

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 5, 2000
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Snyder at 8:10 P.M.

Members Present

James F. Almand
Leo J. Bevon
William Bogard
Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Kerry J. Donley
Paul Ferguson
Jay Fiset
Katherine Hanley
Dana Kauffman
Roger L. McClure
Scott Silverthorne
David F. Snyder
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

Richard H. Black
William D. Euille
Elaine McConnell
William C. Mims
Mary Margaret Whipple

Staff Present

Tamara Ashby
Rhonda W. Gilcrest
Gyles Norwood
Peter Sklannik (VRE)
Jennifer Straub
Richard K. Taube

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of September 7, 2000

On a motion by Mr. Zimmerman and a second by Mr. Donley, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Donley, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

NVTC and VRE Audit Reports for FY 2000

Mr. Norwood, NVTC's Controller, announced that the audits for NVTC and VRE have been completed. He introduced NVTC's auditors, Mr. Bob Dunham and Mr. Michael Aukamp from Dunham & Aukamp L.L.C.

Commissioners Bogard and Connolly joined the meeting at 8: 12 P.M.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that WMATA's policy is to rotate audit firms and he asked if NVTC has similar requirements. Mr. Norwood explained that the audit firm was chosen through a negotiated competitive process and the contract is for a three-year period, with an option for two one-year extensions. The firm has just completed its third year of auditing NVTC/VRE.

Commissioner Ferguson joined the discussion at 8:15 P.M.

In response to a question from Mr. McClure, Mr. Norwood explained that NVTC and PRTC co-own VRE, although it is treated as an independent entity. Mrs. Hanley stated that local jurisdictions' subsidies to WMATA are not shown in the NVTC audit, although jurisdictions' subsidies for VRE are included.

In response to a question from Chairman Snyder, Mr. Dunham stated that there were no material weaknesses discovered during the audit.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to accept the opinion of the auditors and to forward the report to NVTC's jurisdictions, regulatory bodies and other interested parties, after the VRE Operations Board has had the opportunity to review the VRE audit on October 20, 2000. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Demonstration of OTAG Air Quality Model

Commissioners agreed to postpone this presentation until a future meeting so that Mrs. McConnell could be present. Mrs. Bulova suggested that this would be an interesting presentation for the joint NVTC/PRTC meeting in November.

Mr. Kauffman moved, with a second by Mr. Silverthorne, to postpone the OTAG presentation until the November NVTC/PRTC joint meeting. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

NVTC's 2000 Mode Share Report

Mr. Taube stated that the Mode Share Report provides comparisons of mode shares in several transportation corridors compiled from traffic counts performed by MWCOG and VDOT. The 2000 report updates the findings presented in the 1999 Mode Share Report, with new data from the draft 1999 Metro Core Cordon Count, prepared by MWCOG. He asked commissioners to review the document over the next few weeks and submit comments to staff. It will also be reviewed in depth by jurisdictional staff at an upcoming meeting.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Tamara Ashby, of NVTC staff, stated that the Beltway cordon is defined by the inner loop of the Capital Beltway. Traffic counts are taken immediately inside this cordon on major radial highways that cross or connect to the inner loop of the Beltway. The metro cordon is defined as Washington, D.C. and parts of Arlington including: Pentagon City, the Pentagon, Crystal City, and Rosslyn. Counts are taken of all traffic crossing this line into the metro core. Mrs. Hanley stated that it is very important to clarify where the lines are located so people don't assume that the metro cordon line is the Potomac River crossing over into Washington, D.C.

At the request of Chairman Snyder, Ms. Ashby provided an overview of the Mode Share Report. Mr. Taube observed that if one looks at the corridors in which most people are moving, transit is very successful. Mr. Kauffman observed that Table 3A "I-95/I-395 Mode Share" seems to show that, with the exception of Metrorail ridership, all counts are significantly down in this corridor, in 1999 compared to 1996, which could suggest that congestion is diminishing. Ms. Ashby reminded commissioners that the Core Cordon Count is a one-day count. Also, the Franconia/Springfield Metrorail station opened and transit bus service was reduced in this corridor as a result of WMATA's policy not to run bus service that duplicates rail service. Prior to the 1999 count, construction on the Springfield Interchange began. Mr. Zimmerman also observed that the counts are the number of people not vehicles, so that the single occupancy vehicles (SOV) would be a larger share of the vehicles but a smaller share of the people. Ms. Ashby stated that she intends to include a map with the report showing the corridors

and cordon lines. Mr. Kauffman requested staff ask MWCOG staff to provide more details on how the counts were taken and the resulting numbers.

Mrs. Hanley observed that based on Table 7 "I-66 Mode Share," HOV-2 has been successful. Mr. Donley stated that transit and ridesharing are working and asked staff to develop the report so that it is useful to the commission to inform the general public. VRE ridership is a good example that transit works. He stated that with upcoming road and bridge projects, such as the Woodrow Wilson Bridge improvements, the more transit can be promoted to get people out of their single occupancy vehicles, the better off the region is in its efforts to reduce traffic congestion. Mr. Connolly agreed with Mr. Donley, but cautioned on how the data are presented so that the public doesn't think the region's traffic problems are solved. Mrs. Hanley stated that it is very important to clearly identify the cordon lines; otherwise it minimizes the success of ridesharing and transit. Mr. Fissette stated that most people hear that transit only serves 10 percent of the population, but the numbers show that transit has a far greater impact. Mr. Donley stated that it would be interesting to show what the roads would be like without transit and ridesharing. Mr. Zimmerman suggested that a press release be drafted that would include major conclusions. Mr. Taube stated that the Mode Share Report will be brought back for commission approval at the next meeting. Mrs. Bulova stated that this information may be interesting to PRTC as well and suggested that it could be included in the agenda for the joint meeting. Chairman Snyder added that it could then be adopted by NVTC at its business meeting following the joint meeting.

