

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – SEPTEMBER 7, 2000
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Snyder at 8:18 P.M.

Members Present

James F. Almand
Leo J. Bevon
Richard H. Black
William Bogard
Kerry J. Donley
William D. Euille
Jay Fiset
Katherine Hanley
Dana Kauffman
Roger L. McClure
Elaine McConnell
William C. Mims
Scott Silverthorne
David F. Snyder
Mary Margaret Whipple
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

Sharon Bulova
Gerald Connolly
Paul Ferguson

Staff Present

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

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of July 6, 2000

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

NVTC Office Lease Renewal

Mr. Taube stated that NVTC's current office lease expires at the end of December, 2000. The lease market near centrally located Metrorail stations is extremely tight, with rates no lower than those negotiated for NVTC's current space. Staff proposes that the commission authorize its executive director to execute a lease renewal agreement for the existing office space. Staff has concluded negotiations with the landlord's representative on a 10-year lease that amends the current lease with an initial lease rate in January, 2001 of \$28.50 per square foot. This reflects an increase over NVTC's December, 2000 rate of only 50-cents, or less than two percent. As is true of the current lease, the rate will increase by three percent each year. The lease has been reviewed by the Arlington County Attorney.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to authorize the executive director to execute a lease renewal agreement for the existing office space. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Electrek Hybrid-Electric Bus Service in Falls Church

Mr. Taube announced that Falls Church's new bus system, called Electrek and operated by WMATA, will use technologically advanced systems, including a set of hardware/software, known as IVAN II, provided by Clever Devices, Inc. This system will announce the bus-stop location (to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act), record ridership by location, and measure performance of components and alert maintenance personnel to actual and potential problems.

WMATA selected Clever Devices first generation IVAN I for its Metrobus bus stop annunciators and in 1999, upon WMATA's recommendation, NVTC accepted an unsolicited proposal from Clever Devices for \$90,000 to provide these IVAN I devices on the four Electrek buses. WMATA is currently evaluating the much more elaborate IVAN II system. Clever Devices approached WMATA and NVTC staff with an unsolicited proposal to install the newest generation of this equipment in the four Electrek buses for an additional cost of only \$1,220 per bus for the on-board wireless maintenance data transmission package and \$1,000 per bus for the on-board automatic passenger-counting package. Clever Devices would provide the required garage-based

hardware/software package, valued at about \$750,000, free of charge during the two-year term of the demonstration with no further obligation to NVTC. WMATA staff has recommended approval of this new proposal and sufficient grant funds are available to cover the \$8,800 additional cost. Because of the need to install the equipment before the expected start of service, NVTC's executive director issued a notice to proceed on August 1, 2000 and informed NVTC's Executive Committee. The commission is asked to ratify the award to Clever Devices, while noting that this unsolicited offer provides the only feasible, practical and affordable method to acquire these technologically advanced components in a manner that is compatible with WMATA's own systems and which is available by the expected start of service.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Chairman Snyder reported that two buses have been delivered and the third is expected in the next couple of weeks. The fourth bus will be delayed for a few more weeks to resolve a battery maintenance problem. It is hoped that the service could begin mid-October, 2000.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to ratify the executive director's award to Clever Devices and the acknowledgment that this unsolicited offer provides the only feasible, practical and affordable method to acquire these technologically advanced components in a manner that is compatible with WMATA's own systems and which is available by the expected start of service. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Actions to Implement Directives from the Commission's March, 1999 Board Retreat

Chairman Snyder stated that NVTC's Executive Committee has identified five general areas for potential value-added initiatives for NVTC to implement the recommendations of the commission's March, 1999 retreat. These initiatives are meant to provide a menu from which the commission can select some or all of the five initiatives, each with a different level of effort and commitment of resources.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that at some time the commission will need to focus on specifics and have a framework/mechanism for identifying new initiatives. Chairman Snyder suggested that commissioners could communicate with the executive director and he could include new initiatives in upcoming agendas.

