

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 6, 2003**  
**NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman McConnell at 8:15 P.M.

**Members Present**

James F. Almand  
Sharon Bulova  
Gerald Connolly  
Kerry J. Donley  
William D. Euille  
Paul Ferguson  
Dana Kauffman  
Elaine McConnell  
William C. Mims  
Gary A. Reese  
Sharmila Samarasinghe (VDRPT)  
David F. Snyder  
Mary Margaret Whipple  
Christopher Zimmerman

**Members Absent**

David Albo  
William Bogard  
Jay Fisette  
Katherine K. Hanley  
Scott Silverthorne

**Staff Present**

Rhonda Gilchrest  
Scott Kalkwarf  
Jana Lynott  
Adam McGavock  
Kala Quintana  
Richard K. Taube  
Alfred Titus-Glover

Chairman McConnell suggested that the commission begin its meeting with discussion items until a quorum was reached. There were no objections.

### NVTC's Enhanced Website and Annual Transit Performance Update

Kala Quintana gave a presentation on the enhanced NVTC website which will soon be active on the Internet. She stated that one new feature will be a secured section only accessible by password for commissioners and jurisdictional staff to get specific information. She went on to demonstrate several other features such as a key word search capability.

Jana Lynott and Adam McGavock provided the commission with an overview of NVTC's 2003 Annual Transit Performance Update. Ms. Lynott explained that although the update is similar in content to last year's version, it also has a new web-based format that will make it more accessible to the public. The update will also be linked to other transportation related websites. More graphics and pictures of transit have been added to this year's version.

Adam McGavock gave some highlights of transit performance data from the update. He reported that there were 276,000 average daily transit passenger trips in Northern Virginia for FY 2002, which translates into over 117 million annual passenger trips. Unfortunately, that is a slight decrease over FY 2001, which can be mainly attributed to the decrease in Metrorail ridership. Based on ridership figures, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 had a major impact on Metrorail ridership. Mr. McGavock stated that this is mainly due to the temporary closing of the Pentagon Metrorail station and Reagan National Airport, as well as the decrease in tourism. Combined with the current economic downturn, one can see why ridership is down for that period, but recovery has been strong and calendar year comparisons would show an increase for Metrorail.

Mr. McGavock stated that although Metrorail ridership has decreased slightly, other transit systems have experienced increases, including VRE. Although VRE's outstanding service is one reason for its increased ridership, VRE wasn't as severely impacted by September 11<sup>th</sup> events since VRE does not directly serve the Pentagon and Reagan National Airport, it doesn't cater to tourists, and it doesn't run weekend service.

Mr. Snyder arrived at 8:38 P.M.

Mr. McGavock reported that Falls Church's GEORGE Bus is in operation. Not only does the system provide a valuable service to the community, it also provides environmental benefits compared to other types of transit by using clean diesel technology.

Ms. Lynott reported that Northern Virginia HOV corridors are carrying far more HOV person trips compared to HOV facilities in Maryland. Those commuters who are using the HOV facilities in Northern Virginia are reaping great benefits in travel time savings. A commuter using the I-395 HOV lanes is on average saving 30 minutes of commute time compared to conventional lanes. Park and ride lots play an important role in the success of HOV usage. Local governments are also working to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to these lots. Ms. Lynott reported that the city of Fairfax is the first jurisdiction to install lighted pedestrian crosswalks to let drivers know that pedestrians are crossing the street at night.

Mr. Ferguson commended staff on their presentation and suggested that the website include pictures of bicycle usage. He noted that Alexandria and Arlington also have lighted crosswalks at some intersections.

#### Minutes of the February 6, 2003 NVTC Meeting

On a motion by Mr. Ferguson and a second by Mrs. Whipple, the commission unanimously approved the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

#### NVTC's FY 2004 State Aid Application

Mr. Taube reported that NVTC submitted electronically its FY 2004 grant applications to VDRPT for WMATA, local bus systems and VRE by the March 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline. Resolution #955 provides formal approval for these applications. Mr. Taube stated that the resolution has been corrected to \$104,048,265 for operating and capital assistance. Data for the applications are taken from the proposed budgets of each transit system with the cooperation of staff from each system. In addition to the application for operating and capital assistance, NVTC submitted an application jointly with PRTC for state assistance for the purchase of SmarTrip point of sales devices. WMATA's purchase of these devices from Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. does not include deployment in Loudoun County or the PRTC district. As the lead regional agency for DRPT's funding of SmarTrip fareboxes, NVTC has been asked by local staff to submit this application along with PRTC on behalf of those two entities.

