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ASSESSMENT PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Program Direction

Frederick A. F. Cooke, Consulting Engineer.
H. William Merritt, Transportation Consultant.
Leon M. Cole, The Library of Congress.

Panel on Current Developments in the United States

Clark Henderson, Chairman Stanford Research Institute.
John K. Howell, Gerald D. Hines Interests (BRH Mobility).
John R. Jamieson, Twin Cities Area Metropolitan Transit Commission.
Thomas A. Lancaster, Rohr Industries, Inc.
Roy Lobosco, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Panel on Economics

Lyle C. Fitch, Chairman, Institute of Public Administration.
J. Edward Anderson, University of Minnesota (on leave).
Thomas B. Deen, Alan M. Voorhees and Associates, Inc.
Paul K. Dygert, Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company.
Aaron J. Gellman, Gellman Research Associates.
Charles Hickox, LTV Aerospace Company.
Douglas . Lee, Fairfax County, Virginia.
Sumner Myers, Institute of Public Administration.

Panel on Social Acceptability

Jacquelyn A. Ingersoll, Chairman, Citizen Advisor, Twin Cities Area.
Ralph Jackson, Denver Regional Transportation District.
Alain L. Kornhauser, Princeton University.
Rodney K. Lay, The MITRE Corporation.
John B. Schnell, American Publictransit Association.
Reed H. Jt-inslow, The MITRE Corporation.
George V. Wickstrom, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Panel on Operations and Technology

Robert A. Makofski, Chairman, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University.
Richard H. Donlon, Otis-Transportation Technology Division.
Eugene Jones, Frederic R. Harris, Inc.
Thomas McGean, De Leuw Cather and Company.
David R. Phelps, Transit Development Corporation, Inc.
Stanley A. Spinwebbor, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.
Vukan Vuchic, University of Pennsylvania.

Panel on International Developments

H. William Merritt, Chairman, Transportation Consultant.
Robert A. Burco, Public Policy Research Associates.
Thomas H. Floyd, Jr., DIA International.
Howard R. Ross, Transportation Consultant.

Preface

This assessment of Personal Rapid Transit and other forms of Automated Guideway Transportation has been prepared in response to a request from the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations on behalf of the Transportation Subcommittee.

The scope of this assessment complements two other studies conducted by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). The subjects of these other assessments are:

- . The degree of automation which is technically feasible, economically justifiable, or otherwise appropriate to rail rapid transit; and
- . The process by which communities plan, select or reject, and implement rail rapid transit systems in conjunction with other modes of transit.

The objectives of this assessment are threefold:

- To provide the Senate Appropriations Committee with information on the current status and the social and economic aspects of Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) developments,
- To assess the key problems associated with Automated Guideway Transit as perceived by potential riders, the communities, and the transit industry; and
- To identify major policy issues and automated guideway transit program alternatives, and to explore their implications.

Dual-mode systems, moving walkways, and continuous flow systems are beyond the scope of this study. Other urban transportation options (e.g., electric automobiles) that might contribute to overcoming some of our current difficulties are covered, but only briefly.

The assessment was accomplished during a four-month period by a special team of experts in the field representing divergent views on the subject. Study panels were organized to examine the current status of development and implementation. Consideration was given to the economic, social, and technical aspects of Automated Guideway Transit in the United States and foreign countries. The panels consulted with other interested and knowledgeable individuals, including representatives of urban planning organizations, transit operators, industry, and other groups who could make a significant contribution. The panel on social acceptability- invited a representative of organized labor to participate in discussions on the impact of automation.

Members of the assessment team made visits to important Automated Guideway Transit installations in the United States. Meetings were held with the urban Mass Transportation Administration. Advocates and opponents of Automated Guideway Transit presented their views to the assessment team. Research reports and technical data were obtained from a variety of domestic and foreign sources.

This report has been prepared by the OTA Transportation Assessments Group, based upon the findings and conclusions of the study panels and other information developed independently. The panel reports are included in this volume.