On a motion by Mr. Euille and a second by Mr. Kauffman, the commission unanimously approved all five new activities at the level of effort defined as Option 1 (current staffing and budget levels). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Mrs. Whipple arrived at 8:32 P.M.

NVTC FY 2002 Preliminary Administrative Budget

Mr. Taube explained that the commission is asked to forward the budget to the member jurisdictions for use in their FY 2002 budget planning. In January, 2001 the commission will have the opportunity to discuss this budget again, together with any modifications that may be proposed due to better estimates of costs and revenues or comments from the jurisdictions. In February, 2001 the commission will be asked to approve the final budget. For FY 2002, total expenditures would be reduced by 2.6 percent (about \$25,000 compared to the FY 2001 approved budget). Savings are primarily due to a reorganization of the financial/accounting function to eliminate one full-time position (the position is currently vacant). These personnel savings are partially offset by the need to convert a half-time position to a new full-time position devoted to WMATA and public liaison and the need to increase expenditures on computer hardware/software upgrades and consulting for network maintenance and other information technology needs.

For FY 2002, total local contributions would increase to \$310,000, up by \$30,000, from the previous budget. The same is true for state contributions. Despite lower budget expenditures, local and state contributions would increase because accumulated surplus largely has been spent on previous budgets and only \$41,200 is anticipated from this source for FY 2002. Also, chargebacks to VRE are down considerably in FY 2002 reflecting an expected restructuring of project responsibilities.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mrs. Whipple, to forward the budget to member jurisdictions for use in their FY 2002 budget planning. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fissette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

NVTC Annual Transportation Update

Mr. Taube stated that the NVTC Annual Transportation Update is the 16th in the series. The purpose of the report is to compile transit performance information and describe the institutional setting within which transportation decisions are made and services are provided. The report was distributed for review by local staffs. Comments from commissioners and staff will be accepted through September 19, 2000 and the final document will be distributed at the October 5th commission meeting. The report will also be available on the NVTC website.

Chairman Snyder suggested that the press release or executive summary include major findings and highlights. He observed that transit ridership numbers are impressive.

Mr. McClure requested that the General Assembly SJR 121 study be included in the regional studies table.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. Kauffman, to authorize staff to distribute the final report after incorporating comments from commissioners and staff. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Comments on TPB's 2000 Update to the Constrained Long Range Plan

Mr. Taube stated that at the September 20th Transportation Planning Board (TPB) meeting, the 2000 CLRP conformity results are scheduled to be released for public comment. Following a 30-day comment period, the TPB is expected to approve the CLRP in October. In advance of the public comment period, it is recommended that NVTC send a letter to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC). As requested by commissioners at the July 6th NVTC meeting, the proposed letter articulates NVTC's concern over serious limitations on financial resources adversely affecting CLRP transit project submissions.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mrs. Whipple, to authorize NVTC's chairman to send a letter to TPB expressing NVTC's concerns.

Mr. Mims expressed his concern that NVTC's request for additional funding for transit projects should not be at the expense of deserving non-transit projects. Mrs. Whipple explained that the region worked hard to put together the 2020 Plan that balanced road and transit projects. VDOT then added only highway projects to the CLRP. After further discussion of the purpose of the letter, Mr. Mims suggested that the letter could comment that the funding assumptions are too conservative. Mrs. Hanley stated her willingness to include in her motion language in the letter that addresses the methods used for projecting funding needs for transit and highway projects.

Mr. Black stated that he does not want to go on record endorsing transit over highway projects. Mr. Zimmerman stated that it also works the other way—the CLRP should not endorse highway projects at the expense of transit projects. He stated that the 2020 Plan was balanced and transit projects were taken out by VDOT in determining projects for the CLRP. The letter would reaffirm the region's commitment to a balanced program. Mr. Donley stated that the resolution adopted by TCC included language that the 2020 Plan should be balanced between transit and highways.

