

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – FEBRUARY 8, 2001**  
**NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Donley at 8:05 P.M.

**Members Present**

Leo J. Bevon  
William Bogard  
Sharon Bulova  
Gerald Connolly  
Kerry J. Donley  
William D. Euille  
Paul Ferguson  
Jay Fisette  
Katherine Hanley  
Elaine McConnell  
Scott Silverthorne  
David F. Snyder  
Christopher Zimmerman

**Members Absent**

James F. Almand  
Richard H. Black  
Dana Kauffman  
Roger J. McClure  
William C. Mims  
Mary Margaret Whipple

**Staff Present**

Tamara Ashby  
Julie Bourbon  
Rhonda W. Gilcrest  
Scott Kalkwarf  
Wendy LeMieux (VRE)  
Sharmila Samarasinghe  
Pete Sklannik, Jr. (VRE)  
Jennifer Straub  
Richard K. Taube

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of January 4, 2000

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

Presentation on NVTC's Route 1 Bus Study

Chairman Donley introduced Frank Spielberg of SG Associates to present the preliminary findings of the Route 1 Bus Study, a VDOT-funded study being managed by NVTC. Mr. Spielberg introduced Dennis Leach from TransManagement, Inc. Mr. Spielberg stated that DMJM & Harris also provided support for the study.

Mrs. Bulova and Mr. Fisette arrived at 8:07 P.M. and 8:10 P.M., respectively.

Mr. Spielberg explained that the study identifies services and facilities appropriate in the corridor and to complement and provide information to the roadway studies. The study process compared existing and expected development to service guidelines; reviewed and analyzed current services; inspected and evaluated current facilities; and met with citizen and business groups. The concept plan calls for new and expanded bus service; improvements to bus stops, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian signals; installation of 'transit centers' in selected locations; and ITS for passenger information and bus priority.

Mr. Leach announced that two public meetings have been tentatively scheduled for business and government officials. The first is on March 6, 2001 at 10:00 A.M. in Fairfax County; the second is in Prince William County at the Ferlazzo Building at 8:00 A.M. on March 14<sup>th</sup>. The two citizens meetings will be held on March 7, 2001 in Prince William County at the PRTC offices at 7:00 P.M. and in Fairfax County on a date and at a location to be determined.

Chairman Donley asked what would be the projections for transit growth if these improvements are initiated, since they would make transit more attractive and safer? Mr. Spielberg replied that this was not part of the scope of the study, but he would guess that transit ridership would increase from 20 percent to 25 percent. Mr. Connolly asked if there is going to be a public investment of funds, why would it be done if there is only a marginal increase in transit usage? Mr. Spielberg responded that these improvements will provide transit service in the proper way, maintain ridership, and encourage people to use transit. Mr. Connolly asked if any return on investments studies have been done recently to provide a comparison. Mr. Taube stated that staff would provide commissioners with a survey done by NVTC a few years ago that includes this kind of information and will also explore more recent data from transit improvements in this region and elsewhere.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Mr. Spielberg stated that Route 1 is considered a “high speed road” since design parameters are for 45 miles per hour and pedestrians are involved. Mrs. Hanley announced that one innovative initiative will be to install lights in the pavement at crosswalks at some intersections on Route 1.

Mrs. Hanley stated that she assumes that the recommendations for bus service from Huntington to Potomac Mills and a VRE Lorton/Belvoir Shuttle would not be parallel services to existing bus service. She expressed her concern about the costs of running parallel service. She also observed that Huntington to Potomac Mills seems like a long bus route. Mr. Spielberg responded that it would take about an hour, but currently there are no bus connections that can easily be made to these locations and the new bus would serve places along the route. Mrs. Hanley asked if a bus route from Huntington to Lorton to connect to VRE would make better sense?

In response to a question from Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Spielberg explained that traffic lights would be coordinated with buses using GPS transmitters. Mr. Zimmerman noted that the recommendations do not call for any lanes designated for bus-only traffic. Mr. Spielberg stated that since the buses would run during rush hour about every three minutes, the right-hand lane does not need to be designated because it basically becomes a bus-only lane. In response to a question from Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Spielberg stated that the study recommendations call for a bus preemption to be installed at the light at Beacon Mall to facilitate a bus pullover lane. The preemption would only be utilized if a bus was behind schedule. Mr. Zimmerman stated that it is important for transit to provide on-time service.

Mr. Ferguson joined the discussion at 8:27 P.M.

### SmartBike/SmartCar Demonstration Projects

Jennifer Straub introduced Paul DeMaio of Alexandria’s Transportation Department, who gave a presentation on two innovative projects using smartcard technology being developed by local and WMATA staff. He stated that the SmartBike program would provide shared, public-use bicycles at select locations for persons to use for transport around that area. The cost to use the bikes would be minimal or even free, which would encourage transit usage. In response to a question from Chairman Donley, Mr. DeMaio explained that there would be an hour time limit for use of the bicycle and bicycle racks would be located every three blocks within the specific project area. In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Mr. DeMaio stated that this type of program is very successful in Copenhagen where it is used in a concentrated area. A study was done in Copenhagen that showed that a bicycle was used for all but 8 minutes during a 12-hour period. In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Mr. DeMaio stated that the cost of a SmartBike bicycle is \$300. Using smartcard technology would greatly reduce theft and maintenance problems.

