

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – JULY 10, 2003
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman McConnell at 5:43 P.M.

Members Present

James F. Almand
William Bogard
Sharon Bulova
William D. Euille
Jay Fiset
Ludwig Gaines
Katherine K. Hanley
Dana Kauffman
Elaine McConnell
Gary A. Reese
Sharmila Samarasinghe (representing Karen Rae)
Scott Silverthorne
David F. Snyder
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

David Albo
Gerald Connolly
Paul Ferguson
William C. Mims
Mary Margaret Whipple

Staff Present

Rhonda Gilchrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Dennis Larsen (VRE)
Jana Lynott
Stephen MacIsaac (VRE)
Adam McGavock
Kala Quintana
Mark Roeber (VRE)
Pete Sklannik (VRE)
Richard K. Taube
John Tuohy (VRE)

Chairman McConnell suggested that the meeting begin with information items. Mr. Taube stated that Mr. Zimmerman's presentation on new concepts in urban transit will be given at the September meeting. He also stated that a closed session has been added to the agenda. There were no objections.

Mid-Year Status of NVTC Projects

Mr. McGavock gave an update on the regional SmarTrip farebox procurement, which involves the purchase and installation of 387 SmarTrip compatible fareboxes on the regional bus systems. Several completed milestones include garage inspections in Northern Virginia and preliminary and final design of equipment to be installed in Northern Virginia. Final installation and acceptance of the equipment is scheduled for 2004.

Mrs. Hanley arrived at 5:50 P.M.

Mr. McGavock stated that Falls Church's GEORGE bus began revenue service in January, 2003. Mr. Zimmerman requested information on how this type of bus compares to buses operated by WMATA with respect to emissions. In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Mr. McGavock stated that ridership was originally less than anticipated but it is steadily rising. At the beginning of service ridership was at 1,100 trips per month and for June, 2003 ridership was at 7,750 trips per month. There are still issues to address with the GEORGE service, such as running time for the routes and customer service problems. WMATA service planners and quality managers are finalizing a comprehensive schedule and ridership analysis that should result in some changes to the service.

Mr. McGavock stated that remaining project milestones include signing an Operating Agreement with WMATA as soon as WMATA presents an acceptable draft. Mr. Zimmerman suggested providing information to NVTC's WMATA Board members about the operating agreement if this is posing a problem.

Mr. McGavock also reported on work being done for the transit performance database, ITS evaluation, NTD data collection and the bus shelter project.

Mr. Silverthorne joined the discussion at 5:57 P.M.

Mr. Taube suggested the commission proceed to action items and come back to the mid-year NVTC report at the conclusion of the meeting. There were no objections.

Oath of Office for New NVTC Commissioner

Chairman McConnell announced that Ludwig Gaines has been appointed to serve on NVTC, replacing Mr. Donley. She administered the oath of office to Mr. Gaines and commissioners welcomed him to NVTC. Mr. Euille stated that Mr. Gaines is a new member of the Alexandria City Council but not new to transportation issues, since he has served on the city's Planning Commission and the Board of Directors for DASH. Mr. Euille stated that he looks forward to serving with Mr. Gaines on NVTC, although he is saddened to see Mr. Donley leave the Alexandria City Council and NVTC.

Certificates of Appreciation

Chairman McConnell stated that two long-time commissioners are leaving NVTC. She thanked Mr. Donley and Mr. Almand for their many years of dedicated service and presented them with certificates of appreciation. Mr. Donley thanked the commission and stated that it has been his pleasure to serve along with his colleagues on NVTC. He stated that NVTC plays an important role in providing a forum to work out regional differences. Mr. Almand also thanked the commission and stated that there are still many challenges this region will face but NVTC is up to the challenge.

Minutes of NVTC's Meeting of June 5, 2003

On a motion by Mr. Euille and a second by Mrs. Bulova, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Reese and Silverthorne. Mr. Zimmerman abstained since he was not present at the June meeting.

Authorization to Execute FY 2004 State Transit Grants Contract

Mr. Taube explained that the commission is asked to authorize him to execute a standard contract with VDRPT for state transit assistance for FY 2004. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved the final Six-Year Improvement Plan containing \$75.7 million in capital and operating assistance for NVTC on behalf of WMATA, VRE and the NVTC local bus systems. NVTC is also receiving \$48,545 on behalf of Loudoun County to purchase point of sale SmarTrip devices. This grant comprises 95 percent of the estimated cost, with the county to provide the remainder.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to authorize NVTC's executive director to execute a contract with VDRPT for state transit assistance for FY 2004. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Authorization to Apply NVTC's Allocation Formula to \$27 Million of State Assistance for WMATA Railcars

Mr. Taube stated that jurisdictional staff has agreed that the remaining \$27 million of state assistance to be provided for WMATA railcars should be shared according to NVTC's allocation formula in effect in the year each increment of funds is received. The original payment of \$18 million was provided directly to WMATA and, under the terms of a contract signed by WMATA and the jurisdictions, was shared according to WMATA's rail capital formula. The revised procedure favored by NVTC's jurisdictions for the remaining \$27 million is acceptable to VDRPT and WMATA, but WMATA's attorneys requested a formal action by NVTC to confirm the request. Resolution #973 would accomplish this.