In response to a question from Mr. McClure, Mrs. Hanley stated that the 2020 Plan includes the Eastern Bridge and bypass. Two bridges are included in the 2020 Plan and neither is funded in the CLRP.

Mr. Mims stated that he supports transit but expressed concern that for many constituents farther outside the Beltway, transit is not an option.

Mrs. Hanley suggested that the letter be changed to include NVTC's reason for focusing on transit. She also stated that the letter should reflect the commission's concerns regarding air quality. Commissioners briefly talked about air quality concerns for the region as discussed at the last meeting dealing with the air pollution coming from the Ohio Valley. Last year the EPA granted petitions filed by several eastern states, including Maryland and the District of Columbia, seeking to reduce ozone pollution through reductions in nitrous oxide (NOX) emissions from other states. The petitions were filed under Section 126 of the Clean Air Act, which gives any state the authority to ask the EPA to set emissions limits for specific sources of pollution in other states. This action will reduce ozone levels in 19 states, including Virginia, although Virginia itself did not file a petition. Mrs. Hanley suggested that TPB staff be asked to make a presentation on pollution transport (OTAG) at a future NVTC meeting and Mrs. McConnell urged the commission to consider a letter to state officials concerning the serious nature of the pollution transport issue..

Chairman Snyder reviewed commissioners comments on the letter and stated that the letter should include the reason NVTC is focusing on transit and discuss the funding assumptions driving a shortage of funds and how it impacts the CLRP. Mrs. Hanley stated that the letter should be sent to TPB Chairman Kathy Porter.

The commission then voted on the motion to send the letter after incorporating the above-mentioned comments. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Congestion Mitigation Plans for Major Transportation Projects

NVTC's policy on congestion mitigation plans (CMP) has been transmitted to Secretary Ybarra, Commissioner Chip Nottingham, Tom Farley, Leo Bevon, and Kenneth Klinge, as well as the Woodrow Wilson Bridge consultant team (Potomac Crossing Consultants) and Springfield Interchange TDM chair. NVTC received a letter from the project manager of the Potomac Crossing Consultants in an effort to clarify the proposed plans for congestion mitigation for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. A response has been prepared for commission discussion.

Mrs. McConnell stated that it is important for congestion mitigation plans to be in place before projects start.

Mr. Donley stated that the letter should include a request to meet with Potomac Crossing Consultants to discuss the congestion mitigation policy and how it could be implemented. Mrs. Whipple agreed.

Mr. Donley moved, with a second by Mr. Almand, to authorize NVTC's chairman to send a letter to Potomac Crossing Consultants explaining NVTC's concerns and requesting a meeting with them. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand,

Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, Kauffman, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Transportation Funding Issues

Mr. Taube reported that Governor Gilmore announced a series of initiatives on July 18th to help relieve traffic congestion in Northern Virginia. Of particular interest to NVTC is the "Universal Transportation Access Initiative." The Commonwealth intends to provide funding to allow the expansion of WMATA's SmarTrip card to all transit providers in Northern Virginia. Also, participants will be offered a single account for SmarTrip and Smart Tag (tolls) as a first step to a regional smart card clearinghouse. Among the sources of funding are \$6 million of state funds and an expected federal ITS allocation of at least \$2.3 million. Since NVTC's \$1.2 million of federal and state grants are as yet unexpended, they would also be available for this purpose with the agreement of the commission and the grant-funding agencies. An initial meeting was held at NVTC on August 22nd for local, regional and state staff to initiate action on this program.

Mr. Taube also reported that NVTC received copies of letters from James City County and the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads to VDR&PT stating that they do not support VDR&PT's proposal to change the state transit formula assistance program.

Regional Transportation Items

Transit Oriented Communities for Northern Virginia. VDR&PT has commissioned a consulting study by Community Design Group that identified new opportunities for passenger rail service in Northern Virginia. The report explores and illustrates possible models to stimulate further discussion of the positive potential of multi-modal transit and compact development initiatives as a supplement to Northern Virginia's existing highway-dominant transportation system.

