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DELLIBOVI ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO COMBAT SUBURBAN CONGESTION

Alfred A. DelliBovi, Administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), has announced a new initiative to help the nation's suburbs solve growing traffic congestion problems.

"The objective of our suburban mobility initiative is to develop effective alternatives to the single occupant automobile for travel in and around America's suburbs," DelliBovi said. "It will be a joint effort of the public and private sectors, and is designed to avoid creation of a new constituency permanently dependent on federal funds."

The UMTA Administrator announced the new program this week at a meeting of the Transportation Research Board in Washington. He said the program is designed to generate creative strategies for solving the increasing traffic congestion tying up the nation's growing suburbs.

"We want to spark cooperation among public officials developers, transit planners, employers and individual citizens," DelliBovi said. "Mass transit programs must attract the kind of broad support that will get people out of their cars and into mass transit."

He said UMTA can provide technical assistance and a limited amount of funding for feasibility studies and start-up costs. Grants will also be available to help create new institutional arrangements to plan, design, finance, implement and operate transit programs.

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The suburban mobility initiative will include UMTA-sponsored one-day workshops in several key suburban locations, still to be selected. At the seminars, local transportation problems will be discussed by community leaders, transit experts, and UMTA representatives. Participants will also try to design effective solutions to those problems. Short term planning grants will be available to help the community develop its program and to mobilize local resources.

Seminar site selection will be based on factors such as the seriousness of the local traffic problem, the level of local public and private commitment to solving the problem, and the availability of local financial resources. Projects that can be quickly implemented will be given priority.

DelliBovi emphasized that today's suburban traffic problems have developed over more than 20 years, and are likely to increase with continuing shifts in employment, shopping, and travel patterns in suburban areas.

"Almost half of the jobs in the U.S. are now in the suburbs, a figure that is continuing to increase," DelliBovi said. "And, the number of workers commuting within the suburbs is already double the number commuting to central business districts.

"If we are to improve mobility in the suburbs, we need both creativity and community support, because no transit program will succeed unless it picks people up where they are, takes them where they want to go, when they want to go there, at a price they can afford," DelliBovi said. "Only with both leadership and support locally do we have a chance to meet the transit needs of each suburban community."

Suburban locales interested in obtaining additional information on this initiative should contact Mr. DelliBovi by February 15, 1988, at UMTA headquarters, 400 7th Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20590.

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