On a motion by Mr. Zimmerman and a second by Mrs. Hanley, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #973 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Public Awareness Campaign on the Transportation Funding Crisis

Mr. Taube explained that at the direction of the commission, staff prepared bi-partisan materials that could be used to help educate the public about the tough choices facing policymakers who must confront insufficient financial resources for transportation. Mr. Reese complimented staff on the materials and suggested allowing comments from commissioners for the next two weeks. He stated that the Connection Newspapers has agreed to run a series of articles concerning these issues.

Mr. Reese moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to authorize staff to revise the series of articles based on comments by commissioners in the next two weeks and have them signed by commissioners who feel comfortable endorsing them to show bi-partisanship and solidarity for these regional concerns. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Mr. Snyder joined the meeting at 6:07 P.M.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and from the VRE Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Sklannik provided commissioners with an overview of the service disruptions earlier in the evening due to problems with the CSX signal system, in which half of VRE's rush hour trains experienced delays of up to 25 minutes. VRE's Fourth of July trains carried 3,300 people, which reflect rebounding ridership since the September 11th tragedy.

2002 VRE Annual Report. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read VRE's first annual report, which provides a colorful description of the VRE system and its success in attracting riders through excellent customer service.

Award of Contract for Banking Services. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #974, which would authorize VRE staff to initiate a three-year agreement (with two, one-year options) for banking services. Part of the agreement provides a \$1 million line of credit in the name of NVTTC. As requested by the VRE Operations Board, commissioners were provided with a copy of a memorandum outlining the specific procedures and written controls for use of a line of credit.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mrs. McConnell, to approve Resolution #974. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Amendment to Position Classification Plan for Customer Advocates. Mrs. Bulova stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #975, which would approve a revision to the PRTC Position Classification Plan to permit VRE to revise the salary range for three new customer advocate positions. VRE's legal counsel has asked that both commissions adopt this resolution.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Mr. Almand, the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Task Order to Provide Technical Support for RFP for Contract Operator. Mrs. Bulova stated that Resolution #976 would authorize a task order to HDR Engineering, Inc. and its subcontractor, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., to assist VRE in writing a contract operator RFP and evaluating the responses. Of the amount requested (up to \$315,000), only about \$45,000 would be spent prior to the August, 2003 deadline for Amtrak to submit a sole source proposal. After the

deadline, if Amtrak is not selected, very intense work would be needed to select a different operator for VRE's \$15 million annual operating contract.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Almand, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Agreement to Acquire Property at the VRE Woodbridge Station. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #977, which would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to execute on behalf of the two commissions an agreement with the Prince William County Board to purchase property at VRE's Woodbridge station. This property, which is adjacent to the existing parking deck, would be used initially as a surface lot to be followed eventually by a second deck. This acquisition would serve as local match for federal funds. Federal funds would be used to purchase the property and Prince William County would then donate the cash proceeds to the project.

In response to a question from Mrs. Hanley, Mr. Sklannik stated that the cost of the surface parking lot project is estimated at \$550,000 for construction, with \$4.1 million for the entire project. Mr. Zimmerman observed that the resolution does not include a dollar amount for the property. Mr. Maclsaac explained that the appraisal has not been completed. Chairman McConnell requested Mr. Maclsaac draft language for the resolution that specifies the dollar limits to the extent possible. Mrs. Hanley suggested incorporating the agenda memorandum into the motion. Mr. Maclsaac suggested the following change to the resolution: "to authorize an agreement with Prince William County for the purchase of the Woodbridge property in an amount not to exceed the greater of the fair market value of the property or the amount authorized by FTA." Mr. Sklannik stated that the amount is expected to be \$450,000 for the property.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to approve Resolution #977 incorporating Mr. Maclsaac's changes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Extension of CSXT Access Agreement

Mr. Taube explained that Resolution #978 would extend the CSXT Access Agreement for a period not to exceed one year (June 30, 2004).