Transit Benefits 2000 Working Papers. The Federal Transit Administration has published a document that compiles recent research on the benefits of public transit using economic models of public choice.

Joint Subcommittee to Study Creation of a Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Authority (SJR 121). Mr. Taube stated that the subcommittee's first meeting was held on July 12, 2000. Four of the 14 members also serve on NVTC. NVTC staff will attend each meeting and report to the commission.

Capital Beltway Rail Feasibility Study. On August 14, 2000 the Policy Advisory Committee met to evaluate the results of the Tier 1 analysis and discuss the upcoming public meetings. The study is looking at the feasibility of constructing rail from the

existing mass transit rail facilities at Springfield to mass transit rail facilities at or near Tysons Corner. The study will also examine extending rail beyond Tysons Corner into Maryland. The expected completion date is March, 2001.

Mr. Kauffman expressed his concern regarding the linkage between the Capital Beltway Rail Feasibility Study and the Capital Beltway EIS and asked if there can be a way to fold them together. Mrs. Hanley stated that both studies end about the same time. She also commended Corey Hill of VDR&PT for his work at the recent public hearings on the rail feasibility study.

Status of Potomac Ferry. A private firm, Potomac Riverjet, has delayed its plans to initiate passenger ferry service. That company had planned to begin late this summer. The company is still proceeding with design and procurement and could start sometime next year.

Capital Beltway EIS. On July 27, 2000, VDOT issued a letter to Capital Beltway stakeholders and interested parties outlining details related to the study being elevated from an Environmental Assessment (EA) to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS document is scheduled for completion in late 2000, with a public hearing to occur in early 2001.

Busway Carpool Rules. Mr. Ed Tennyson provided the commission with a copy of an article from the Los Angeles Times, which describes the adverse effects on bus ridership from relaxing carpool restrictions on the San Bernardino Freeway. After dropping to HOV-2 from HOV-3, buses became mired in traffic, with 600 people (the equivalent of 15 buses) diverting to HOV-2.

Mr. Kauffman left at 9:17 P.M. and did not return.

WMATA Items

Ridership Gains and Vehicle Needs. APTA announced that WMATA was among the fastest growing transit systems in the U.S. during the first quarter of 2000. Metrorail ridership grew by 8.5 percent and Metrobus by 13 percent. General Manager Richard White reported that WMATA needs 50 new railcars and 300 new buses by 2005 to accommodate expected growth in ridership. The cost is \$220 million, which is not currently budgeted. Mr. Zimmerman stated that out of 22 days in June, 15 days had Metrorail ridership over 600,000.

Mr. Zimmerman reported that the WMATA Board took preliminary action regarding a procurement of compressed natural gas buses for the next bus procurement. In response to a question from Chairman Snyder, Mr. Zimmerman stated that WMATA will look at the cost and safety issues of this type of vehicle.

Chairman Snyder asked if ridership is up outside the Beltway. Mr. Zimmerman responded that ridership is up everywhere. With the fare simplification program implemented, it makes it more attractive the farther out you go. Mrs. Whipple stated that it would be helpful to have an analysis done of where the increases in ridership are coming from. Mrs. Hanley stated that weekend and off-peak ridership is also up. In response to a question from Mr. Fiset, Mr. Zimmerman stated that 9,400 riders is the average for late night ridership.

60-Day Action Plan. WMATA has a new plan to improve service in response to a board request for an escalator program that was broadened to include a systemwide mobilization to address many other customer –oriented issues. Among the components of the plan are improved communications, urgent facilities enhancements, and escalators and elevators.

Additional SmarTrip Cards. The WMATA Board has approved the purchase from Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. of an additional 100,000 SmarTrip cards. With 90,000 cards already sold from an inventory of about 214,000, the program is likely to receive a further boost from expanded Metrochek use by federal employees. WMATA is testing a program to automatically load Metrochek benefits onto SmarTrip cards.