In response to a question from Mr. Euille, Mr. DeMaio stated that the next steps are to work with WMATA staff to develop a program, contact bike manufacturers, and look for ways to integrate smartcard technology. He requested that NVTC encourage WMATA to research and develop a SmartBike program, as well as the SmartCar program.

Mr. Euille questioned whether there would be zoning problems. Mr. DeMaio explained that staff is currently looking to see if the technology is feasible and then they will deal with other issues.

Mr. DeMaio also gave a presentation on SmartCar, which facilitates the sharing of a private vehicle within one's community. It is similar to a car rental, but the difference is that an individual can use the carsharing vehicle for as short a time period as one hour and the cars are located in the communities rather than at a central car rental location to which one would need to drive. It would cost \$4.50 per hour and 40-cents per mile, although car insurance would be included in the price. Alexandria and Arlington are requesting \$50,000 for promotion of carsharing through VDRPT as a demonstration grant. The promotional funding would include waiving the application and the first year's membership fees for both residents and employers for the purpose of increasing use of the carsharing vehicles in the program's infancy.

Mrs. Hanley asked where the cars would be stored? Mr. DeMaio replied that staff is working with WMATA to reserve parking spaces at Metrorail stations, but most of the cars would be parked in the communities. In response to a question from Mrs. McConnell, Mr. DeMaio stated that the program would be based on a reservation system and there would be a registration process.

In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Mr. DeMaio stated that this type of project is being done in Portland, Oregon and he offered to provide NVTC with a report describing the project.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to encourage WMATA to proceed with the SmartBike and SmartCar programs with assistance from NVTC staff. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman.

#### NVTC FY 2002 Proposed Administrative Budget

Chairman Donley reminded commissioners that they discussed the budget at the January 4, 2001 meeting.

Mr. Zimmerman moved to approve the budget and Mrs. McConnell seconded. The motion passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman.

### Legislative items

Mr. Taube provided a summary of legislative activities of the General Assembly session. A letter to the Northern Virginia General Assembly Delegation was also provided to commissioners for discussion. In response to a question from Mr. Taube, commissioners agreed that the new NVTC legislative updates are very useful. He stated that the updates are currently sent to commissioners and local staff, but asked if they should be distributed to a wider audience. After some discussion, Mr. Connolly suggested referring this matter to the legislative committee to look at for next year's legislative session. There were no objections.

Commissioners were provided with a copy of the latest version of Senator Mims's bill creating a regional transportation authority, which would affect NVTC. Mr. Taube stated that it has changed considerably from its original version. Mr. Connolly expressed his concern that the bill provides for the governor to appoint six out of the 16 or 17 members of the authority. This would be two more appointments than the original version of the bill. Chairman Donley also expressed his concern that weighted voting dilutes local voting authority.

Mrs. Hanley left the discussion at 9:00 P.M. and did not return.

Mr. Taube was asked to review the proposed letter. He explained that the first part of the letter identifies several positive General Assembly actions that implement the commission's objectives, and the remainder of the letter addresses NVTC's concerns about initiatives that are not favorable for transit in Northern Virginia.

Mr. Zimmerman suggested that on page 2 (third paragraph) "well balanced" be changed to "better balanced." He also suggested that on page three it should read, "Senator Mims's SB 1355 and Delegate McClure's HB 2606 have been changed to reflect some of the concerns expressed by NVTC and other groups..."

Mr. Connolly stated that he understands why the letter starts out positive, but since NVTC's concerns do not begin until page three, they could be overlooked. He suggested shortening the letter. Mr. Ferguson agreed.

Mrs. McConnell stated that she can't support the letter because of the paragraph referencing the Saslaw/Dillard legislation regarding a new regional sales tax for transportation. She expressed her disappointment that the legislation has been drastically changed from its original version, which included a sunset provision. Mr. Zimmerman stated that although he supports the letter, it is understated and he

suggested that the letter focus on the real message (last bullet on page three), which is NVTC's concerns about certain legislation.

Mr. Connolly moved to approve the letter with the following changes: include the first paragraph and delete everything to the bottom of page two and insert "NVTC members acknowledge the positive changes that have been made to several pending transportation bills, however," before "we do have very serious concerns about provisions of several bills."

Mrs. Bulova clarified that the letter would be silent on the Saslaw bill. She also expressed her disappointment that the original legislation was changed. Mr. Ferguson observed that the Saslaw bill calls for a referendum in 2002, which would provide time to revisit it during next year's session. Mr. Snyder requested that the letter include, without referencing the Saslaw bill, how projects should be determined and that they should be determined locally. Also, the list of priority projects should reflect a strong balance of major transit elements. Mr. Snyder stated that the letter should include Mr. Connolly's comments about the proposed makeup of the membership of the authority and weighted voting, as well as the concept of a predetermined NVTC outcome. Mr. Connolly accepted these friendly amendments to his motion.

