

in the near term can take advantage of the availability of existing track and right-of-way, offers the prospect of efficiently transporting large volumes of people at high speeds in safety and comfort. The potential of this technology is, as yet, relatively untapped; the pay-off from a vigorous program of research, development, and demonstrations could, therefore, be correspondingly great.

The reports of the Office of High Speed Ground Transportation, which will be based on systematic research, will focus on the most effective and efficient use of resources to maintain mobility in the Northeast and in other densely populated regions of the United States.

BACKGROUND, ADMINISTRATION, AND SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE HIGH-SPEED GROUND TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1965

Background

In June 1962, Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island introduced into the Congress a resolution (S.J. Res. 194, 87th Congress, 2d Session) which would have authorized the District of Columbia and eight Northeastern States to "... enter into a compact to establish a multi-state authority to construct and operate a rail passenger transportation system within the area" In the following October, Senator Pell requested that the Administration provide assistance in analyzing the transportation problem which had prompted his resolution. The President responded by directing that an interagency task force be assembled "... to survey available information, to identify issues and to estimate the time, expense and staff required to prepare such proposals as may be appropriate." The interagency task force reported to the President on December 10, 1962, recommending that a "... comprehensive analysis of transportation problems in the Northeastern Megalopolis ..." be carried on by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Work began on the Washington-Boston study in June 1963 with funds which had been previously appropriated by Congress for transportation research in the Commerce Department. In September 1964 the study was given formal project status as the Northeast Corridor Transportation Project, first, in the Office of the Secretary of Commerce and, in April 1965, in the Office of the Under Secretary of Commerce for Transportation.

It soon became apparent that, in order adequately to evaluate alternative ways in which the transportation needs of the Northeast Corridor could be met, much more and better information was needed, including technological and cost data for both current high speed ground systems and possible new systems. The President, therefore, asked the 89th Congress for legislation which resulted in the High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965. This Act authorized the Secretary of Commerce to undertake research and development in high speed ground transportation, to contract for demonstrations in high speed ground transportation and to collect and collate transportation data, statistics, and other information.

Although the demonstration projects described in the legislative background were to be in the Northeast Corridor, the single area of greatest regional population density and transportation congestion, the High Speed Ground Transportation program was to be national in scope. The information gained in the Corridor would have general application in other highly urbanized regions. Planners, builders and operators of urban and interurban transportation systems throughout the United States would have available to them the new technology coming out of high speed ground transportation research and development, as well as the data obtained in testing public acceptance of improved rail service. The systems engineering, costing, and system simulation and evaluation techniques to be developed for analyzing alternative transportation systems for the Northeast Corridor would also be available for application in other regions of the nation.