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Mr. Almand, the commission unanimously approved Resolution #978 (copy attached). The vote in favor was

cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Mr. Kauffman arrived at 6:17 P.M.

Closed Session. Mrs. Bulova made, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, the following motion to enter into closed session:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Section 2.2-3711A (7) of the Code of Virginia), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission authorizes discussion in closed session regarding legal matters relating to Civil Action #03-316-A.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

The commission entered into closed session at 6:18 P.M. and returned to open session at 6:41 P.M.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Zimmerman, to approve 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, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

Mr. Euille moved, with a second by Mr. Kauffman, to authorize VRE's legal counsel to enter into a settlement agreement concerning Civil Action #03-316-A. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Gaines, Hanley, Kauffman, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Reese, Silverthorne and Zimmerman.

WMATA Items

Metrorail Ridership. Mrs. Hanley reported that Metrorail ridership is at an all time high. Mr. Zimmerman announced that the third largest ridership day in WMATA's history was a Wednesday in June, 2003, with no special event happening that day.

Columbia Pike Metrobus Service Restructuring Plan. Mr. Zimmerman reported that a public hearing was held on July 7th in Arlington County and another hearing is scheduled for next week in Fairfax County. There were some concerns raised about service of Routes 16L and 16W, but there may be solutions to these concerns. Long-term plans for the corridor include a transitway for bus rapid transit or light rail supplemented by coordinated layers of local bus service, including neighborhood shuttles, cross town connecting routes and regional feeder routes. This restructuring plan is an interim step.

Approval of Fare Adjustment Package. The WMATA Board approved fare and parking charge adjustments that should help close the initial budget gap for FY 2004. This is the first fare increase in eight years and should yield about \$34.2 million.

Car Sharing Program. The WMATA Board approved the second option year of a no cost/no revenue contract with Flexcar. Surveys show that 70 percent of Flexcar customers use transit and in general customers show a decreased reliance on private automobiles.

FY 2004 Bus Fare Buydown. The WMATA Board approved a reduced fare proposal for Metrobus 9A operating in the Richmond Highway corridor. This fare buydown is part of Northern Virginia's \$800,000 plus annual program using funding programmed by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The FY 2004 program also includes Fairfax Connector routes. NVTC staff helps guide the process used to determine which corridors to feature each year, as well as working to obtain funding each year.

Regional Transportation Items

State Transportation Plans -- Multimodal, Six-Year and 20-Year. Mr. Taube stated that VDRPT is spearheading the transit components of an ambitious series of state-sponsored plans. Commissioners and local and regional staff are being interviewed by consultants who are developing the needs components of the plans.

VDOT Northern Virginia Park-and-Ride Lot Feasibility Study. Mr. Taube stated that VDOT's study of park-and-ride lot capacity and demand has been completed. The results show a surprising level of remaining capacity in park-

and-ride lots across the Northern Virginia District (46 percent). Nonetheless, parking is limited and demand expected to rise in the most popular carpooling corridors; namely those with HOV lanes and ample transit opportunities. Overall park-and-ride lot demand is projected to increase by approximately 50 percent by the year 2020.

Agreement to Use Remaining Falls Church Federal Earmark. Mr. Taube stated that an agreement has been reached to use \$728,045 remaining in a FY 2001 federal earmark originally provided to Falls Church through the efforts of Representative Moran. This agreement will allow the funds to be used to improve access by pedestrians and transit using shuttles, reduced fares and temporary parking during the construction process of the West Falls Church Metrorail parking deck. This will provide a direct benefit to the citizens of Falls Church as well as their neighboring jurisdictions. NVTC staff helped facilitate communication among the participants as they worked to find an acceptable use for the funds which otherwise would have expired. WMATA, Fairfax County and Falls Church staff, as well as NVTC commissioner Dave Snyder, are to be congratulated for their intense efforts to meet a rigid deadline.

Communications from Ed Tennyson. Mr. Tennyson has published an opinion piece on rail in the Dulles corridor in the Journal newspapers and provided a letter to NVTC on its proposed public education campaign on the crisis in transit funding.

Route 1 Crystal City-Potomac Yard Alternatives Analysis. Mr. Taube reported that the alternatives analysis phase of this ongoing study has been completed. The study determined that all three major alternative modes (BRT, light rail, Metrorail) should go forward to the next EIS phase beginning in 2004. In this initial phase, BRT was the most cost-effective, partially due to having the highest forecast ridership (in part because of more frequent assumed headways).

Legislative Items

Mr. Taube reported that although legislation to reauthorize TEA 21 has not yet been introduced in either the House or the Senate, both Houses are expected to make progress on new authorizing legislation during July.

