

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 7, 2002
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Zimmerman at 8:08 P.M.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

James F. Almand
Richard H. Black
William Bogard
Dana Kauffman
William C. Mims
Mary Margaret Whipple

Staff Present

Tamara Ashby
Rhonda W. Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Wendy Lemieux (VRE)
Stephen MacIsaac (VRE)
Mark Roeber (VRE)
Kala Quintana
Sharmila Samarasinghe
Howard Shock (VRE)
Pete Sklannik (VRE)
Dave Snyder (VRE)
Jennifer Straub (VRE)
Alfred Titus-Glover
Richard K. Taube
Dale Zehner (VRE)

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of February 7, 2001

Without objection, the commission unanimously accepted the minutes as presented.

NVTC's FY 2003 State Aid Application

Mr. Taube reported that on February 28th NVTC submitted its FY 2003 grant applications to VDRPT for WMATA, VRE and the local bus systems. In addition to the applications for FTM/administration and capital assistance, NVTC submitted applications for the third year of a public outreach program and to initiate a transit ITS performance evaluation process. Resolution #911 would provide formal approval for these applications.

On a motion by Mr. Connolly and a second by Mr. Euille, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #911 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder and Zimmerman.

SmarTrip Farebox Procurement for Loudoun County

Mr. Taube asked that this item be deferred until the next meeting. There were no objections.

Falls Church Bus Project

Mr. Taube stated that NVTC's legal counsel, Cyrus Phillips, was present to discuss the settlement proposal with AVS. Mr. Taube stated that a closed session would be appropriate.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to approve the following motion to enter into closed session:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Section 2.2-3711(7) of the Code of Virginia), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission authorizes discussion in closed session on legal matters pertaining to a settlement proposal regarding the AVS contract.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder and Zimmerman.

The commission entered into closed session at 8:12 P.M. Mr. Silverthorne arrived at 8:23 P.M. and the commission returned to open session at 8:24 P.M.

Chairman Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, 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 Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Snyder and Zimmerman. Mr. Silverthorne abstained since he did not participate in the closed session discussion.

Mr. Snyder moved that, based on the recommendation of NVTC's legal counsel, the commission should accept the proposed settlement agreement with AVS, subject to review by WMATA's legal counsel. Mrs. Bulova seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Mr. Taube explained that staff recommends that the commission purchase four clean diesel buses through exercising an option with an existing contract, which would save time in the procurement process. The financial plan is being finalized, which would include the remaining unspent grant funds from the hybrid-electric buses. Additional funds (approximately \$200,000) would still be needed. A funding source has been identified through a federal earmark sponsored by Congressman Moran. NVTC needs to make sure that no other agencies or local governments in the region are anticipating these funds. Another missing piece of information is WMATA's updated costs to operate the buses.

Mr. Snyder moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to authorize NVTC's Executive Director to proceed accordingly and to report back to the commission for final approval. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Legislative Items

State Legislation. Mrs. Hanley provided an update on the General Assembly session. She reported that legislation has been passed which would expand the use of FRANS. This should protect funding for Metro projects. Mr. Taube reported that the House amendment to Senator Barry's legislation to create a Northern Virginia transportation authority reduces the number of members. It has been passed in both the House and the Senate. Mrs. Hanley explained how the membership numbers were changed. She stated that now there are 16 members, including 14 voting members, nine of whom are local chief elected officials. She observed that there was no legislation passed that appropriated funds for the authority.

Federal Legislation. Mr. Taube explained that the VRE Operations Board has recommended that the commission adopt Resolution #913, which would authorize VRE and commission staff to pursue federal earmarks for VRE projects, support the level of funding for transit in the proposed FY 2003 budget, favor a cure for the potential drastic reduction in federal highway funding, and reiterate support for legislation that would provide a federally mandated forum for resolving disputes between operators of passenger rail service and freight railroads. Mrs. Bulova stated that all of these actions would be taken in close coordination with local governments.

