



Statement of Elaine McConnell
Chairman,
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

To the Commonwealth Transportation
Board's Financial Planning and
Programming Hearing
▪ March 6, 2003 ▪



**What is the role
of the
Northern Virginia Transportation
Commission?**

- Forum for elected officials to achieve an effective and coordinated regional transit and ridesharing network.
- Serves six local jurisdictions covering 1,000 square miles with a population of 1.5 million.
- Appoints Virginia's members of the WMATA Board.



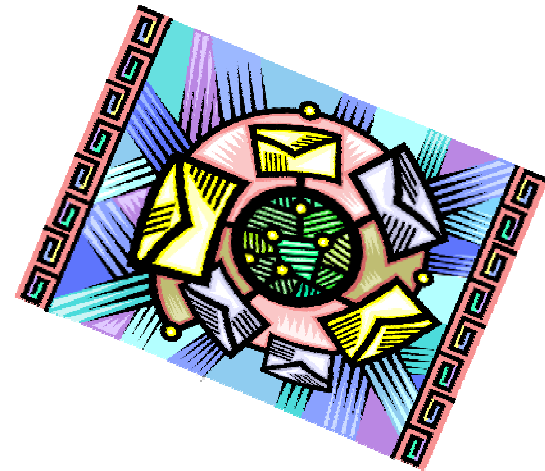
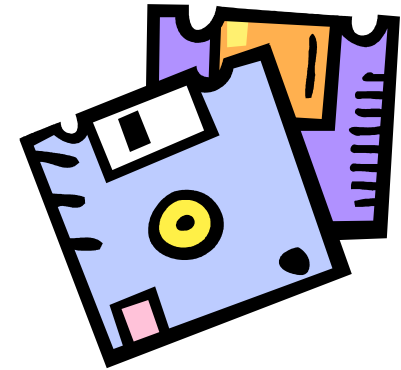
NVTC

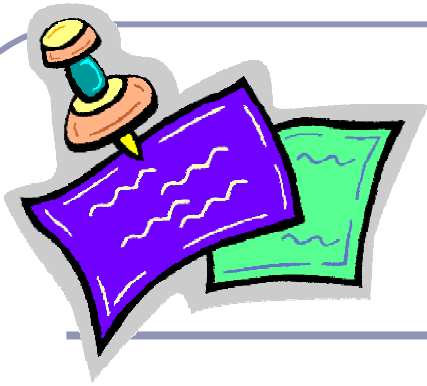
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission



- Co-owner of Virginia Railway Express.
- Obtains and allocates \$100 million annually of transit funds among its members.
- Sponsors transit demonstration projects to relieve congestion and improve air quality.

- Compiles performance data to facilitate transit management.
- Communicates with the public to promote regional projects and improve awareness of transit's benefits.



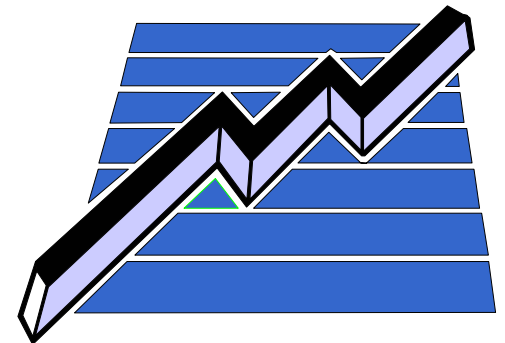


What is NVTC's Message?

- Transit is very successful in our region.
- This success is imposing steep costs on our local governments and transit riders.
- Our local governments bear a disproportionate and growing burden to fight congestion with effective transit investments.
- CTB should recognize the commonwealth's responsibility and increase its investments in our region's transit systems.

Transit is performing effectively

- Over 276,000 weekday transit trips in Northern Virginia, and 117 million annually in FY 2002.
- Without transit, 15 more freeway lanes needed here at \$100 million per lane per mile.
- VDOT reports that VRE saves about a third of travel time for a typical trip in the I-95 corridor (and ridesharing saves a half) compared to single-occupant autos.



What are the documented public transit needs in Northern Virginia?



WMATA's urgent capital priorities for the next six years

- Existing infrastructure rehabilitation and replacement: \$1.5 billion with \$275 million unfunded.
- Series 6000 rail car option (120 rail cars) and related facilities which is only about a quarter of needs to reach CIP goal of doubling ridership in 20 years: \$625 million unfunded.
- Bus program (garage in Virginia, CNG or successor technology buses) at a quarter of the CIP bus needs: \$171 million unfunded.
- Total system-wide shortfall of \$1 billion for urgent priorities.