The commission then voted on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman.

In response to a question from Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Taube explained that one of the budget amendments proposes that the transit bonds authorized by the 1999 General Assembly be sold in this calendar year. VDOT staff contacted NVTC seeking more justification of why NVTC needs the bonds sold now. Chairman Donley requested that staff provide an update on this issue at the next NVTC meeting.

### NVTC's 2001 Handbook

Chairman Donley stated that the handbook is used by commissioners, staff and citizens to help explain NVTC's history, organization and accomplishments. Given widespread interest in a new transportation authority for Northern Virginia, an up-to-date Handbook is needed.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to authorize staff to distribute the final version of the Handbook. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman.

## WMATA Items

Award of Contract for Bus Fare Collection System/Solicitations for Clearinghouse. The WMATA Board awarded the contract at its January 25, 2001 meeting and staff issued a notice to proceed on the same day. Local jurisdictions will now have six months to exercise options to purchase these SmarTrip compatible fareboxes. NVTC will serve as the contract agent for the Northern Virginia systems.

Significant Facilities Completion. On January 13, 2001, WMATA completed its 103-mile Metrorail system by opening five new Green Line stations. Ridership is far exceeding expectations (almost 30,000 versus an expected average of 22,000 by June, 2001 assumed in the budget). The new parking garage at Vienna/Fairfax-GMU station was opened on January 18, 2001. It has six levels with 1,535 net new spaces.

New Transit Service. A King Street express bus service now operates weekdays every 15 minutes between 5:30 A.M. and 10:30 P.M. A new shuttle (N 22) connecting Navy Yard and Eastern Market Metrorail stations has also been introduced. Together with existing V7 Metrobus service from L'Enfant Plaza Metrorail station, these services provide frequent (and free) bus connections to VRE customers who have been transferred to work at the Navy Yard.

New Surveys. WMATA Board has approved authority of up to \$175,000 for a Metrorail passenger survey to be used for allocating subsidies among jurisdictions and \$87,500 for continuing to monitor the quality of customer service.

System Performance. Ridership continues to be very strong, with system-wide cost recovery of 56 percent in November, 2000 (75 percent Metrorail/33 percent Metrobus).

Pentagon Renovation Project. The first phase of construction is planned to begin on February 7, 2001. Phase I is the construction of the relocated taxi loop and should be completed by April, 2001. Subsequent Phases 2 and 4 will last until late October, 2001. The transition to the new Metro Entrance Facility (MEF) will occur in November, 2001. Phase 5 will be the construction of the new welcome/entrance facility to the Pentagon building, as well as the new auditorium.

## Regional Items

Response to NVTC's Potomac Ferry Letter. A response from Secretary Ybarra was received on January 18, 2001. She stated that VDOT is not planning to subsidize a ferry service and has no desire to negatively impact existing public transit.

Route 28 Corridor Improvements. In an effort to respond to the rapid economic expansion occurring along the Route 28 corridor and the traffic generated by growth, two private highway construction consortiums have prepared competing proposals to

widen a 14-mile stretch of the Route 28 corridor. The geographic scope of the project extends from Route 7 in Loudoun County to I-66 in Centreville. The improvements would include lane widening and the addition of 11 interchanges. VDOT is the sponsoring agency for this project. If approved by VDOT this facility is expected to be operational by 2005.

New Leesburg Bus Service. A fixed route transit bus service has been initiated in the Town of Leesburg. Revenue service started on January 15, 2001.

VDOT Park-and-Ride Study. The purpose of this VDOT study is to identify the future need for park and ride lots in Northern Virginia and identify sites to meet those needs. The consultant team is headed by BMI and also includes Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc. and Burgess and Niple, Inc.

Falls Church Electric Bus. Mr. Snyder announced that two of the buses are expected to be delivered in late February.

#### NVTC Financial Items

The financial report for December, 2000 was provided to commissioners and there were no questions.

#### Commuter Rail Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. Commissioners were urged to read the minutes of the January 19, 2001 VRE Operations Board meeting.

Quantico Station Rehabilitation. Chairman Donley reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #867, which would authorize the issuance of a task order to Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas (PB) for \$122,060 (including a 10% contingency) for design work and preparation of bid specifications for rehabilitation of the Quantico Station building. Currently, this building is considered uninhabitable and VRE uses it for storage. Town of Quantico officials are advocating the rehabilitation of this building to provide a passenger waiting area, space for a Prince William Model Railroad Club display and a commercial tenant. To date, \$300,000 in federal and state earmarks have been secured for this project.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Mrs. McConnell, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #867 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the commission unanimously agreed to adjourn. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bogard, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder, and Zimmerman. Chairman Donley adjourned the meeting at 9:28 P.M.

Approved this 1st day of March, 2001.

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Kerry J. Donley  
Chairman

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Elaine McConnell  
Secretary-Treasurer