



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced the award of four contracts totaling \$6 million for the construction and demonstration of four innovative new Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) systems.

The new-type personal rapid transit systems will be installed and tested at the U. S. International Transportation Exposition (TRANSPO). One million visitors are expected to attend TRANSPO at Dulles International Airport near Washington, D. C. during May-June 1972. The event will be the first complete land, sea and air transportation exposition ever held anywhere in the world.

"The purpose of the Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) Program is to identify technologies suitable for meeting transportation needs in the congested urban environment," Secretary Volpe said in announcing the contract awards. "The availability of Dulles and TRANSPO as a test site for this program is a happy coincidence. We expect to continue systems testing and evaluation for perhaps a year following TRANSPO, during all seasons and under all weather conditions," Volpe said. "These demonstrations will provide the public an opportunity to see and ride prototype transit systems prior to their installation in some city. It enables us to greatly reduce the uncertainties in applying new technologies to moving people in cities," Secretary Volpe said.

Today's contract awards for about \$1.5 million each went to the Dashaveyor Company of Los Angeles, California; the Ford Motor

Company of Dearborn, Michigan; Transportation Technology, Inc. of Denver, Colorado; and the Varo Corporation of Garland, Texas.

A total of 13 firms and corporations submitted bids on the four contracts. All four successful contractors will use some of their own funds to build their PRT's, bringing the total project cost to over \$8 million.

Today's four contracts, awarded by the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), call for:

- \* The Dashaveyor Company to build and demonstrate a 31-passenger, rubber-tired vehicle, electrically propelled with a guideway switch.
- \* Ford Motor Company to construct and demonstrate a smaller 24-passenger car system. The Ford system will incorporate an on-board switch.
- \* Transportation Technology, Inc. to demonstrate a PRT system with air pad suspension and linear-induction motor propulsion.
- \* The Varo Corporation, affiliated with the Rohr Corporation, to demonstrate a suspended monorail PRT using on-board switches activated by the guideway.

Personal Rapid Transit systems, sometimes called "people movers," are considered by many to be one of the solutions for the mounting needs of urban travelers. The systems are characterized by small, independently-powered vehicles traveling at relatively low speeds on exclusive guideways under automatic control.

The objective of the PRT is to move riders along a guideway between closely-spaced stations. However, because the systems use stations which are on spur lines rather than on the main line, it is possible for PRT cars to bypass all but the one station pre-selected by the individual PRT rider. The result is a personal trip from origin to destination competitive with the personal journey of a private auto user.

The PRT projects announced today are part of UMTA's broad program of research, development and demonstration of advanced new technology systems, according to UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal. On

a smaller scale, UMTA is working on the system problems of new technology, such as propulsion, suspension, vehicle command and control, the Administrator said.

Other PRT projects supported by UMTA contracts and grants are in Morgantown, West Virginia, and at the new Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport currently under construction. In Morgantown, construction is about to begin on a PRT system linking several parts of the West Virginia University campus with downtown Morgantown. At the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport, which will be the largest in the world, UMTA is assisting in the planning of a PRT system which will shuttle airline passengers to various sections of the massive terminal buildings.

The four contractors selected to build PRT's at TRANSPO will all design, develop, install and demonstrate their complete systems on airport areas measuring roughly 100 by 750 feet.

In making today's announcement, Secretary Volpe said:

"From the standpoint of both the general public and the transit industry, this PRT project represents a special opportunity for us to find out about the system's safety, reliability, cost, capabilities and public acceptance.

"These PRT's will not be designed to get visitors to and from TRANSPO," the Secretary said. "However, we are building them at TRANSPO not just to show the latest transit technology but to give the PRT's broad exposure to a large number of people in a very short period of time."

The Secretary said that the Department of Transportation will make the results of the PRT demonstrations available to city governments and to the transit industry.

"This is a very good example of Government-industry cooperation," Secretary Volpe said. "It will bring into being a new generation of transportation technology in which the Government and private industry will be justifiably proud."

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