

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 2, 2008
NVTC CONFERENCE ROOM – ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Euille at 8:12 P.M.

Members Present

David Albo
Charles Badger
Sharon Bulova
Adam Ebbin
William D. Euille
Jay Fiset
Mark R. Herring
Pat Herrity
Catherine Hudgins
Mary Hynes
Jeffrey McKay
Thomas Rust
David F. Snyder
Christopher Zimmerman

Members Absent

Kelly Burk
Gerald Connolly
Jeffrey Greenfield
Joe May
Paul Smedberg
Mary Margaret Whipple

Staff Present

Rhonda Gilcrest
Scott Kalkwarf
Greg McFarland
Adam McGavock
Kala Quintana
Rick Taube
Dale Zehner (VRE)

Minutes of the September 4, 2008 NVTC Meeting

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mrs. Bulova, to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Badger, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Herring, Herrity, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Rust, Snyder and Zimmerman.

VRE Items

Report from the VRE Operations Board and Chief Executive Officer. Mrs. Bulova stated that there are no VRE actions items. She encouraged commissioners to read the VRE Operations Board minutes of September 19, 2008. Mr. Zehner reported that ridership achieved its highest ridership day in history on September 11th by carrying 17,612 passenger trips. He also reported that the Commonwealth has provided \$3.9 million in federal bonus obligation funds that will allow VRE to make an initial purchase of five locomotives (instead of two), which will result in approximately \$1 million in savings. Also, Governor Kaine announced some corridor improvements, which include three-miles of third track in Fredericksburg. Mr. Taube stated that for those commissioners who want to trace the history of VRE, NVTC staff has compiled and updated a VRE Chronology, which was distributed to commissioners.

Award of Contract for Alexandria's Real-Time Bus Status System

Mr. Taube reminded commissioners that at the September 4, 2008 meeting, commissioners authorized him to negotiate with the top-ranked firm (Strategic Mapping, Inc. of Toronto, Ontario) and if not successful with the remaining firms in the order in which they were ranked. He reported that the contract negotiations with Strategic Mapping should be finalized within several days. Notice to proceed would not be given until the contract has been reviewed by Alexandria's legal counsel. Chairman Euille stated that Alexandria's attorney has agreed to this arrangement.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Delegate Rust, to authorize the execution of the contract and issuing the notice to proceed by NVTC's Executive Director. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Badger, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Herring, Herrity, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Rust, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Testimony for the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Fall Public Hearing

Mr. Taube reported that CTB will conduct a public hearing on its six-year transportation program in Northern Virginia on a date to be determined (most likely in November). This year NVTC's jurisdictions' transit systems face even greater challenges due to tax revenue shortfalls threatening state and local subsidies, much higher fuel costs, and soaring ridership stretching capacity to (and beyond) its limits. The draft testimony emphasizes these challenges and features a list of key transit (and highway) projects and services that have fallen by the wayside due to the failure of the

General Assembly to provide adequate statewide funding and restore regional funding. Local staff helped compile the list of projects.

In response to a question from Mr. Zimmerman, Mr. Taube stated that the testimony does not need to be approved tonight and could be deferred to the November NVTC meeting. Mr. Zimmerman stated that there is a lot of good information in the testimony, but as a presentation he suggested that it needs to be more to the point to be effective. Commissioners discussed ways to improve the testimony.

Delegate Albo arrived at 8:19 P.M.

Mr. Fisette moved, with a second by Mrs. Hudgins, to authorize NVTC's chairman or his designee to provide the testimony at the CTB hearing. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Badger, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Herring, Herrity, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Rust, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for a Tenant's Agent

Mr. Taube explained that NVTC's current lease expires at the end of December, 2010. Staff believes that the current market for office space is "soft" and it would likely be advantageous to employ a tenant's agent to perform a market analysis and assist the commission in either acquiring new space or extending the current lease on favorable terms. As agents are paid by landlords upon completion of a deal, it is likely that NVTC would incur no costs for such a contract. The intention will be to return to the commission with a recommended award of contract at the November NVTC meeting.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. McKay, to authorize the release of a RFP for a Tenant's Agent. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Badger, Bulova, Euille, Fisette, Herring, Herrity, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Rust, Snyder and Zimmerman.

