

**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 1, 2018**  
**NAVY LEAGUE BUILDING – FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Smedberg at 7:38 P.M.

**Members Present**

Sharon Bulova  
John Cook  
Jim Corcoran  
Katie Cristol  
Christian Dorsey  
John Foust  
Libby Garvey  
Jeff Greenfield  
Catherine Hudgins  
Matt Letourneau  
Tim Lovain  
Jennifer Mitchell (Alternate, Commonwealth of Virginia)  
Paul Smedberg  
David Snyder

**General Assembly Members**

**Absent During Session**

Adam Ebbin  
David LaRock  
Jennifer Wexton

**Members Absent**

Jeff McKay  
Ron A. Meyer

**Staff Present**

Matt Cheng  
Karen Finucan Clarkson  
Andrew D'huyvetter  
Nobuhiko Daito  
Rhonda Gilchrest  
Dan Goldfarb  
Patricia Happ  
Scott Kalkwarf  
Aimee Perron Seibert  
Kate Mattice  
Melissa Walker  
Joe Swartz (VRE)

### Opening Remarks

Chairman Smedberg announced that there is a full agenda, including a presentation by WMATA General Manager/CEO Paul Wiedefeld on current WMATA activities, as well as a discussion about the Regional Fare Collection Program and pending WMATA funding legislation; a legislative update on other NVTC-related activities at the General Assembly and in Congress; the first look at the I-66 Commuter Choice FY2018 Project scores; and action on an amendment to NVTC's office lease.

Chairman Smedberg stated that since Mr. Greenfield has to leave early, he recommends the Commission take up the two action items at the beginning of the meeting. There were no objections.

### Minutes of the February 8, 2018 NVTC Commission Meeting

Mr. Dorsey moved, with a second by Mr. Letourneau, to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bulova, Cook, Cristol, Dorsey, Garvey, Greenfield, Letourneau and Snyder. Commissioners Corcoran, Foust, Hudgins and Smedberg abstained.

### Amendment to the NVTC Office Lease

Chairman Smedberg stated Resolution #2356 would authorize the executive director to sign an amendment to the NVTC office lease. Ms. Mattice introduced NVTC's broker agent, Ben Smith, managing director of MGA, who met earlier with the Executive Committee to review the lease terms and comparables and is available to answer Commissioners' questions.

Ms. Mattice explained that staff responsibilities have grown in the past seven years and they have outgrown the current office space. While the current lease is not up for renewal until 2021, the Navy League Building approached NVTC with an opportunity to move to another floor within the next year and add approximately 40 percent more space. The offer terms would also reduce the lease rate by 18 percent and reduce the annual escalation rate from 3 percent to 2.5 percent. Any construction of the new space would be covered by the building.

Ms. Mattice explained the new lease would provide additional space for current and new staff and consultants, retain the conference room plus the building has guaranteed updated amenities for the first-floor conference space, including Wi-Fi and streaming capabilities.

There were no questions or comments from Commissioners.

Ms. Garvey moved, with a second by Ms. Bulova, to approve Resolution #2356. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bulova, Cook, Corcoran, Cristol, Dorsey, Foust, Garvey, Greenfield, Hudgins, Letourneau, Smedberg and Snyder.

Mr. Lovain arrived at 7:43 P.M. and Mr. Greenfield left at the same time.

#### Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Chairman Smedberg stated that the Commission will forgo the usual WMATA Board Member Report. He introduced Paul Wiedefeld, WMATA's General Manager/CEO since 2015, who has made great strides in improving safety, service reliability, and financial responsibility at WMATA. Chairman Smedberg noted Mr. Wiedefeld has agreed to stay to participate in the discussion of the next three agenda items.

Mr. Wiedefeld gave an update on Metro funding legislation, service improvements, and the FY2019 budget. He thanked NVTC Commissioners and staff for their support for Metro funding legislation. The Maryland General Assembly is considering legislation calling for \$150 million in dedicated revenue for WMATA (up from \$120 million initially proposed). The District of Columbia is confident they will be able to pass a sales tax in the District, once Maryland and Virginia make a commitment. Mr. Wiedefeld observed that this legislative season is the best chance to get WMATA funding legislation passed, so he encouraged NVTC to continue to push for legislation.