Mr. Taube also reported that staff of the city of Fairfax requested that NVTC, on behalf of the city, apply for a \$140,000 marketing grant request for the TEIF program. The public-private partnership marketing campaign for CUE would be entirely managed by the city and the funds would not be subject to allocation via NVTC's subsidy allocation formula.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Euille, to approve the corrected resolution. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Request for Proposals for Analysis of the Benefits of Free Transit Fares on Forecast Code Red Days

Mr. Taube explained that the commission is asked to authorize staff to issue a RFP for a consulting study of the benefits of the free transit fare program on forecast Code Red days which NVTC administers on behalf of Northern Virginia's transit systems. A total of \$85,000 of CMAQ funding is available. The proposal would provide up to \$80,000 to a consulting firm with \$5,000 for NVTC technical support. Part of the work would involve devising a process for continuing evaluation that NVTC and the transit systems could perform in the future. It is expected that the work would begin before the Summer, 2003 ozone season with the results to be available shortly after the close of that season. The consultant selection and ongoing management of the project would be guided by a technical committee consisting of local, regional and state agency staff. Proposals would be due by April 7, 2003 and the commission would be asked to authorize award of contract and notice to proceed at its May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Mrs. Whipple asked if the consultant will look at other options, such as charging transit passengers a nominal fare on Code Red days. She stated that the program might be able to get similar results and still generate some revenue. Mr. Taube responded that the consultants will be asked to look at different alternatives, including nominal fares, and to make recommendations for improvements to the program. Mr. Connolly stated that there might be air quality implications, such as emissions credits, if fares are charged. Mrs. Whipple stated that this is why it's important to evaluate the alternatives to make sure that ridership doesn't decrease if fares are imposed. In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Mr. Taube stated that a staff representative from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments with air quality expertise will serve on the technical committee. He stated that to his knowledge, MWCOG or MWAQC has not done any comparable analysis of the benefits of free bus fares on forecast Code Red days.

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to authorize staff to issue the RFP. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

### Downloading Transit Schedules to Personal Digital Assistants and Pocket Computers

Ms. Quintana explained that Arlington County has completed a pioneering effort to allow persons using personal digital assistants and hand-held computers to access ART and Metrobus schedules. NVTC staff, with the support of the Management Advisory Committee and other transit system representatives, recommend that this technological innovation be expanded to all of the transit routes operated by transit systems in Northern Virginia. She explained that Code Red information would be included in the information that could be downloaded.

Ms. Quintana stated that Arlington County's consultant, the Redmon Group, is the only practical and practicable alternative to perform this work, since they can do it quickly (before the Summer, 2003 ozone season) and at a savings of at least \$31,200 (representing the value of investments already made by Arlington). The cost of adding all of the routes of seven new transit systems is \$37,000, plus another \$8,000 for updating routes over the next year or so. The transit systems would cooperate with NVTC in promoting this project and in measuring its success. NVTC would use currently available marketing grant funds for this purpose.

Mr. Taube stated that the commission is asked to authorize staff to contract for this project with the Redmon Group, for an amount not to exceed \$45,000, on a sole source basis, since that firm provides the only practical and practicable alternative. Jim Stone and Pete Kaiman, representatives from the Redmon Group, were present to answer any questions.

Mr. Snyder stated that because it's a sole source contract, it is important to have it reviewed by one of the local government's legal counsel. He also asked if it would be technically possible to communicate other information, such as weather conditions or information regarding an emergency situation. Mr. Stone responded that it might have the capability to do this with some advanced notice. In response to a question from Mr. Snyder, Mr. Stone stated that without much publicity promoting the service in Arlington, about 1,000 people have already signed up for this service. Mr. Snyder observed that this type of technology has broad potential and he asked NVTC staff to explore ways in which it could be used to provide the public with other information.

In response to a question from Mr. Connolly, Ms. Quintana stated that this technology is currently only available for Northern Virginia transit routes. Mr. Connolly replied that this could be very beneficial for the entire Metropolitan Washington D.C. region. He suggested NVTC contact staff from Maryland and the District of Columbia to provide them with information about this technology. Mr. Taube stated that NVTC staff will bring it to the attention of the WMATA Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee (JCC).