Metro Items

Ridership at Virginia's Metrorail Stations. Metrorail ridership remains very strong in Northern Virginia as well as throughout the entire system with many record days of ridership achieved during the last two months.

Transit Performance Indicators. Metro achieved 95 percent on-time performance on its Orange Line; MetroAccess maintained 92 percent on-time performance with a 16 percent increase in ridership over the past year; escalator availability systemwide was over 94 percent (up from 91 percent); and the probability of being a victim of crime in the Metro system is 2.48 per million customers. Systemwide, Metrorail ridership was up four percent for FY 2008 compared to the previous year. Metrobus ridership was up one percent for FY 2008.

Independent Review of MetroAccess. The independent review found that “significant progress has been made by WMATA in addressing many of the issues raised by the TPB and the community in 2006 regarding MetroAccess service quality and management.” A revised final report is expected to be presented to the Transportation Planning Board on November 19, 2008.

Ten-Year Capital Needs. Chairman Euille reported that Metro staff has estimated capital needs between 2010 and 2020, including inflation, to be \$11 billion. No funds for rail expansions (including Dulles) are included. Over \$7 billion is needed just to maintain the current system and \$3.5 billion to meet growing ridership. The current capital funding program known as Metro Matters expires in 2010. WMATA General Manager John Catoe called this inventory of needs a first step in developing priorities for a new 10-year capital improvement program. The target is to have a new funding agreement in place by July, 2010.

Federal Legislation for Funding Metro. Mr. Zimmerman reported that legislation (HR 2095) passed yesterday by Congress authorizes \$1.5 billion for WMATA over a decade. It is a big step but there is still a long road ahead. WMATA’s Compact must be amended quickly to meet the terms of the legislation. Also, Virginia must identify a source of dedicated funding to match the new federal investments. Mr. Snyder suggested NVTC send a letter of appreciation to Northern Virginia’s congressional delegation and to remind them what still needs to be done.

Mr. Zimmerman moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to authorize NVTC’s chairman to send a letter to Northern Virginia legislators concerning this issue. The vote in favor was cast by commissioners Albo, Badger, Bulova, Euille, Fiset, Herring, Herry, Hudgins, Hynes, McKay, Rust, Snyder and Zimmerman.

WMATA Headquarters Relocation Proposal. Mr. McKay reported that at its last meeting the WMATA Board deferred discussion of the proposal to relocate Metro headquarters. A recommendation may be presented at the next Board meeting. Mr. McKay stated that he is opposed to it, especially during a time when Metro needs more funding for trains and buses. It is projected that relocation and construction of a new building would cost approximately \$70 million. He stated that NVTC may want to take a position on this issue.

Mr. Fiset asked if the sole reason to oppose it would be financial reasons. Mr. McKay stated that there are other reasons too. He expressed his opinion that from a strategic standpoint, it does not look good when a region is asking for federal funding for unfunded capital needs, but is spending \$70 million on a new building. Also, it is not Metro’s role to be a redevelopment organization. The proposal calls for moving Metro’s headquarters to Anacostia to jump start redevelopment activity. Mr. Fiset stated that some public facilities and buildings can be legitimate use for economic development but it should not be the only reason. Mrs. Hudgins stated that it would be helpful to provide Metro’s report on this issue at the next NVTC meeting. She stated that the point is that Metro should not be caught up in the District of Columbia’s particular jurisdictional issues that are solely their issues and needs. Metro decisions should be based on what is best for Metro. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he is sympathetic to the notion that, when

all things are equal, it is a good thing to promote transit oriented development. In response to a question from Mr. Fiset, Mr. Zimmerman stated that this is not a WMATA-driven proposal; the District of Columbia is pushing it forward. Mr. McKay stated that Metro staff does not need this distraction right now. He cautioned that if it is not dealt with now, it could keep coming back for future consideration.

Legislative Items

Mr. Taube stated that as reported earlier HR 2095, which authorizes \$1.5 billion in new federal funding to support WMATA, is waiting for the President's signature. Delegate Albo stated that he will send copies of the legislation to Virginia General Assembly members. He observed that unless the General Assembly takes action and provides a dedicated funding source, it would effectively be leaving \$50 million on the table every year. Chairman Euille suggested NVTC send letters to the Northern Virginia General Assembly delegation formally transmitting the bill. Mr. Fiset stated that any letter should include a message. It was decided that Delegate Albo would send out copies of the bill to General Assembly members.