NVTC 2000 Handbook Update

Mr. Taube explained that the Handbook was updated mid-year to include biographical sketches of the new commissioners. Chairman Snyder suggested that this report be posted on NVTC's website.

NVTC Financial Items for June and July, 2000

The financial reports for June and July, 2000 were provided. There were no questions.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. Peter Sklannik, VRE's new Director of Operations, suggested that commissioners read the minutes of the VRE Operations Board meeting of August 18, 2000.

Preliminary FY 02 VRE Operating and Capital Budget. Mr. Sklannik reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #848. The resolution authorized referral of the FY 2002 budget materials to the jurisdictions for their formal review and comment. Based on local comments the Operations Board will recommend a specific budget alternative at its December meeting for final action by the commission in January, 2001.

Mrs. McConnell moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to approve Resolution #848 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fissette, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Extension of Operating Agreement with CSXT. Mr. Sklannik stated that the Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #849. The resolution would authorize the VRE Director of Operations to approve a two-month extension of the existing Operating Access Agreement with CSXT. The current agreement has been extended several times and is in effect until September 18, 2000. VRE and commission staffs have been in discussions with CSXT regarding the terms of a new Operating Access Agreement.

In addition, the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between and among the commissions, CSXT, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDR&PT) are also under negotiation. These terms are related to capital improvements in the Richmond-Washington corridor and will likely be incorporated into the Operating Access Agreement.

As these discussions are still underway, an extension of the existing agreement to November 17, 2000, as requested by CSXT, is necessary. Funds to continue VRE operations over CSXT tracks are provided in the FY2001 budget.

Mrs. McConnell moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve Resolution #849 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fissette, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Contract for On-Board Advertising. Mr. Sklannik reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #850, which would authorize the VRE Director of Operations to enter into a contract with TDI for advertising on-board VRE trains. This contract reflects the previous VRE Operations Board and WMATA Board authorization to participate in the WMATA advertising procurement. WMATA has awarded a 10-year contract to TDI for advertising on WMATA equipment and property.

The proposed VRE contract would be for one year with options to extend the contract for up to 10 successive years. Editorial control over advertising would be exercised by VRE. It is anticipated that proceeds would net between \$50,000 and \$70,000 during the first year. This revenue would be added to the marketing budget. All costs associated with the contract would be paid out of the proceeds from the sale of advertising.

The current contract does not cover any advertising on VRE platforms, which would require approval of local jurisdictions and the railroads. If such approvals are

obtained in the future, a proposed amendment to the contract with TDI would be presented to the VRE Operations Board and commissions.

On a motion by Mrs. McConnell and a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fiset, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Other VRE Business. Mr. Sklannik announced that VRE's ridership has reached a record of 9,500 daily riders. VRE is the second fastest growing commuter rail system in the U.S. VRE staff is working on short and long-term goals to address growth.

Other NVTC Business

Mrs. Hanley requested a letter regarding the OTAG issue. Chairman Snyder stated that the commission would include this issue at a future meeting.

Closed Session

Mr. Fiset moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, approval of the following motion:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Section 2.1-344A.1 of the Code of Virginia), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission authorizes discussion in closed session on personnel matters.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fiset, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

The commission entered into closed session at 9:30 P.M. and returned to open session at 10:13 P.M.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the following certification:

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge and with no individual member dissenting, at the just concluded closed session:

1. Only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed; and

2. Only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard, discussed or considered.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Mr. Donley moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to approve a \$2,000 bonus for NVTC's executive director. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Zimmerman and a second by Mr. Donley, the commission unanimously agreed to adjourn. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bevon, Black, Bogard, Donley, Euille, Fisette, Hanley, McClure, McConnell, Mims, Silverthorne, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman. Chairman Snyder adjourned the meeting at 10:14 P.M.

Approved this 6th day of October, 2000.

David F. Snyder
Chairman

Christopher Zimmerman
Secretary-Treasurer