On a motion by Mr. Donley and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #913 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fiset, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

WMATA Items

FY 2003 Budget Review Schedule. The WMATA Budget Committee expects to forward the budget to the jurisdictions for review and comment following its April 11th meeting, to receive local comments at its May 9th meeting, and to forward the budget at its June 13th meeting to the full board for approval.

Performance of New Bus Routes in FY 01 and 02. 16 new bus routes were implemented between September, 2000 and December, 2001. In Virginia, Route 10P has met its 12-month goal; however, additional marketing may be required for it to reach its projected goal.

MetroTram. WMATA Board Chairman Chris Zimmerman has suggested a new transit component, MetroTram, to be explored this year as one of his three goals for WMATA in 2002. MetroTram would be a system of tramways to

complement the existing public transit system providing greater urban mobility and relief from congestion.

Core Capacity Study. Mr. Taube stated that WMATA staff discussed the study at NVTC's MAC meeting on February 19th. The MAC group asked that a letter containing proposed NVTC comments be sent to WMATA.

Mrs. Hanley moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to authorize NVTC's chairman to send a letter to WMATA with these comments. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisetite, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

NVTC Products

New Director of Public Outreach. Mr. Taube introduced Kala Quintana, NVTC's new Director of Public Outreach.

Media Campaign and Outreach Efforts. Ms. Quintana reported that on February 18th, NVTC's radio ads promoting the region's efforts to enhance safety and encourage public transportation use began running. The radio ads direct listeners to www.CommuterPage.com for more information. By measuring the number of visitor "hits" to this website and the corresponding page, a fairly clear picture of the ad's success can be determined. Data from [CommuterPage.com](http://www.CommuterPage.com) indicate that the number of visitor sessions (compared to previous weeks) increased by approximately 1,000 visitors during the first week the ad ran and the site experienced 33,000 more hits than usual during the second week.

Ms. Quintana stated that the radio ads are scheduled to run for four weeks on both the Clear Channel and DC-101 stations. If this outreach effort is successful, the final numbers (available at the end of March), will allow NVTC to determine whether or not to pursue this form of advertising as a viable outreach method in the future.

Ms. Quintana also reported that additional radio interview opportunities have been arranged with Jerry Phillips of Metro Talk. These will be taped interviews and commissioners are encouraged to participate. The first one is scheduled for March 13th.

Transit Systems Emergency Response, Coordination and Communication. Mr. Taube reported that MWCOG/TPB hosted a work session chaired by John Mason on the transportation component of the Regional Emergency Response Plan (RERP). Mr. Snyder, in his capacity as chairman of the M&O/ITS Committee, presented a consensus request for transportation capital funding of about \$150 million. One of the components is about \$10 million for regional traveler information systems improvements, including a proposal reviewed and

forwarded by NVTC's MAC group on February 19th that would equip all of the region's buses with Automatic Vehicle Location capabilities to permit real-time displays of schedule adherence on vehicles, at bus stops and on web sites.

Mr. Taube stated that the plan underway at COG/TPB is still focused on the communications aspects and has not yet delved into the operational details of how the transportation systems will respond to particular scenarios in an emergency situation. He stated that, as a result of commissioners' interest, staff has drafted a Bus Bridge proposal for commission discussion. He asked for direction from commissioners regarding the proposal. He further explained that, to his knowledge, no agency is working on the Bus Bridge project at this time, but it is likely to eventually be included in MWCOG's considerations.

Several commissioners provided updates on progress being made at the committee level. Mr. Connolly expressed concern that the process should not be too D.C. centered. Many people involved in looking at how to get people out of the District during an emergency may feel that their responsibility ends at the Beltway. There needs to be a way to broaden the vision to incorporate outlying jurisdictions. Mr. Fisette stated that the draft MWCOG report is due on April 10th, which will provide a framework. The operational issues will be addressed later.

Mrs. Bulova suggested that NVTC could express interest and offer its assistance in helping other agencies pursue the Bus Bridge analysis. Mrs. Hanley suggested that NVTC forward the Bus Bridge proposal to the transit operators working group that meets at WMATA, since WMATA would be the agency that would operate a Bus Bridge deployment.

