



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF TRANSIT INNOVATION WITH TRANSPORTATION LEADERS

*U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mendez and Virginia Secretary of Transportation  
Aubrey Layne announce the launch of new NVTC transit studies and initiatives*

**Arlington, VA** — On September 4, 2014, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) celebrated 50 years of Transit Innovation at George Mason University's Founders Hall.

**U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez** was a keynote speaker for this historic event and congratulated NVTC and local leaders for their continued leadership and innovation in transit. "From creating WMATA and founding VRE, to opening the Silver Line and launching Metroway, NVTC's legacy stands up to the transportation accomplishments of any region in America," said Deputy Secretary Mendez. "With your plans for the future – including the Fairfax Arlington streetcar project, expanded service on VRE, and the addition of bus rapid transit on I-66—that legacy is only set to grow." The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration also included special tributes to retiring **U.S. Representatives James P. Moran** (D-8<sup>th</sup>) and **Frank Wolf** (R-10<sup>th</sup>) for their support of the region's transit systems.

**Virginia Transportation Secretary Aubrey Layne** remarked, "Northern Virginia 'gets' transit. As leaders you understand how to make transit work as an engine to create jobs and grow the economy and that's what we need throughout the Commonwealth." Layne also launched NVTC's Transit Fellows program and introduced the first three fellows and described their research projects. Secretary Layne closed his remarks by adding, "All of NVTC's connections point to tangible outcomes that strengthen the entire Commonwealth. Transit in Virginia capitalizes on Governor McAuliffe's initiative to create a New Virginia Economy by attracting the workforce of the future, supporting business growth and moving people and goods throughout the Commonwealth. The work that NVTC does – and it does well- is vital to the economic growth this administration is building."

**Delegate Thomas Rust**, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee and long-serving NVTC member, celebrated NVTC as an expert technical resource to the General Assembly on transportation and transit issues in the Commonwealth. Delegate Rust noted that in February the General Assembly passed a joint resolution honoring NVTC's 50 years of Transit Innovation.

Other honored guests for the evening included past NVTC Chairmen, commissioners as well as transit transportation and business leaders from across the region.

**NVTC Chairman Paul Smedberg** served as the master of ceremony for the evening, "50 Years of Transit Innovation has changed Northern Virginia. In 1964, there was no Metrorail or Virginia Rail Express or any of the local bus services we enjoy today—the DASH, CUE, ART, Loudoun County Transit, or the Connector. Now Northern Virginia has been transformed by retail, businesses, health care centers, universities and even parks connected by transit. 550,000 trips each work day by transit take cars off the

road making the commute a little better for those who drive.” Smedberg noted that “As we celebrate this special year --- NVTC keeps bringing the region together to make transit happen. The opening of Metroway, the region’s first Bus Rapid Transit service and Silver Line as well as groundbreaking on two new VRE stations which will increase service to commuters and help spur and economic development across Northern Virginia for years to come.”

**Senator Tim Kaine** sent a letter congratulating NVTC on all that it has accomplished and reiterating, “NVTC plays an important role in providing transportation solutions for Virginians in a dynamic and expanding region.”

**Rep. Gerry Connolly**, a past chairman and former member of the Commission, recognized NVTC’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the House floor on September 4, 2014. The Congressional Record captured his comments, “NVTC has become a champion for commuters across the region, an advocate for sustainable transit funding, and a leading voice on transportation policy throughout the Commonwealth. One shudders to think what Northern Virginia might look like if not for the persistent efforts of the Commission to bring local, state and federal leaders together to promote transit solutions that have made commuting more convenient.”

In addition to Secretary Layne’s announcement of the NVTC Fellows Program, NVTC also announced new partnerships with local and state universities to study the impact of transit on economic growth in Virginia. NVTC will also partner with George Mason University on a series of roundtable on key transit issues. NVTC also announced a forum scheduled for December 12, 2014, that will bring together transportation leaders in business and government to discuss the role of transit in the economy of Virginia and the region.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration was hosted by **George Mason University** and brought together over a hundred elected officials, regional staff and partners who have been a part of NVTC’s success as well as the expansion and growth of transit in the region for the past five decades.

**The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary page on the NVTC web site** <http://www.thinkoutsidethecar.org/50years.asp> includes a one-of-a-kind 50-year graphic timeline highlighting the progress and accomplishments of NVTC and transit in the region, copies of congratulatory letters, and resolutions from the evening.

**## NVTC ##**