



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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The U.S. Department of Transportation today made a grant to the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport Board to help construct a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system at the new massive airport now under construction between the two Texas cities.

The \$7,635,540 grant, made by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), will help finance the new PRT system, known as AIRTRANS, which is scheduled to go into operation when the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport opens in mid-1973.

Local funds totaling \$3.8 million will be provided by the Airport Board, bringing the total net project cost to more than \$11.4 million. An additional \$10.2 million in construction costs are expected to be paid by revenue from AIRTRANS users, bringing the total gross project cost to \$21.7 million.

Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said: "The primary function of AIRTRANS is the transportation of airline passengers, the public, and airport employees between the three airline terminal buildings, the parking lots, and the airport hotel. It will also provide a vital and logical link in meeting the total transportation needs in the Dallas-Fort Worth urban area, in keeping with President Nixon's wishes that we make the greatest use of our new transportation facilities so that more people may be served."

Passengers and others arriving in private autos at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport may park in one of the two remote parking lots, board AIRTRANS at a nearby station, and ride to the airline terminal of their choice. Similarly, returning air passengers and others who have parked in a remote parking lot will ride AIRTRANS from the terminal where they arrive to the remote parking lot where their car is located.

"The project facilities and equipment will also be available for passengers using other forms of public transportation that exist or are planned to meet the total transportation needs of the Dallas-Fort Worth urban area," Secretary Volpe said.

"In addition, AIRTRANS will provide inter-terminal service for passengers transferring between air carriers," the Secretary said. Dallas-Fort Worth currently has a very high percentage of interline transfer passengers -- approximately 36 percent.

Air passengers transferring at Dallas-Fort Worth to other flights will be able to deplane, walk a short distance to a nearby enclosed AIRTRANS station, ride a PRT mini-train to another terminal and board their continuing flights in less than 10 minutes on an average, Secretary Volpe said.

"AIRTRANS users will ride in 40-passenger, electric-powered vehicles which will operate on concrete guideways 24-hours a day," the Secretary said. The rubber-tire PRT vehicles will be capable of operating automatically as a single vehicle or in trains of two or more cars. The entire system will be built by Vought Aeronautics of Dallas.

Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal of UMTA gave the following description of the new AIRTRANS vehicles:

"Each vehicle will be about 21-feet long, 7 1/2-feet wide and 10-feet tall ... seats will be provided for 16 passengers, with as many as 24 additional standees ... air-conditioning, tinted safety glass, interior lighting and foam insulation will provide a comfortable environment for the riders ... carpeted flooring, upholstered seats and plastic interior panels will also provide comfort and sophistication expected by today's airline passengers."

For safety, Administrator Villarreal said, AIRTRANS will be entrapped by two-foot high concrete parapet walls on each side. An on-board public address system will be installed for communication between each vehicle and AIRTRANS Central Control, in addition to an emergency alarm button which will enable passengers to notify Central Control in case of an on-board problem.

Structurally, the AIRTRANS vehicles will be made of a fiberglass body shell, mounted on a welded steel body frame and attached to a welded steel chassis with fail-safe mechanically-operated friction brakes. The AIRTRANS guideway will be manufactured with warm-tone cement and sandblasted to harmonize with other airport buildings and bridges.

In making today's grant announcement, Secretary Volpe praised the designers of the new airport, saying:

"In order for this new airport design to meet the transportation needs of the Dallas-Fort Worth urban area properly, it is mandatory that a fast, efficient, and economical form of transportation be provided within the confines of the airport that will interface with the other forms of transportation presently in being or planned for the Dallas-Fort Worth area."

In addition to the primary function of moving people, the AIRTRANS system is also designed to move baggage, mail, cargo, supplies and trash. UMTA's participation in the system, however, pertains only to the "people moving" portion of the system.

UMTA is currently researching other concepts of personal rapid transit systems as possible solutions to the growing need for a more comprehensive and viable means of meeting the total urban mass transportation needs in the Nation's urban areas.

UMTA is building the Nation's first public PRT system at West Virginia University in Morgantown. In addition, UMTA currently is testing four prototype PRT systems on a small scale at Dulles International Airport near Washington, D. C. Both projects are being conducted under UMTA's Research, Development and Demonstration Program.

Administrator Villarreal said: "The system being assisted at the Dallas-Fort Worth area is using proven state-of-the-art technology and is being financed under UMTA's Capital Grant Program.

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