

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – JUNE 5, 2003**  
**NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman McConnell at 8:19 P.M.

**Members Present**

David Albo  
James F. Almand  
William Bogard  
Sharon Bulova  
William D. Euille  
Paul Ferguson  
Dana Kauffman  
Elaine McConnell  
Karen Rae  
Gary A. Reese  
Scott Silverthorne  
David F. Snyder

**Members Absent**

Gerald Connolly  
Kerry J. Donley  
Jay Fiset  
Katherine K. Hanley  
William C. Mims  
Mary Margaret Whipple  
Christopher Zimmerman

**Staff Present**

Rhonda Gilchrest  
Scott Kalkwarf  
Jana Lynott  
Adam McGavock  
Kala Quintana  
Mark Roeber (VRE)  
Pete Sklannik (VRE)  
David Snyder (VRE)  
Richard K. Taube

Chairman McConnell suggested that the meeting begin with the presentation on transit-related congestion mitigation for the Springfield Interchange. There were no objections.

#### Presentation on Transit-Related Congestion Mitigation for the Springfield Interchange

Chairman McConnell introduced Gus Robey of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) who was present to give a presentation on the results to date of efforts to control congestion during construction of the Springfield Interchange Improvement Project. Ms. Robey also introduced Valerie Pardo of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Chairman McConnell stated that her district office has not received any complaints during the entire construction project. She stated that this project should be a model for the rest of the country. With the project as large as it is and going as well as it has, it is a credit to all involved. Mrs. Bulova agreed and stated that it is nothing short of miraculous that VDOT has been able to get the volume of traffic through the interchange while managing the magnitude of construction.

Ms. Robey reported that the project, which is designed to improve safety and ease congestion at one of the busiest interchanges on the East Coast, is now over halfway complete and remains on schedule for completion in 2007. She explained that prior to construction staff looked at ways to improve internal communication; to respond to incidents; to get people to choose public transit alternatives; to get drivers off the roads; to minimize the single occupancy vehicles going through the construction zone; and to better communicate with the public.

Commissioners Albo and Kauffman arrived at 8:25 P.M.

Ms. Robey stated that the main focus was on people and not construction. Before any construction began, detailed research was done. The goal was to remove several thousand vehicles from the construction zone each day to maximize the safety of the drivers and construction workers and to keep delays to a minimum.

Last fall VDOT conducted a survey with 1,900 commuters to learn how the project has impacted motorists. The survey shows that more than 6,000 daily interchange users have switched from driving alone to HOV, teleworking or using transit since construction began. More than half of the people who switched commuting modes said the new ridesharing and transit services affected their decision.

Mr. Silverthorne joined the meeting at 8:35 P.M.

Ms. Robey explained that the survey and recent research have shown that there was no single solution. I-95 commuters changed their travel behavior because they were provided with choices that worked for their lifestyles.

Ms. Robey stated that in research conducted by VDOT before the project began, a significant percentage of interchange users indicated that they were willing and able to try carpooling in order to avoid congestion. In response to this demand, VDOT and other transportation agencies added 4,817 additional park-and-ride spaces throughout the I-95 corridor. More spaces (485) are expected in 2004. She stated that during the morning rush hour period, the two HOV lanes carry more people than the four regular conventional lanes. More than 10,000 people use the HOV lanes during the A.M. rush hour.

Ms. Robey reported on changes made to bus service in the corridor. VRE ridership is also at a record high. VRE initiated mid-day trains to provide service for commuters in the afternoon. VRE ridership is up 50 percent since the Springfield Interchange project began.

Ms. Robey also provide information about other parking initiatives, additional bus service, teleworking, vanpools, and rapid incident response, all making a difference to mitigate congestion in the I-95 corridor. In response to a question from Mrs. Bulova, Ms. Robey stated that although the majority of people telework from home, there are three satellite telework locations in Virginia. VDRPT has initiated a new Telework Virginia Program to help employers start or expand formal telework programs. Qualified employers can receive up to \$35,000 for technical assistance, training and equipment lease costs to begin or expand their telework programs.

Ms. Robey stated that an important component of the interchange project is to continue to communicate with the public about the project. She stated that the true test of success of this project is that there has been no gridlock resulting in massive delays for commuters.

Chairman McConnell stated that it has been a pleasant surprise that commute times haven't been as long as originally anticipated. Ms. Robey stated that most drivers have the perception that their commute times are not much longer than before construction began. Mr. Kauffman stated that this is the first time local elected officials have played a key role in the planning of a major construction project by being members of the congestion mitigation committee.