Draft Annual Transit Ridership in Northern Virginia in FY 2008

Annual transit ridership in Northern Virginia for FY 2008 shows that almost all systems are up substantially. The two exceptions are special cases. The city of Fairfax's CUE has switched to electronic fareboxes with precise counts for FY 2008 compared to a sampling method with plus or minus 10 percent accuracy as previously used. Metrobus has some anomalies for September, 2007 that NVTC staff is working with WMATA to investigate. It is clear that Northern Virginia's systems collectively experienced ridership gains of at least 3.3 percent during FY 2008.

Mr. McKay stated that it is important to make sure Metro includes in its ridership data express bus routes, such as REX, which Metro operates but are not part of the Metrobus system. Mr. Herrity asked for cost comparisons between 2007 and 2008.

Regional Transportation Items

2007 State of the Commute Report. MWCOC's Commuter Connections program has published the results of its periodic surveys of employed persons in the Washington metropolitan region. The purpose of the survey is to document trends in commuting behavior and attitudes. It also measures the effectiveness of commuter assistance programs and improvements to air quality.

A Better Way to Go: Meeting America's 21st Century Transportation Challenges with Modern Public Transit. The U.S. Public Interest Research Group's Education Fund has published a compendium of arguments in favor of improved public transit. In the Washington metropolitan area, 254 million gallons of gas costing \$666 million are saved each year due to transit, the bulk (239 million gallons at \$626 million) due to Metrorail.

WMATA also saves 1.85 million tons of CO₂ annually out of transit's metropolitan (DC/VA/MD) total of 1.9 million tons. VRE saves 6.8 million gallons of gas valued at \$17.8 million annually and reduces 52.7 thousand tons of CO₂. Transit benefits in general include reduced road expenditures of \$8 billion annually, parking (\$12.1 billion) and accidents (\$5.6 billion) with a grand total of transit benefits of \$60.1 billion per year.

I-95/395 HOT Lanes. Mr. Taube reported that the safety study and the bus-only lane analysis have been provided to NVTC. Commissioners were provided with copies of the reports. Mr. Snyder stated that in regard to the safety study, there needs to be more work done. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he would not limit it to safety issues; there are many questions that still remain. Mrs. Hudgins stated that for the bus-only lane study, it is important to emphasize that there was a commitment made to transit. Parking lots (5,000-6,000 spaces) are already being built that will bring more transit users to the corridor. She expressed her fear that it will be paralyzing to the region if the transit piece is not included.

DRPT's State Transit Plan. DRPT has begun regular monthly briefings on progress for NVTC's Management Advisory Committee (MAC). At the September 16th meeting, the MAC group received a draft scope of work.

DRPT's Transit/TDM Grantee Workshop. On September 16th DRPT staff provided briefings on new program application guidance, capital budgeting, dashboard performance data, the state program on Small, Women and Minority Owned (SWAM) business targets, performance review program and various state plans. NVTC staff has provided comments on these new initiatives.

National Award for Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Partnerships. Governor Kaine's office issued a press release describing the awards for VDOT Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer and Deputy Secretary of Transportation Barbara Reese. The awards were given by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association.

NVTC Financial Items for August, 2008

Commissioners were provided with the financial reports and there were no questions or comments.

Mr. Ebbin arrived at 8:40 P.M.

NVTC's November Meeting

Chairman Euille explained that at his request, staff has surveyed commissioners to determine if the November NVTC meeting could be changed, since Alexandria members have a conflict. Commissioners discussed November 5th and 13th as alternate dates. It was agreed that staff would poll commissioners again and a new meeting date would be determined by majority consensus. Staff will notify commissioners of the new meeting date.

Adjournment

Chairman Euille stated that the closed session will be deferred to the November meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Zimmerman and a second by Mrs. Hynes, the commission unanimously voted to adjourn. Chairman Euille adjourned the meeting at 8:45 P.M.

Approved this 5th day of November, 2008.

William D. Euille
Chairman

Gerald E. Connolly
Secretary-Treasurer