



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced two grants totaling \$60 million for mass transit improvements in the metropolitan Chicago area, including financing for 500 new buses, 100 new rapid transit cars and 21 new commuter rail cars.

In addition, Secretary Volpe today took action to enable the West Suburban Mass Transit District of Chicago to advertise for bids and incur costs in anticipation of a \$24 million grant to the Transit District for double-deck commuter rail cars to serve Chicago-Aurora commuters.

Both grants were made by the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA). Secretary Volpe made the announcements during a year-end news conference in Washington.

The first grant -- for \$53,119,700 -- was made to the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) for 500 buses, 100 rapid transit cars and other related improvements designed to upgrade transit facilities for urban and suburban commuters, Secretary Volpe said. It is UMTA's largest single grant for new buses.

The second grant -- for \$6,890,355 -- went to the Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission of Indiana for 21 electric commuter rail cars. The 21 air-conditioned, 130-passenger, self-propelled rail cars will be leased to the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad for commuter service between Chicago and its Indiana suburbs of Hammond, Gary and Michigan City.

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The anticipated third grant -- for \$24,266,849 to the West Suburban Mass Transit District -- is expected to be approved in the near future, Secretary Volpe said. Funds from that grant will enable the Transit District to purchase 94 double-deck commuter rail cars and 21 locomotives currently being operated by the Burlington Northern Railroad for Chicago-Aurora commuters. The Transit District plans to modernize the cars and locomotives and to purchase 25 additional double-deckers.

"The Chicago area is getting better mass transit because State, county and city government officials have worked together to make it possible," Secretary Volpe said during his news conference.

"Governor (Richard B.) Ogilvie used his personal leadership to get State support behind these vital transit improvements and to obtain the necessary list of mass transit priorities for the Chicago region," the Secretary said. "I appreciate the Governor's leadership, along with cooperation from Indiana Governor (Edgar D.) Whitcomb, and help from Chicago's Mayor (Richard J.) Daley, who lined up city support for these commuter improvements.

"Important help also came from the Regional Transportation Planning Board, which worked with the four major Chicago area planning agencies from two States to make these much-needed grants possible," Secretary Volpe said.

The Chicago Transit Authority operates the second largest public transit system in North America and annually carries more passengers than all of the Nation's railroads--commuter service included. Combined in CTA's \$53 million grant are funds for the Authority to:

- * Purchase between 500 and 525 air-conditioned, 51-passenger, V-8 diesel transit buses, equipped with environmental improvement packages, two-way radio-telephones and replacement parts. Each bus will cost between \$43,000 and \$45,000, for a total estimated cost of \$22,672,500 for all 500-525 buses.

- * Buy between 100 and 120 air-conditioned electric rapid transit cars, equipped with the latest modern safety and comfort devices and replacement parts. Each car is expected to cost between \$166,000 and \$200,000, for a total estimated cost of around \$20.3 million. The new cars will replace some of the oldest operating rapid transit cars in North America--some dating back to 1922--and will bring CTA's air-conditioned rail fleet up to nearly 40 percent of its 1,200 cars.

* Build and remodel surface and rapid transit facilities, such as terminals, subway stations, garages and employee services. Total expenditures are estimated at \$11.4 million.

* Install rapid transit safety signal light systems along the unsig-naled portion of the heavily-traveled North-South route and on the Douglas branch of the West-Northwest route for a cost estimated at \$10.6 million.

* Modernize the Newport and 62nd Street rapid transit power sub-stations and replace overhead trolley wires with third-rail power on the Evanston branch for \$2.1 million.

* Rehabilitate various rapid transit structures along the Douglas, Ravenswood and North-South routes and rehabilitate rapid transit tracks on the North-South, Lake Street and Milwaukee routes, for a total cost of \$4.2 million.

* Buy supervisory and transit service vehicles, purchase new shop machinery and tools, construct bus turn-arounds and renew damaged safety fences along rapid transit rights-of-way for an estimated total cost of \$1.6 million.

* Improve CTA's 300-car park-and-ride lot at Cicero-Berwyn terminal, and provide a 350-car lot at 79th and Perry Streets to serve the Dan Ryan rapid transit line for \$283,000.

These and other related capital improvement projects covered by today's grant are expected to cost a total of around \$80 million. Today's \$53 million UMTA grant covers two-thirds of the entire first-phase project, with the remaining one-third funding of \$26.5 million to come from the State of Illinois -- \$20.7 million -- and from CTA -- \$5.8 million in labor forces and materials.

"Federal funds were made available through President Richard Nixon's 1970 Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act, which provides \$3.1 billion over a five-year period to save, modernize and develop new American transit systems," commented Secretary Volpe.

In addition to serving all sections of Chicago, the Chicago Transit Authority also serves 34 suburbs, all within Cook County. Service is provided on 135 bus routes and on six rapid transit lines over more than 2,100 miles of city and suburban streets and rights-of-way.

Ninety-nine percent of Chicago's population lives within a half-mile of CTA service. On a typical weekday, CTA serves about 1.2 million revenue passengers, using 2,800 buses, 300 trolley buses and 1,240 rapid transit cars.

UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal praised CTA's operating procedures but pointed out that massive Federal financial assistance is necessary if fare levels are to remain reasonable "because increasing labor and equipment costs are preventing CTA from making capital improvements, such as buying new buses and rail cars."

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For further information, contact Walter Gold at the UMTA Office of Public Affairs, (202) 426-4043. For specific information on the CTA grant (UMTA Project No. ILL-UTG-24), contact F. C. Knautz, Chicago Transit Authority, Merchandise Mart Plaza, P. O. Box 3555, Chicago, Illinois 60654, (312) 644-7200, extension 400. For additional specifics on the Lake-Porter grant (IND-UTG-5), contact Bryce E. Billings, Chairman, Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission, 8149 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, Indiana 46322, (219) 923-1060.

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