



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 7, 2008

THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION JOINS WITH THE AUTHORITY (NVTA) -- URGES IMMEDIATE FUNDING OF TRANSPORTATION TO AVOID DEVASTATING IMPACT ON MOBILITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE REGION

Arlington, VA—At its March 6, 2008 meeting the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Virginia General Assembly to take prompt action to replace lost transportation funding.

Background

On February 29, 2008 the Virginia Supreme Court ruled that “the General Assembly may not delegate its taxing power to a non-elected body such as NVTA... [and] therefore such taxes and fees that NVTA has already imposed are null and void.” The Court also stated “If payment of the regional taxes and fees is to be required by a general law, it is the prerogative and the function of the General Assembly... to make that decision...” The Court concluded that “...the General Assembly has failed to adhere to the mandates of accountability and transparency that the constitution requires.”

Impact on the Region’s Mobility and Economy

This Court decision will result in the loss of an anticipated \$300 million annually from NVTA fees representing \$1.7 billion in bonding capacity.

At the same time declining statewide revenues and the elimination of abusive driver fees by the General Assembly are resulting in a 47% decline in anticipated primary, urban and secondary road funds amounting to over one billion dollars; a \$97 million decline statewide (\$71 million in Northern Virginia) in transit formula funding over five years; and the loss of \$180 million in one-time statewide transportation funding diverted by the General Assembly to help cover the state budget deficit.

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While these devastating revenue losses are occurring, transportation needs are accelerating as measured by congestion, aging facilities, deteriorating system performance, capital investment backlogs, and degraded personal mobility.

Costs of improving transportation are accelerating (rising fuel, steel, asphalt prices) much faster than the Consumer Price Index making delays in investing in transportation improvements even more catastrophic.

NVTA has prepared a list of the projects likely to be delayed or abandoned as a consequence of this crisis, and the list includes a sobering array of desperately needed highway, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements that, by their absence, will have a real and deleterious effect in the lives of residents and the success of businesses in Northern Virginia, including crowded and less safe streets and highways and packed and less reliable transit vehicles.

NVTC asks General Assembly to “Move Promptly” to “Avoid Devastating Impact”

In its resolution the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission urged the Virginia General Assembly to move promptly before adjourning its 2008 session to restore regional funding and enact a statewide transportation funding plan that fully meets the needs of Northern Virginia; retains the role of NVTA in allocating funds collected in this region for those projects determined by NVTA to have the greatest priority; and provides sufficient funding to resolve the current crisis for all transportation modes throughout the commonwealth for capital, maintenance and operations.

NVTC Chairman and Mayor of Alexandria, Bill Euille, stated “The commission recognizes the devastating effects of this crisis on the commission’s local jurisdictions’ budgets. Combined revenue losses have formed a ‘perfect storm’ that cannot be ignored, cannot be absorbed, and inevitably must lead to widespread and intense pain without immediate General Assembly action. Political stalemate is not an option. The General Assembly should not go home until they resolve this crisis. ”

More details about NVTC are available at the commission’s website: www.thinkoutsidethecar.org.

NVTC is *the* leading source of information about public transportation issues in Northern Virginia. NVTC is a regional agency with the mission of managing traffic congestion, restoring clean air, boosting the economy and improving the quality of life for all of Northern Virginia’s citizens through effective public transit and ridesharing networks. NVTC includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church covering over 1,000 square miles with a population of 1.6 million. The agency manages over \$120 million of state and federal grant funds each year for public transit and serves as a forum for its board of 20 state and local elected officials to resolve issues involving public transit and ridesharing. **For more information please visit www.thinkoutsidethecar.org or call 703-524-3322.**

NVTC