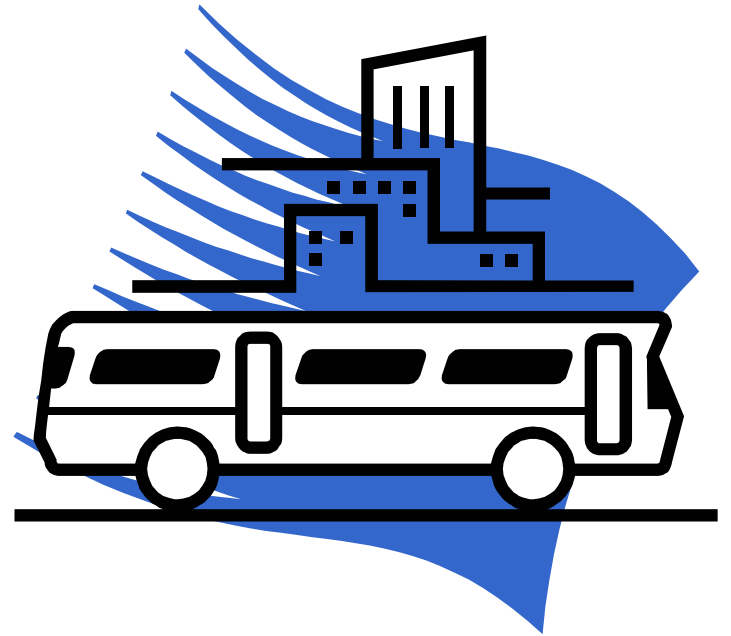
VRE to maintain existing service satisfaction and meet projected growth:



- 20 new generation locomotives: \$55 million.
- 87 new high capacity railcars: \$87 million.
- Cab coach refurbishment: \$27 million.
- Parking expansion: \$30 million.
- L'Enfant station improvements: \$48 million.
- Train maintenance facility: \$30 million.
- Platform extensions: \$20 million.
- Service extensions: \$133 million.

Several local bus systems have their own growing needs:

- Fairfax County Connector
- Alexandria DASH
- City of Fairfax CUE
- Arlington ART
- Loudoun County Transit
- Falls Church GEORGE
- PRTC OmniRide and OmniLink



FY 2004 transit budgets call for fare and local subsidy increases

- WMATA: \$48 million proposed budget operating shortfall to be split between cost reduction, higher fares and local subsidies.
- VRE: Four percent fare increase and \$600,000 local subsidy increase.



NVTC's sources of funding

- FY 2003 State Funding
 - \$64.8 million for NVTC jurisdictions
 - \$14.7 million for VRE
- FY 2003 NVTC Gas Tax
 - \$18.7 million



State programs are important and *seriously* under-funded

- For FY 2003, NVTC's state aid was over \$75 million less than the commission's statutory eligibility based on documented expenses for fuels, tires, maintenance, administration and capital.
- Transit's share of the Transportation Trust Fund would have to increase to 32 percent (up from 14.7 percent) to make up for this shortfall.



This Region's Unique Air Quality Concerns



Challenge #1

- Because of the regional problems in meeting air quality standards in 2005 and EPA's new designation of "Severe" for our ozone problems, this region has had to delay adopting a new Transportation Improvement Program and must cut pollution sharply (especially NO_x).

Challenge #2

- More Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures (TERMS) are needed to reduce pollution and these require funding – which should *not* be at the expense of transit projects that themselves are reducing pollution.

Challenge #3

- The consequence of failing to meet these requirements, in addition to health costs, is the ***loss of all federal transportation aid*** – which happened in Atlanta, GA.

What is NVTC asking from CTB?



- ✓ Act on the testimony of WMATA, and the commission's jurisdictions, for balanced state funding including all of our region's transit systems.
- ✓ Understand the critical role of transit in mitigating congestion and improving air quality.
- ✓ Support DRPT programs for proposed discretionary transit projects.

- ✓ Fund VTA 2000 transit projects that are ready to go, including WMATA's rail cars (\$27 million of promised state funds remain to be provided).
- ✓ Provide \$800,000 for bus fare buydowns from a source other than our own district's funds, since this money was *promised* to the region as annual compensation for earlier state actions regarding HOV on I-66.



- ✓ Continue funding for VRE freight railroad access fees – but from a source other than the already seriously under-funded TTF transit programs.
- ✓ Provide the 20 percent non-federal match for CMAQ (which largely funds transit projects) as is now done for RSTP (mostly highway projects).

- Encourage the Secretary of Transportation to meet the existing multi-modal planning mandate by shifting current resources (primarily from VDOT planning) and producing a realistic multi-modal plan for balanced transportation.
- Continue funding for the region's procurement of *SmarTrip* compatible bus fareboxes, VRE fare collection equipment, and related point of sale devices and clearinghouse expenses (300,000 cards are used already region-wide, including 60 percent of peak Metrorail customers).

Questions & Answers



For more information contact NVTC at:

Tel. 703/ 524-3322

Or visit our website at:

www.thinkoutsidethecar.org

Thank You!