

NVTC NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Comprehensive Annual Transportation Update Now Available

Ridership trends in Northern Virginia are leading public transit growth throughout the nation. These and other facts are documented in the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's **Seventeenth Annual Transportation Update**, available today. This comprehensive report, compiled by NVTC staff, covers transportation developments of national and regional significance and especially those in NVTC's jurisdictions of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax.

The region has made significant investments in an effective public transit network consisting of regional rail, regional and local bus, park and ride lots and high occupancy vehicle facilities. For example, as of FY01, Northern Virginia's local governments and transit customers paid over two-thirds of the non-federal costs of transit capital and operations, by investing over \$175 million of the \$260 million in total transit revenue sources in this region.* NVTC's report focuses on the coordination efforts required to use this network to its greatest advantage and documents that the network is being employed more intensively and effectively than ever to meet the region's congestion challenges.

The report provides performance data, updates on regional transportation studies, ridership numbers, links to transportation websites and an appendix of local, state and federal transportation agencies and organizations, their functions, website addresses and directors.

Among the findings and highlights:

- In FY01, riders took 74,378,266 trips on the public transit systems operating in Northern Virginia, with total average weekday boardings of 273,130.
- Nationwide, riders took 9.4 billion trips, the most in 40 years.
- U.S. public transit usage grew 21 percent in the last five years, compared to a general population growth of 4.8 percent, highway usage growth of 11 percent and domestic air travel growth of 19 percent.

- Metrorail is the second largest heavy rail system in the U.S., with over 600,000 daily trips. Achieving the highest ridership in its 25 year history, Metrorail carried 177,173,000 passengers in FY01, nearly 14 million more than in FY00. Ridership has increased for six consecutive years.
- Metrorail completed its originally planned 103-mile system in 2001 with the extension of the Green Line to Branch Avenue. Ridership exceeded all expectations, averaging 35,000/weekday at the end of FY01.
- Metrobus is the sixth largest bus system in the nation and the fastest growing. Ridership last year increased five percent to 146,000,000, its second highest level ever.
- In nine years, VRE has grown to be the 11th largest commuter rail system in the U.S. It now carries over 11,000 daily trips in the congested I-95 and I-66 corridors. Over 2.2 million passenger trips were taken in FY01, with nearly 17 million trips logged since VRE's inception.
- More than 27 transit-related studies – corridor studies, data/information collection and regional commissions/panels – are currently active in the region in an effort to combat congestion.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia spent over \$8 million expanding or building park and ride lots in Northern Virginia between February 2000 and August 2001. When combined with increased transit options and carpool/vanpool incentives, park and ride lots have been shown to be useful congestion mitigation tools.
- NVTC organized a comprehensive performance database for local and regional transit systems, including ART, CUE, DASH, Fairfax Connector, VRE, Loudoun County Commuter Service, PRTC and WMATA's Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess.

These facts and many others can be found in NVTC's **Seventeenth Annual Transportation Update**. It is a valuable reference tool for transportation professionals, elected officials, commuters and others.

Please call NVTC at (703) 524-3322 to receive a free copy of this report. It can also be found on NVTC's website, www.cns.state.va.us/nvtc.

**Local funding figures are drawn from NVTC's forthcoming Transit Funding Resource Guide.*