### Minutes of the May 1, 2003 NVTC Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Silverthorne and a second by Mr. Almand, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Eulle, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese and Silverthorne. Mrs. Bulova abstained since she was not at the May meeting.

### Award of Contract for Collection and Reporting of National Transit Database Information and Revision to NVTC's Subsidy Allocation Resolution

Mr. Taube reported that NVTC staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for assistance in revising NTD sampling plans, collecting data and completing some or all required NTD forms to be submitted by Northern Virginia's local bus systems to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The term of the contract would be for three years with an option for an additional two years. Each year the exact scope of work would be determined based on the precise needs of each participating transit system. By engaging such consulting expertise to ensure that all of NVTC's bus systems file reports each year, NVTC and local staff estimate that federal formula assistance (Section 5307) received by WMATA would be about \$4.2 million greater than if NVTC's bus systems did not file reports, with a yield for NVTC's local jurisdictions in the form of reduced WMATA subsidies of about \$1.1 million annually.

Mr. Taube explained that since NVTC's smaller jurisdictions receive a relatively low individual return in the form of reduced WMATA subsidy as a result of increased WMATA formula assistance, NVTC should arrange for this consulting help since the overall return to the region as a whole is far in excess of the cost.

Mr. Taube reported that the staff technical committee reviewed four proposals and has recommended the team of George Hoyt and Associates, MCV Associates, Inc. and Gerry Martin. Both firms have been employed previously by NVTC on related assignments and performed excellent work. Ms. Martin is well known for her years of invaluable work as a WMATA employee. The committee determined that the Hoyt group proposal was the strongest of the four proposals on technical merit, experience and personnel, as well as the lowest price. The estimate for the first year is \$137,000, \$69,000 for the second year and \$56,000 for the third year.

Mr. Taube explained that a source of funding needs to be identified for this work before a contract can be executed. Local jurisdictional staff has agreed to take state aid "off the top" as it comes into NVTC to pay for this work, since it is resulting in increased funding for the entire region. This would require some minor changes to NVTC's allocation resolution. Resolution #971 would accomplish this.

Mr. Euille moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to authorize NVTC's executive director to negotiate and execute a contract with the Hoyt group and to issue the notice to proceed. The motion would also approve Resolution #971. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese, and Silverthorne.

#### Change Order to NVTC Contract with Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. for Additional Fareboxes for Arlington Transit

Mr. Taube explained that Arlington Transit (ART) is purchasing 18 new buses and intends to equip them with SmarTrip-compatible fareboxes. Cubic is willing to provide these fareboxes as a change order to its existing contract with NVTC at a price identical to that paid for the 375 fareboxes purchased previously by NVTC. This proposed action has been reviewed by VDRPT and local staff and they support it. Arlington County would pay all the costs included in the purchase order for \$198,293.

Mr. Almand moved, with a second by Mr. Ferguson, to authorize NVTC's executive director to execute a change order with Cubic and to arrange with Arlington County to pay all of the costs. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese, and Silverthorne.

#### Legislative Items

State. Mr. Taube reported that the SJR 211 joint subcommittee studying the JLARC recommendation on Virginia's transportation programs met on May 20<sup>th</sup> at PRTC. The committee is grappling with revenue shortfalls for the commonwealth over the next few years and into the future.

Delegate Reese stated that although the Warner Administration should be commended for getting fiscal discipline back into VDOT, the impact of the budget deficit is truly devastating on new construction projects. He expressed his concern that by FY 2008-09 there won't even be enough money for matching funds for federal grants. He suggested that staff develop a series of "letters to the editor" to inform the public what is coming in the future. The letters should be bipartisan and provide the true impact of the VDOT six-year proposal. Mr. Ferguson stated that this is a good idea. On behalf of Arlington County, he thanked CTB member, Judy Connally, who was present, for challenging the local jurisdictions to come up with smaller projects that don't require as much funding. Mr. Euille also expressed support for Delegate Reese's suggestion. He stated that although the November referendum was defeated and would have brought

needed funding to the region, not all is lost and the region needs to keep working to identify sources of funding.

Mrs. Bulova stated that the Braddock District just concluded a series of community dialogues on transportation and land use where people met and talked about why they voted the way they did on the referendum and where to go from here. She stated that she will provide a copy of the report to NVTC. She stated that it is important to educate the public since many people don't know how the process works for funding transportation projects. She stated that mistrust was a big factor in people voting against the referendum.

