



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced a \$3.1 million grant to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to help COG and other local agencies finance "the most unified planning for transit improvements ever conducted in the Washington area."

The \$3,133,300 grant, made by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), will cover two-thirds of COG's total costs over a 33-month period. The remaining one-third local share will be provided by local funds and staff services from the participating agencies.

In making the grant announcement, Secretary Volpe said "the planning program integrates and consolidates all transit planning studies and projects by the Washington area's many regional, subregional, State and local agencies into one unified, comprehensive transit development program. It carries out President Nixon's directive for coordination of local programs and for development of a balanced transportation system in the Nation's Capital."

The UMTA grant includes funds for work to be carried out by the Council of Governments, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, Maryland Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia Planning District Commission, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the District of Columbia Transit Development team of the Office of Planning and Management. Over-all coordination will be provided by COG.

Other agencies playing an important role in developing and carrying out the unified program are the Washington Suburban Transit Commission,

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District of Columbia Department of Highways and Traffic, Virginia
Department of Highways and National Capital Planning Commission.

Secretary Volpe pointed out that this program is "an excellent example of our emphasis on financing immediate action and short-range improvements which are consistent with long-range plans and objectives." Of the total grant, \$3 million is for the short-range and immediate action phases with \$133,300 for completion of the long-range phase of the program. The \$133,300 will assist in financing the completion of COG's long-range transportation planning program.

UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal noted that this grant was the largest technical study grant that has been made in the history of UMTA's technical study grant program.

"With this grant, we are again demonstrating the commitment of the Department of Transportation to improving mass transit in the Nation's Capital," Mr. Villarreal said. "We feel that this immediate action program will help the Washington area qualify for two-thirds Federal capital grant assistance for needed transit improvements, within the first months of the program." Presently, Washington qualifies only for fifty-percent Federal transit funding because the area lacks a regional transit development program which will be developed under this grant.

The most urgent phase of the program is immediate improvements to existing transit systems. These activities, to be carried out by COG, WMATA, WMATC, NVTC, and MNCPPC, are intended to maintain and enhance existing levels of transit service. The aim is to encourage greater use of transit now in anticipation of the start of METRO rail transit service in July 1974.

This includes detailed implementation programs for:

- * Bus operations improvements, including improved routing, and scheduling.
- * New and innovative transit services, including special off-peak services, and service for the elderly and the handicapped.
- * Bus passenger services improvements, including increased availability of information about transit services, transit maps and easy-to-use timetable information.
- * Additional new bus stop signs showing such information aids as route numbers and routing and schedule information.

- * Bus rider shelters, including recommended locations for an estimated 250 shelters in the region.
- * New bus stations, including recommended sites to facilitate transfers.
- * Bus lay-over areas where buses have to stand for long periods.
- * Bus-priority lanes and streets and auto-free zones designed to provide speedy, regular and reliable bus service and reduce air pollution, and,
- * Alternatives to prevent cutbacks and deterioration of essential transit services, including possible subsidies.

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For further information, contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043, or Mr. William Gilbert, Director of Public Affairs, COG, 1225 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036. Phone (202) 223-6800. (UMTA Project No. INT-T9-20)

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