Mrs. Hanley moved that NVTC refer this paper to the transit operators group at WMATA and the transportation working group at COG/TPB. Mr. Connolly seconded. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Mr. Fisette suggested that NVTC include a cover letter offering NVTC's assistance.

VDOT Freeway Incident Manual. VDOT's Work Group on HOV policies co-chaired by NVTC's Executive Director and Virginia State Police representative Tom Martin, met at NVTC on February 19th. Mr. Taube stated that a list of recommendations and comments of this group regarding improvements in the VDOT/State Police policy of lifting HOV restrictions in emergencies will be discussed by VDOT's full task force beginning on March 25th. Mr. Connolly stated that it would be useful to make sure that this issue is also being addressed by the transportation working group at COG/TPB.

Regional Transportation Items

National 10-Year ITS Vision Plan. ITS America recently unveiled the 10-year National Intelligent Transportation Systems vision for delivering a technologically efficient transportation system utilizing computers, communications and sensor technology. The fundamental goals of the 10-year vision are to improve the safety, security and efficiency of the surface transportation system, to increase accessibility to existing and future networks, to maximize fuel efficiency and minimize environmental pollution. To reach these goals the plan considers various initiatives that have been in place during the past decade (i.e. ITS Metropolitan Model Deployments, National ITS Architecture) and anticipates building on these efforts.

Tri-County Parkway Location Study. The study, which was initiated by VDOT and FHWA, will examine a new north/south transportation link to connect the city of Manassas with I-66 and the Dulles Technology corridor. The proposed corridor would extend from VA 234 in Manassas north to Braddock Road in Loudoun County. NVTC staff will participate on the Technical Advisory Committee. The study is scheduled for completion in early 2004.

New Alexandria Transit Store. The grand opening of a new transit store located near the King Street Metrorail station will be held on March 25th at 11:30 A.M.

Regional Air Quality Issues. TPB adopted a conformity neutral Transportation Improvement Program on February 20th. No projects can be added that help or hurt air quality. This provides a fall-back position if the TPB's consideration of about \$39 million of Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERM's) does not progress. Sources of funding and many details of the TERM's are unknown and pressure is being placed on FY 2003 and earlier projects already funded with CMAQ and RSTP grants. Consequently, upcoming TCC and TPB meetings will be especially important for determining the fate of many transit projects.

Financial Items for January, 2002

The financial report was provided to commissioners and they had no questions.

Commuter Rail Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board. The minutes of the February 15, 2002 VRE Operations Board meeting were provided to commissioners.

Progress Report on VRE's Strategic Plan. Mr. Sklannik reported that CSX has granted permission for VRE to run a mid-day train on the Fredericksburg Line. On-time performance continues to be high, with a 95% average for February. He stated that the strategic plan will be presented to the Operations Board at its next meeting.

Chairman Zimmerman asked for an update on Amtrak. Mr. Sklannik reported that VRE staff has met with Amtrak management and labor unions and has received assurances that commuter rail operations will not be disrupted should Amtrak be dissolved.

Historical Growth and Structure of VRE. VRE staff has produced a synopsis of the historical highlights of VRE, as well as depicting its current management structure and relationships with NVTC, PRTC and other outside organizations. This information will be considered as the strategic plan is completed to shape VRE's future.

Woodbridge Station Land Acquisition. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #914, which would authorize PRTC's Executive Director, as contract officer, to purchase property required for the Woodbridge second platform, pedestrian crossover and kiss-and-ride lot. Federal funds are budgeted for the acquisition to be matched by Prince William County.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Fisette, to approve Resolution #914 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Bevon, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Fisette, Hanley, McConnell, Silverthorne, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Adjournment

Chairman Zimmerman invited commissioners to see the E-Bus parked outside. Without objection, he adjourned the meeting at 9:04 P.M.

Approved this 4th day of April, 2002.

Christopher Zimmerman
Chairman

William Euille
Secretary-Treasurer