NVTC Financial Reports for May, 2003

Mr. Taube explained that following repeated inquiries from Mr. Kalkwarf, the Department of Taxation has refunded \$81,000 in fees previously withheld from the commission's motor fuels tax revenues to support an initiative to introduce new technology. The department determined that NVTC had not benefited from the department's program. The restored funds have been

credited to the jurisdictions and are reflected in this month's report. Mr. Taube stated that the fees to be assessed to NVTC were scheduled to increase dramatically. For example, an additional charge of \$55,000 was scheduled to be withheld from the June, 2003 motor fuels tax revenues had the error not been discovered and corrected. There were no questions concerning the financial report.

Commissioners Euille, Hanley, Snyder and Zimmerman left at 6:49 P.M. and did not return.

Continuation of the Mid-Year Review of NVTC Projects

Ms. Lynott reported that this is the fifth year for the Air Quality Code Red free bus fare project, in which free bus service is provided on forecast Air Quality Code Red Ozone Action Days as an enticement to commuters to take public transportation. The first Code Red days this season were on June 25 and 26, 2003. The current budget has sufficient funds to cover seven Code Red Days this season. NVTC obtained \$85,000 in the FY 04 CMAQ grant to evaluate the effectiveness of offering free bus fares on Code Red Days. SG Associates, Inc. is now under contract to complete this evaluation project. A bilingual on-board survey in English and Spanish has been completed and will be handed out during three Code Red Days. The purpose of the survey is to help determine if offering free bus fares increases ridership. A telephone survey is also being prepared. The completed final report is expected in December, 2003.

Ms Lynott also reported that she has been working with VRE staff to identify offsite, temporary emergency overflow parking that could be used by VRE's customers should a major incident cause a surge in ridership. Following September 11th VRE had a significant surge in ridership. The goal is to identify additional parking near to Broad Run, Manassas, Manassas Park, Burke Center and Rolling Road on the Manassas Line and Brooke and Woodbridge stations on the Fredericksburg Line. Parking lots not within walking distance to the station would be served by a shuttle bus service. Currently, 180 additional parking spaces are confirmed through verbal agreements with interested property owners. An additional 425 spaces are awaiting final responses and if all are confirmed, would equal a 16 percent increase in parking capacity for these seven station locations.

Ms. Lynott announced that NVTC's 18th Annual Transit Performance Update is now available on NVTC's website. Bound copies are also available from staff. The report includes performance data from individual transit systems and other regional agencies.

Ms Lynott reported that NVTC is expanding its use of GIS mapping and analysis to a number of projects. For example, NVTC staff is exploring with the

Virginia Department of Taxation auditors the feasibility of using GIS to geocode the locations of gas stations in the NVTC District and link this geographic data with the financial databases to be provided by the department. This would enable more accurate accounting of fuel tax revenues and would allow NVTC to verify the jurisdiction of operation as reported by operators on their registration, identify unexplained changes in revenue, and reduce errors.

Ms. Quintana reported that staff has been working on converting NVTC jurisdictional bus and VRE schedules into an easy to accept format that can be accessed and downloaded to both Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) and hand held computers, as well as cell phones with internet access. She stated that at the WMATA JCC meeting on June 27th, interest in this technology was expressed from staff from Maryland and the District.

Ms. Quintana reported that NVTC's website continues to be enhanced and expanded to include more information. Staff is currently archiving historical data, maps, reports and photographs to store on the website. A web maintenance manual is also being created.

Ms. Quintana reported that back in January, NVTC participated in VTA's Transit Education Day in Richmond. Mr. Fisette asked if this was effective and how it compared to other lobbying efforts by other agencies. Mr. Reese stated that from his perspective the most effective way to lobby legislators is to tell them exactly what legislative initiatives they support. He suggested being specific and relating information to specific bills so that legislative aides can enter the bills into computerized tracking systems. Mr. Almand added that approaching legislators with their constituents is also an effective way of communicating.

Ms. Quintana also stated that staff is continuing to establish NVTC as "the leading source of information on public transportation issues in Northern Virginia" through the use of press releases, submission of op-eds to area print media; letters to the editor; participation with the TAGS executive board; and support for local outreach events.

Mr. Taube reported that the Metro capital improvement bonds have been all committed in time to avoid the interest arbitrage rebate sanctions. NVTC's Transit Funding Resource Guide is also being updated.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman McConnell adjourned the meeting at 7:02 P.M. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Fisette, Gaines, Kauffman, McConnell, Samarasinghe, Reese and Silverthorne.

Approved this fourth day of September, 2003.

Elaine McConnell
Chairman

Paul Ferguson
Secretary-Treasurer