted that three cities, Los Angeles, Miami and Philadelphia, have formed the first Transbus consortium which will request bids under the specification on a 530 bus order. "We expect the first consortium to advertise for bids within a month," Page said. "In order to attain the earliest possible implementation of the Transbus mandate, the department is fully prepared to make progress payments to the winning bidder," he added.

The Administrator pointed out the department has pledged its utmost effort to help other cities establish consortia to make the Transbus program economically viable for manufacturers and to assure early production.

In 1971, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration initiated a major research project to develop an improved transit bus that would attract mass ridership, and also be accessible to elderly and handicapped persons. Three manufacturers, GMC Truck and Coach Division, AM General Corporation, and Rohr Industries, Inc. previously designed and built prototype 'Transbuses' to an earlier specification outlined by UMTA.

Among the key improvements, Transbus will introduce to the riding public: wider doors; reduced noise; less odor and emissions; quicker acceleration and higher top speed; shock absorbing bumpers; and a smoother ride.

The Transbus mandate is expected to stabilize the bus market through standardized performance and procurement requirements, anticipated long production runs, and open competition.

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For additional information, a comprehensive policy paper "Transbus Policy Statement: Reaffirmation of the DOT Mandate" and the "Transbus Procurement Requirements" dated September 1978, may be obtained by contacting the Urban Mass Transportation Administration Office of Public Affairs, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590, (202) 426-4043.

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