Regarding service improvements, Mr. Wiedefeld reported WMATA has experienced the best railcar performance in the last eight years. The new 7000 series railcars, which now comprise 40 percent of the fleet, are making an impact and helping to rebuild ridership. WMATA's "Rush Hour Promise" program is going well. If a rush hour trip is delayed by 15 minutes or more, WMATA will automatically credit the rider's SmarTrip card. Ninety percent of all service is on schedule, so to-date about two percent of riders have been eligible for that credit. Mr. Wiedefeld also reviewed some of the upcoming track work. The work that would have closed the Huntington and Eisenhower station in May 2018 has now been rescheduled to 2019.

Regarding safety, Mr. Wiedefeld stated that Part 1 crime rate is down 19 percent, the lowest it's been in 10 years. WMATA has closed four of the NTSB recommendations since January. Thirty-six underground rail stations now have Wi-Fi capabilities.

Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA management continues to focus on driving down costs. In FY2017, WMATA reduced absenteeism and sick leave by 16 percent, which totals almost \$3 million. Long-term leave has been reduced by 30 percent. WMATA is continuing to pursue P3 public-private partnership projects, including the Cinderbed Road Bus Garage project and the Silver Line Phase 2 project.

Mr. Wiedefeld gave an update on the FY2019 budget, which was introduced in November. WMATA concluded the public hearings and public comment period and the budget will go to the Finance and Budget Committee on March 8<sup>th</sup> with action by the full Board on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. He stated he received NVTC's letter regarding the budget. WMATA is committed to holding operating subsidy increase at three percent. To do that, management had to identify another \$38 million in budget cuts and revenue opportunities.

Mr. Letourneau stated there were some service disruptions on the Orange Line this week. Riders had concerns with the lack of coordination with bus service responding to the rail disruption. He asked about WMATA's ability to bring buses in to provide bus bridge service when Metrorail service is disrupted. Mr. Wiedefeld explained that the response time depends on the time of day. This incident happened during the morning rush hour, which made it a challenge to physically get equipment there, but service was up and running in about 50 minutes. Those affected riders are eligible for the "Rush Hour Promise" credit. Mr. Corcoran asked about the cost to WMATA to provide that credit. Mr. Wiedefeld stated there is no estimate yet, but it is the largest incident to date. WMATA has estimated a \$2.5 - \$3 million exposure for the entire program, but anticipates the new program will help bring back riders, which will offset costs.

Mr. Cook commended WMATA for the three percent cap in operating subsidy, which in his opinion, is the linchpin of getting Metro funding legislation passed in the General Assembly. Cost containment is the key to getting revenue. He stated that the cap needs to be ironclad.

Ms. Bulova observed Delegate Hugo's bill calls for a two percent cap. She asked what would be the impacts of a two percent cap. Mr. Wiedefeld stated that to put it in perspective, three percent for FY2018 breaks down to 0.9 percent for operating growth and 2.1 percent for revenue drop. He stated at some point, management can only make so many budget cuts, so reducing the three percent cap would be problematic. He clarified WMATA could go over the three percent in the future when new service is added.

Mr. Dorsey stated that the General Manager proposed a budget with the three percent cap, but the WMATA Board can always adjust the budget that would require greater subsidy. He stated that it is important that legislation does not prohibit WMATA going above the three percent willingly.

Ms. Garvey asked how decline in ridership compares to the rest of the industry and if teleworking is a factor. Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA is seeing rail ridership stabilizing, while bus ridership continues to decline. He stated teleworking, different travel patterns, and Uber/Lyft services have all impacted transit ridership. WMATA's major bus study will look at these impacts.

Mr. Snyder commended the General Manager and the WMATA Board on the improvements on service and reliability he has seen over the last two years. He stated that Falls Church and Fairfax County are interested in impacts to the West Falls Church Metrorail Station and he urged WMATA to closely coordinate with these two jurisdictions. He also asked if there is a better way for the public to get information, such as an online user manual on how to use and navigate the Metro system, especially for tourists and first-time riders.