Mr. Connolly moved, with a second by Mrs. Bulova, to authorize NVTC staff to execute a contract with the Redmon Group using available grant funds. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

### Legislative Items

Mr. Taube reported that the General Assembly concluded its session without approving new funding measures for transportation, but at least public transit funding was not reduced. Many of NVTC's proposed legislative items were introduced, but only a few passed. Among those defeated include Delegate Almand's bill (HB 2532) that would have increased NVTC's motor fuels tax to four percent from two percent; Senator Whipple's bill (SB 1115) that would have increased transit's share of the Transportation Trust Fund to 19 percent from 14.7 percent; and Delegate Rollison's bill (HB 2750) that would have provided insurance fees to support several corridor improvements in Northern Virginia.

Mr. Taube asked General Assembly members to provide their observations regarding the legislative session. Delegate Reese stated that HB 2750 was mainly defeated because it created a huge hole in the budget. He recommended that NVTC approve its legislative agenda in November since pre-filing of bills has become important. Mr. Connolly stated that this is a good suggestion and also stated that NVTC should be more proactive in working with legislators on specific legislation.

Delegate Almand stated that his bill (HB 2532) developed an interest among legislators and it had a fairly close vote in committee. He expressed his opinion that this legislation would have a fighting chance of getting passed in the future if the process started early and it was clear that local jurisdictions endorsed it.

Senator Whipple reported that any legislation dealing with formula allocation changes was defeated. She announced that her bicycle bill passed, although her pedestrian safety bill did not. Delegate Reese stated that he was disturbed that lock box legislation did not pass (which would have protected Transportation Trust Fund revenues from shifts to General Fund uses). Chairman McConnell stated that it is apparent that there isn't enough money for this region's basic transportation infrastructure and it's unfortunate that the tax referendum did not pass. Mr. Donley noted that no legislation passed during the recent General Assembly session that increased revenues for transportation. Mr. Connolly stated that if revenues are not raised, there will not be enough money to fund the region's transportation needs.

Mr. Connolly observed that he was saddened to read in the newspaper that Delegate Almand has announced his retirement from the General Assembly. Delegate Almand stated that it has been a pleasure serving as a NVTC commissioner and looks forward to serving on NVTC until his term runs out. He encouraged NVTC to be proactive in pursuing legislative initiatives for future General Assembly sessions.

### WMATA Items

Real-Time E-Mail Alerts. Metrorail customers can now subscribe to a free e-mail alert service via the Metro website that provides real-time information regarding Metrorail service delays and disruptions. This new customer service feature has proven to be a very popular communication tool for VRE and several other local transit systems in the region.

Fare Increase Public Hearings. Mr. Euille reported that WMATA is holding several public hearings to hear comments about the proposals to increase revenues for FY 2004 by \$24 million to help close a gap in the proposed budget.

Mr. Kauffman explained that WMATA has a \$48 million gap. WMATA's General Manager has initiated cost saving measures to cover half and the other half would be covered by the proposed fare increase.

### Regional Transportation Items

I-95 Corridor Coalition Electronic Payments Systems (EPS) Committee. The I-95 Corridor Coalition is a regional partnership of public and private transportation agencies, toll authorities, and industry associations serving the I-95 corridor between Maine and Virginia. The EPS committee, a subset of the I-95 Corridor Coalition, deals with all types of electronic payment systems, such as Smart Cards and EZ Passes. The subcommittee recently reviewed a promising change in parking policies in New York City that relies on technology to help relieve congestion resulting from truck deliveries.

Smart Growth Conference. On January 25, 2003, the Coalition for Smarter Growth and a number of other local community organizations sponsored a regional Transportation and Land Use Summit in Arlington. Entitled "What Next: Northern Virginia Growth & Transportation Issues in an Election Year," the focus was on bringing together local perspectives from across the region to share ideas on interconnections, opportunities and priorities for the election year and post transportation tax referendum defeat. More than 130 citizens attended from across the region, with the strongest showing from Arlington and Fairfax counties.

VDOT Enhancements to its Smart Traffic Center. The Northern Virginia Smart Traffic Center has been in operation for more than a decade. The ongoing challenge for VDOT is to operate, maintain and enhance this investment in order for the center to remain on the leading edge of transportation management. A journal article described upgrades.