Mr. Almand arrived at 8:40 P.M.

Northern Virginia 2020 Transportation Plan Transit Project Progress Report

Jennifer Straub, of NVTC staff, presented a format for a chart that will show the progress of transit projects included in the Northern Virginia 2020 Plan. Once this format has been agreed to and the CLRP approved, information related to specific projects would be added and used to report on progress to the commission and other interested parties. She asked for commissioners' input on ways to improve the chart.

Mrs. Hanley observed that this will be a useful chart, but that the 2020 Plan timing should be clarified. She stated that any project with a "no" in the CLRP cannot go forward. She suggested that these projects be moved to the bottom of the category, not mixed in with the funded projects. Mr. Donley stated that some type of footnote would be appropriate that provides an explanation why projects are not going forward. Mrs. Hanley stated that it is useful for the public to see that the projects are prioritized as short and long-term. In response to a concern from Mr. Kauffman, Ms. Straub suggested that the chart include footnotes that explain short-term projects as planned for completion "by 2010." In response to a question from Chairman Snyder, Ms. Straub explained that once VDOT has assigned specific projects to the \$100 million allocated for studying 2020 Plan projects, that information will be added to the chart. Mrs. Hanley

stated that the recently announced Governor's initiatives will take \$8 million out of this district's primary road funds.

Regional Transportation Items

Woodrow Wilson Bridge Congestion Mitigation Plan. In response to NVTC's letter, the consultant for the project's Congestion Mitigation Plan has agreed to meet with NVTC and local staff on October 17th.

Capital Beltway Rail Feasibility Study. Public meetings for the study were held on September 6th in Falls Church and September 7th in Annandale. Over 135 citizens attended the meetings as well as several elected officials. Public comments offered at the meetings generally supported the concept of rail transportation. Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Dan Shoemaker, also attended the meeting and distributed a press release from the Governor signifying support for this project.

Joint Subcommittee to Study Creation of a Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Authority. The SJR 121 Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Warren Barry, met on September 13th. Briefings on the 2020 Transportation Plan and TPB's CLRP were provided. Senator Barry asked subcommittee members to develop ideas for a prototype of the authority to be discussed at the next meeting on October 11, 2000.

Fairfax Connector 15th Anniversary Celebration. Fairfax Connector will celebrate its 15th anniversary on October 14, 2000 at the Springfield Mall Commuter Lot. The Fairfax Connector now carries over 1.5 million passengers a year including 22,000 average weekday trips.

WMATA Items

Test Phase of Smart Benefits Program. WMATA is testing with 400 employees of USDOT, Justice, EPA and KPMG the ability to claim Metrochek benefits on their SmarTrip cards at the Passes/Farecards machine at any Metrorail station.

Escalator Maintenance Program. WMATA continues to maintain its escalators in a very tight labor market. More hiring of private firms is recommended.

Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP) Future Funding. The Budget Committee was scheduled to meet on October 5th to endorse funding for future years in the IRP and to specify the system capacity requirements, but the meeting was deferred due to testimony to Congress set for the next day.

Legislative Items

Chairman Snyder announced that NVTC's Legislative Committee will meet in November to prepare a recommended legislative agenda for consideration at NVTC's December 7, 2000 meeting. He has appointed the following commissioners to serve on that committee: Commissioners Hanley (chairman), Almand, Bogard, Donley, Ferguson, Mims, Silverthorne, and Snyder. There were no objections.

Mr. Taube stated that the Virginia Transit Association's Fall 2000 legislative conference is scheduled for November 15-16, 2000 in Norfolk. Commissioners interested in attending should contact staff.

NVTC's Joint Meeting with PRTC

Mr. Taube explained that a tentative agenda has been prepared. The majority of the time would be devoted to a careful explanation of the current structural organization of VRE and VRE Operations Director Pete Sklannik's proposals for reorganizing some staff functions. Those topics recommended earlier in this meeting would also be added to the November 2nd agenda.

NVTC's 16th Annual Transportation Update

Copies of the final Update were provided to commissioners. It will also be posted on NVTC's website and will be sent to selected officials, media, and libraries with a media release. Mr. Connolly suggested that the Update be provided to the Northern Virginia General Assembly delegation.

NVTC Financial Items for August, 2000

The financial report for August, 2000 was provided. There were no questions.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. Mrs. Bulova commended to commissioners the minutes of the VRE Operations Board meeting of September 15, 2000. Also, VRE conducted its annual marketing survey, which includes some interesting results. Mr. Taube announced that this is the first full week of Metrochek provided to federal employees and VRE ridership has reached an all time high of 10,000 daily trips.

Authorization of Amendments to VRE Personnel Policies. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #851, which would authorize the VRE Director of Operations to implement at VRE the personnel policy changes approved by PRTC. These new policies are applicable to VRE employees as they are considered employees of PRTC for purposes of payroll, benefits and personnel administration. The PRTC policy was amended at the September 7th PRTC meeting.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Kauffman, to approve Resolution #851 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mr. Silverthorne, the commission unanimously agreed to adjourn. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 9:06 P.M.

Approved this 2nd day of November, 2000.

David F. Snyder
Chairman

Christopher Zimmerman
Secretary-Treasurer