Mr. Snyder also acknowledged there is new technology on the horizon, such as autonomous vehicles, and asked if WMATA is looking at such technology. He stated that the City of Falls Church is interested in partnering with other agencies on this type of technology. Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA is starting to look at what these types of technology and what they mean operationally and how they impact the market place. The

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is doing a lot of research. He stated it is still early, but WMATA will need to spend some resources to look into new technology.

Mr. Lovain observed that with cost escalations of paratransit service, he asked if WMATA has looked into using other sources, such as Uber, to provide this service. Mr. Wiedefeld stated that when WMATA issued a bid, Uber did not respond. In Maryland, there is Ability Ride, which is a new program using taxi service. The paratransit user pays \$5, WMATA pays \$15 and the customer pays any remainder.

Mr. Foust stated the Rush Hour Promise is a good start. He asked what else WMATA can do to aggressively get riders back. Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA needs to get the word out and communicate improvements, especially safety issues. WMATA is willing to take some chances and risks and try different things to bring riders back.

Chairman Smedberg asked Mr. Wiedefeld to share some of the feedback he has received from General Assembly members. Mr. Wiedefeld stated he has heard a common theme that WMATA needs to get costs under control.

Chairman Smedberg acknowledged Greg Potts and Regina Sullivan from WMATA. He also acknowledged Ms. Mattice's efforts on the legislative front in Richmond.

Ms. Garvey thanked Mr. Wiedefeld for his hard work.

### Regional Fare Collection Program

Ms. Happ, project manager, updated the Commission on NVTC's efforts in progressing the Regional Fare Collection program on behalf of the region. Due to delays at WMATA, several Northern Virginia bus transit agencies are approaching a critical junction that may affect agencies' ability to collect fares and/or procure new buses. Based on the latest information provided by WMATA that the upgrade project is approximately 14 months behind schedule, NVTC has calculated that the earliest likely date for delivery of upgrade kits is January 2019, which will put the ability to collect fares at risk for Arlington and Loudoun. WMATA's lack of transparency and schedule delays have impacted NVTC's ability to respond to the issues.

Ms. Happ explained that the NVTC bus farebox upgrades are necessary because the existing system relies on several components that are no longer manufactured or supported. The New Electronic Payments Program (NEPP) was supposed to implement a new long-term solution. When NEPP was canceled, the region was left with failing fareboxes and no plan for the future. The DCU Upgrade project was designed to keep fareboxes running until a long-term fare collection solution is established. The farebox DCU Upgrade project is dependent on procurement, testing, and implementation activities run by WMATA.

Ms. Happ explained that NVTC has requested WMATA provide and adhere to the current upgrade schedule and require vendors to do so as well, and provide detailed ongoing

transparency into the farebox upgrade schedule and process by providing regular updates to all regional partners and responding to requests.

Ms. Cristol asked Mr. Wiedefeld for more details on how the schedule became so delayed. Mr. Wiedefeld explained that the vendor, CUBIC, had some long lead time items that took longer than anticipated, as well as software issues identified during testing. The delays should not impact Loudoun County and WMATA is working on a short-term solution for Arlington County. He is confident WMATA can meet the new deadline because WMATA is working with the vendor on a daily basis.

Ms. Garvey asked if WMATA is looking at different fare technology to get away from tickets and ticket vending machines, such as what Europe does with a pass. Mr. Wiedefeld stated WMATA is looking at various solutions.

Chairman Smedberg thanked Mr. Wiedefeld for speaking with the Commission. He observed that the key is communication and coordination with the regional partners.

#### Report from the Co-Chairs of the Legislative and Policy Committee

Ms. Cristol, co-chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee, asked Ms. Siebert to give an update on pending legislation. Ms. Siebert reported things are moving quickly with only nine days left before the General Assembly adjourns. There are four bills NVTC is closely following: Senator Saslaw's omnibus funding bill (SB856), Delegate Hugo's WMATA funding bill (HB1539), and two gas tax bills (SB896 and HB768). All four bills have been appointed to conference. Conferees were appointed yesterday. Senators Saslaw, Wagner and Norment are Senate conferees on all four bills. Delegates Tim Hugo, Chris Peace and Rip Sullivan are Delegate conferees for the two WMATA bills and Delegates Chris Jones, Greg Habib and Eileen Filler-Corn are Delegate conferees for the gas tax bills.