#### NVTC Financial Items for January, 2003

The financial report was provided to commissioners and there were no questions.

#### VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and Chief Operating Officer. Mrs. Bulova urged commissioners to read the minutes of the February 21, 2003 Operations Board meeting.

Short-Term Lease Authorization for VRE Railcars. Mrs. Bulova explained that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #956. This resolution would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to execute short-term leases to provide any surplus VRE railcars to other commuter rail operators at a rate of \$200 per day per car. Among the possible commuter rail systems that may be interested in such leases is MARC which has inquired about VRE's four Budd Cafe cars. VRE is unable to use those four cars now because of their limited seating capacity.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

VRE Submission for the Governor's Congestion Mitigation Initiative. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends Resolution #957, which would support the Board's decision to apply for almost \$2 million of funding from the Governor's Initiative via the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. The project would address VRE station parking and access and add an estimated 1,130 new riders. Sufficient railcars will be available to accommodate the anticipated increase in riders. Because of an early filing deadline, the VRE Operations Board authorized staff to submit the application prior to action by the commission.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners

Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Six Task Orders for RailPlan International. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #958. The resolution would authorize VRE's Chief Operating Officer to issue six task orders to RailPlan International for upgrading and standardization of rolling stock. The amount of funding needed is \$507,640 which includes a 10 percent contingency. Budgeted federal grant funds are available for this purpose.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Two Task Order Amendments and Increased Authorization for the General Engineering Consulting Contract II. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #959. The resolution would increase the total authorized amount for the GEC II contract by \$36,824 above the original limit of \$2 million. This would allow increases to the scope of two of the 17 task orders funded under this contract. For one task order, Parsons Transportation Group would be asked to assist in fare collection work related to manual validation training and acceptance testing. In the other task order, Parsons Transportation Group would provide additional engineering, analysis and cost estimating for the L'Enfant VRE station project.

On a motion by Mrs. Bulova and a second by Delegate Reese the commission unanimously approved the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Contract Change Orders for Transportation and Transit Associates, LLC. Mrs. Bulova reported that the VRE Operations Board recommends approval of Resolution #960, which would provide for change orders to the TTA contract for overhaul of nine Gallery railcars. The original contract was for \$3,008,289, plus an additional \$451,253 contingency. Subsequent change orders have totaled \$438,277. Estimates of the cost of overhauling two Gallery cab control cars proved to be too expensive at over \$1 million per car. Accordingly, these two cars would be removed from the scope and two more regular Gallery cars substituted, while several more change orders are needed. The net result would be an increase in the contract of \$676,580.99. Grant funding is available for this purpose.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Delegate Reese, to approve the resolution (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners

Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Closed Session. Ms. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Almand, to approve the following motion:

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 on legal matters pertaining to compliance with federal grant regulations and negotiations with CSXT.

The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Euille, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, Whipple and Zimmerman.

Mr. Euille and Mr. Zimmerman left the meeting and did not return. The commission entered into closed session at 9:08 P.M. The commission returned to open session at 9:57 P.M.

Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, 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, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, and Whipple.

Memorandum of Understanding with Manassas Park. Ms. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley to approve Resolution #961 regarding the understanding with Manassas Park concerning restricted parking as discussed during closed session. Mr. Connolly asked if the resolution and the accompanying memorandum of understanding were amended to include "the not to exceed amount" as discussed in closed session. Mrs. Bulova stated that this was part of her motion.

The commission then voted on the resolution and it passed (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, and Whipple.

Extension of CSXT Operating Agreement. Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Connolly, to approve Resolution #962, which would extend the current operating agreement with CSXT through June 30, 2003. The unanimous vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, and Whipple (copy of resolution attached).

Letters Regarding Operation of VRE During Emergencies. Mrs. Bulova moved, with a second by Mr. Donley, to approve Resolution #963, which would authorize NVTC to send the letter discussed in closed session to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of CSX, with the deletion of the final paragraph except for the last sentence. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Almand, Bulova, Connolly, Donley, Ferguson, Kauffman, McConnell, Mims, Reese, Samarasinghe, Snyder, and Whipple. (A copy of the resolution is attached.)

### Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman McConnell adjourned the meeting at 10:00 P.M.

Approved this third day of April, 2003.

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Elaine McConnell  
Chairman

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Paul Ferguson  
Secretary-Treasurer