Delegate Albo suggested that one topic for the series of letters could be the proposed legislation to make the Transportation Trust Fund constitutionally protected. It did not pass during the last General Assembly session but he will be reintroducing this legislation at the next session. His legislation will define a true Transportation Trust Fund, since the current TTF lacks that definition.

Delegate Reese moved, with a second by Delegate Almand, to authorize staff to draft a series of letters to help educate the public about the transportation funding crisis. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Eulle, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese, and Silverthorne.

In response to a question from Mr. Kauffman, Ms. Rae stated that funds to cover deficits in completed highway projects will not be taken "off the top" of the Transportation Trust Fund, and each district will pay off its own deficit. Ms. Connally agreed Northern Virginia would not be paying for other districts' deficit funding.

Delegate Reese asked why other districts receive more funding for new projects than the Northern Virginia district, but Northern Virginia is by far and away the largest contributor. Ms. Lynott responded that this issue came up at a recent NVTa technical committee. The district shares of total construction funding are dependent on big Interstate system projects in any given year. A few years ago when the Springfield Interchange project was beginning, Northern Virginia's share was much higher.

Federal. Mr. Taube stated that the Bush Administration has released its proposed surface transportation reauthorization program, known as SAFETEA (Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2004). The bill authorized \$247 billion over the next six years, including \$45.7 billion for transit. The proposal contains several features that are less favorable to transit than those contained in proposals from some Members of Congress. Guaranteed funding levels would not apply to the portion of transit programs received from the general fund, so that only \$37.6 billion would be guaranteed. Also, new transit projects would receive a reduced maximum federal share of 50

percent, while highways would continue to receive 80 percent. The new starts program would be funded largely from non-guaranteed funds.

Mr. Taube stated that another troubling proposal being considered by the Senate Finance Committee would divert federal gas tax revenues now used for transit to highways with some type of bonding substituted. The Senate Banking Committee has protested this change in a letter that opposes replacing “the usurped tax revenues with some type of bonding scheme.”

Ms. Rae expressed her concern that if the Bush Administration’s proposal goes forward there could be disastrous affects. She asked how the state could guarantee a full funding grant agreement if there is no guaranteed federal funding. She also noted that the Amtrak proposal would shift 100 percent operating and 50 percent capital responsibilities to the states. VDRPT will be responding and she will provide NVTC with a copy of the letter.

### WMATA Items

FY 2004-06 Budget Issues. Mr. Taube reported that while local jurisdictions have submitted generally favorable comments on WMATA’s approach to its FY 2004 budget, WMATA staff has given an early indication of very difficult issues looming for the future. Initial operating shortfalls of \$67 million and \$119 million are likely for FY 2005 and 2006 if costs and local subsidies grow at historical rates. The WMATA Board has established a cost containment committee and nine separate working groups to examine remedies.

Proposals for Improved Marketing and Passenger Information. The Mid-Atlantic Office of the Sierra Club presented a proposal, “Get Metrobus on the Map,” to increase Metrobus ridership through improved route and schedule information. Also, the Access for All Advisory Committee: Subcommittee of Transit Information for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Customers of the National Capital Regional Transportation Planning Board released a draft report of recommendations to improve transit information. There were no questions.

### Regional Transportation Items

Value Pricing for Transportation in the Washington Region. Mr. Taube reported that several agencies, including TPB, FHWA and VDOT among others, sponsored a one-day conference on June 4, 2003. Chris Zimmerman was one of the officials presiding over sessions.

Fairfax Connector One of Ten Most Improved Transit Systems. The Fairfax Connector was selected as one the ten most improved transit systems by Metro Magazine in its May, 2003 issue. FY 2002 ridership gains of 12 percent

and a reduction of adverse customer comments by 27 percent were among the reasons.

Virginia Transit Association Awards. VTA held its annual spring conference in Richmond May 29-30, 2003. Mr. Ferguson announced that Delegate Almand and Mr. Zimmerman were honored with awards for outstanding legislator and public official, respectively. Arlington Transit received the small transit system marketing award for its lunch loop/free service and Arlington County received an award for the best use of technology in pioneering electronic schedules for personal digital assistants. PRTC won the large transit system marketing award for a unified campaign including English and Spanish language videos.

### NVTC Projects

Code Red. The Technical Advisory Committee met with SG Associates and its subcontractors on May 15<sup>th</sup> to modify the scope of work and agree on a schedule. Survey design should be completed by mid-June which will allow surveyors to be ready for Code Red Air Quality alerts that may occur thereafter. MOU's are being executed by each participating transit system for Code Red Ozone Alert Free Bus Ride days during the 2003 ozone season. These MOU's detail procedures for transit systems receiving grant-funded reimbursals from NVTC for those free-ride days.

