

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 2004

Remarks by Norman Y. Mineta, Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

*Groundbreaking ceremony
Euclid Corridor Transportation Project
Cleveland, Ohio*

Good morning.

Thank you, Senator Voinovich, for that kind introduction, and your distinguished career in public service at the local, state and federal level.

Thanks to everyone at Playhouse Square for your tremendous hospitality and for that warm welcome.

I'm thrilled to be back in Cleveland, and in such distinguished company, for what could very well be one of the most important days for this city's future.

Right here and right now, we are witnessing the beginning of the "new" Euclid Avenue. In its hey-day, Euclid had the distinction of being the most beautiful street in all of America.

And with this groundbreaking, this venerable thoroughfare begins its return to glory as the crown jewel of Cleveland.

In a city that is almost synonymous with urban renaissance and rebirth, this new, state-of-the-art bus rapid transit line will breathe new life into the area.

Along this Corridor, home to some of Cleveland's largest employers, this new service, aptly named the Silver Line, will bring workers to their jobs quickly and efficiently.

The new line is also attracting more businesses downtown, like the House of Blues, which otherwise would have set up shop elsewhere.

Additionally, it will provide a more timely and cost-effective way for students at Case Western Reserve and Cleveland State to get to class on time. And, music lovers will certainly appreciate having a reliable way to get to Severance Hall before the first note is played.

Some of you may be wondering – can one bus line do all *that*?

The answer, ladies and gentlemen, is yes!

As the Secretary of Transportation, I have had the privilege of seeing entire communities rebuilt from the ground up because of a new transit system. I also experienced that as Mayor of San Jose, California, and as a member of Congress representing the Silicon Valley of California.

I can think of no city that demonstrates better than Cleveland how transportation is moving the local economy.

Since 2000, the new Euclid Avenue has generated about 600 million dollars in economic development with East Fourth Street, the Statler Apartments, and the Old Arcade.

Looking ahead, this community can expect an additional 700 million dollars from the new apartments, condos, restaurants, and shopping outlets.

And with that investment comes jobs.

Experts predict that the new Euclid Corridor, the largest capital improvement project in Cleveland's public transit history, may generate as many as 32,000 new jobs.

The Bush Administration is committed to helping cities like Cleveland strengthen their economies through investments that relieve congestion and lure jobs and businesses to their communities.

We are focusing our efforts on building stronger, more efficient transit systems all across America that benefit commuters and continue to drive our nation's economy.

That's why the Euclid Corridor Project was one of the President's top transit priorities this year.

Like all other ambitious transit projects, the Silver Line came about through hard work, careful planning, and positive partnerships between the federal government and local transit agencies.

And for that, I'd like to thank the RTA, Governor Taft, Senator Voinovich, Mayor Campbell, and the many others who saw this project grow from a dream to a reality.

Now, in just a few minutes, I'm going to make it all official by signing the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

This pact represents a firm commitment by the U.S. Department of Transportation to cover nearly 85 percent of the 168.4 million dollar cost of the entire project with funds

from the Federal Transit Administration, congestion mitigation and air quality funds and rail modernization funds.

As I said earlier, this may very well be one of the most important days for Cleveland's future, and I am honored to be a part of it.

On behalf of President Bush and Vice President Cheney, I want to thank all of you for being here.

Travel safely, and thank you for inviting me.