



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 1972

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today announced an \$18 million grant to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, to help finance five years of transit improvements in the Twin Cities area, including the purchase of nearly 500 new buses.

The Grant, made to the Twin Cities Area Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) by the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), will provide two-thirds Federal funding for the five-year, \$27 million project. The remaining one-third local share of \$9 million will come from a fractional property tax levied by the MTC.

The Transit Commission provides nearly all public transportation for two million residents of a 2,500 square mile area which includes the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and seven suburban counties. Today's grant includes funds for the MTC to buy 498 new buses, the second largest such venture ever backed by UMTA.

"This is an important contribution under the Nixon Administration's public transportation program," said Secretary Volpe, "to the efforts of a major Middle Western metropolitan area to solve its transportation problems."

The Secretary said the grant also "enables the Minneapolis-St. Paul area to become the first of 11 Urban Corridor Demonstration Projects in the country." The demonstration program is a joint effort by the Department's Federal Highway Administration and UMTA to develop and test highway and transit projects which will effectively attack congestion in urban corridors, particularly during peak hours, Secretary Volpe said.

"Of the new buses to be purchased during the first year, 36 will be used to implement the Interstate 35-W Urban Corridor Demonstration Project," the Secretary said.



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"Both President Nixon and Secretary Volpe have made helping the frustrated commuter one of their top priorities...they are answering the public's demand for better alternatives to the automobile for commuting purposes...and we are doing something about this nationwide problem right now," UMTA Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal said.

The MTC's five-year capital improvement program is designed to upgrade and extend the level of service available in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Most of the 498 new buses are replacement vehicles for city buses which range between 15 and 20 years old.

Secretary Volpe said that "in addition to helping the MTC buy new buses, this UMTA grant will allow the Transit Commission to equip all their buses with two-way radios for better service and with environmental improvement packages for better pollution control."

Other transit improvements to be made with today's grant funds include the repair, renovation and consolidation of the MTC's existing bus garages and the construction of 100 bus passenger waiting shelters. In addition, the grant will allow the MTC to buy administrative and maintenance equipment and to implement reserved bus lanes for faster, safer transit service.

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