Northern Virginia Transit Funding Resource Guide. The update to NVTC's guide is being reviewed by local staff and should be available for review by the commission at its July, 2003 meeting with posting to NVTC's website thereafter. The guide is designed to serve as a description of the complex array of transit funding alternatives and as a checklist for project sponsors seeking to leverage their own scarce financial resources.

Preliminary FY 2004 State Transit Grants. Mr. Taube reported that the final six-year program has been approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Northern Virginia should receive additional transit funds in FY 2004, compared to FY 2003. Total assistance for WMATA, local bus systems and VRE should be about \$76 million for FY 2004, up from \$69 million in FY 2003.

Ms. Rae stated that the CTB Multi Modal Committee, which is chaired by Judy Connolly, will quantify the six-year transit and rail needs across the commonwealth. VDRPT will provide assistance,

Mr. Snyder arrived at 9:12 P.M.

ITS Evaluation. NVTC's consultant, Multisystems, Inc., has completed its public survey to help evaluate the performance of this region's investments in

new transit technology. A response rate of about 15 percent was achieved from the 14,000 surveys distributed to transit customers. A full briefing on the results of the study will be given at NVTC's September NVTC meeting.

### NVTC Financial Reports for April, 2003

The financial reports were provided to commissioners for their review. Mr. Taube reported that next month's reports will reflect an administrative refund of over \$80,000. More details about this will be provided at that meeting.

### VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and Chief Operating Officer. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read the minutes of the VRE Operations Board meeting of May 16, 2003. Mr. Sklannik announced that VRE received a VTA award for its innovative program allowing armed, plain clothes law enforcement officers to ride free to enhance security. VRE also captured an honorable mention for marketing its tenth anniversary.

Mr. Sklannik reported that VRE ridership has reached almost 15,000 daily trips during the first few days of June. On-time performance was 92 percent for May, 2003 and farebox recovery ratio is still strong at 62 percent. In response to questions from Mr. Albo and Chairman McConnell, Mr. Sklannik stated that recovering 62 percent of operating costs from fares paid by customers is excellent. Ms. Rae observed that anything over 50 percent is considered excellent by the rail industry.

Request for Proposals for a VRE Contract Operator. Mr. Taube stated that VRE has been negotiating with Amtrak for a renewal of the current operating agreement. The expiration date was extended to January 30, 2004 to permit Amtrak to respond to VRE's requests for an operating plan and pricing proposal that incorporates VRE's business objectives. Amtrak has not responded satisfactorily. Commissioners were provided with copies of an amended Resolution #972. The resolution would authorize the VRE Chief Operating Officer to request an extension of the existing Amtrak operating agreement through June 30, 2004; notify Amtrak that it has until August 1, 2003 to provide a complete and acceptable pricing proposal and operating and maintenance plan that are responsive to VRE's business plan; and in the event that Amtrak does not provide this response, to issue a competitive Request for Proposals for these services. The resolution would also express the commission's strong intent to guarantee that all Amtrak employees currently providing service to VRE are treated fairly if a different firm is selected and to emphasize that any new firm must provide a superior level of customer service.

Mr. Taube suggested that if commissioners were comfortable voting for the resolution without discussion, a closed session would not be needed. Mr. Sklannik reported that PRTC discussed the resolution in closed session and passed it in open session. Mrs. Bulova suggested commissioners read the resolution. After allowing time for the resolution to be read, Mr. Snyder asked if VRE's legal counsel had reviewed the resolution. Mr. Sklannik replied that it was forwarded to Mr. MacIsaac but a response has not been received. Mrs. Bulova noted that the Operations Board is scheduled to meet in June and August and will have a chance to review it again.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to approve Resolution #972 (copy attached). Mr. Snyder requested that the motion be amended to make it subject to review by VRE legal counsel. Mrs. Bulova and Mr. Euille accepted the amendment. The commission then voted on the amended motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese, Silverthorne and Snyder.

#### July NVTC Meeting

Mr. Taube announced that NVTC's July meeting will be held on July 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 P.M. Commissioners were invited to arrive at 5:00 P.M. for a barbeque buffet supper.

#### Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman McConnell adjourned the meeting at 9:21 P.M. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Almand, Bogard, Bulova, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Rae, Reese, Silverthorne and Snyder.

Approved this tenth day of July, 2003.

---

Elaine McConnell  
Chairman

---

Paul Ferguson  
Secretary-Treasurer