Ms. Siebert stated the Northern Virginia region is working collaboratively with the General Assembly and the Northernham administration. Commissioners then discussed different provisions of the bills.

In response to a question from Chairman Smedberg, Ms. Siebert explained that the conferees have not formally met yet. Bills have to be adopted by March 10<sup>th</sup> before the General Assembly adjourns. Ms. Garvey asked if there is a sense of how supportive legislative staff is to the legislation. Ms. Mitchell gave an overview of the staff role.

Mr. Dorsey left the room at 8:28 P.M.

Ms. Mitchell explained that beyond the Metro piece, the legislation includes some structural changes to the statewide transit program. One requires the state to develop a prioritization program for the transit capital program by 2019. WMATA would not be a part of the prioritization and would have a set amount of funding. The Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) will begin meeting again starting on March 12<sup>th</sup> to begin work to determine how transit capital and operating funding will be prioritized and

allocated. The capital prioritization process needs to be in place by December 1, 2018 to be ready for next year's grant cycle. Ms. Mitchell stated there is still hope that some statewide capital funding will be included. The administration will be floating some proposals to the conferees.

Ms. Cristol stated that the Legislative and Policy Committee met earlier and discussed a draft "2018 General Assembly Transit Bills: NVTC Taking Points for Conferees" document, which reflects NVTC's adopted Legislative Agenda. She stated the committee suggested several changes, including adding clarity if the \$154 million target is not met and what it means for WMATA's deferred maintenance; adding a description of why there needs to be a three percent cap and making a clear case for that cap; and making it clear that if a reform board is created, NVTC should be involved in the selection of Virginia's member.

Ms. Garvey asked if individual Commissioners should be taking any action. Ms. Cristol stated there is a good team in place in Richmond. Potentially, NVTC may need help when the bills move back to the House and Senate for a vote. Ms. Mitchell observed that if it comes down to a close vote, it is important to not take any chances. Ms. Siebert reviewed the coordination and stated the team is doing its best not to overwhelm legislators.

Mr. Dorsey returned to the discussion at 8:37 P.M.

Mr. Cook discussed how important a three percent cap is versus a two percent cap, which would result in putting the jurisdictions in a straightjacket. He suggested preparing information (i.e., the rate of inflation, WMATA contract standard escalation rate, etc.) to help educate legislators on the need to keep the cap at three percent. He also stated the importance of the region speaking with one voice. In his opinion, neither WMATA bill is good because of what it does to NVTA funding, but it is important to seek a new source of dedicated funding for WMATA.

Ms. Mitchell agreed about the importance of speaking with one voice. Picking the legislation apart, will start to unravel the whole thing. In her opinion, she does not think there will be another opportunity next year in the General Assembly to get WMATA funding legislation passed.

Ms. Bulova reminded Commissioners of the initial McAuliffe proposal and noted the two WMATA funding bills are better to help resolve Metro's issues. She stated that SB856 seems to align closer to NVTC's legislative principles. She noted that once a bill is passed by both chambers, there will still be time to tinker with it before it goes to the governor for his signature. She likes that NVTC's conferee document includes NVTA's position on the possible removal of regional revenues. She observed that fixing Metro is a priority among the regional partners and it is important that it is addressed in the General Assembly this year.

Mr. Corcoran stated that the Northern Virginia Alliance, chambers and businesses have been strong advocates through the Metro Now Coalition. Ms. Siebert agreed that it has been a team effort.

Mr. Letourneau stated he wants to make sure NVTC is not saying “as long as they pass something, we are ok...” There comes a point where the General Assembly can do more harm than good. There is an impact to the region with what it is doing to NVTA funding. He does not think NVTC should take a position on that. He stated that there needs to be changes to these bills because they do harm to the jurisdictions and will require passing the costs to constituents.

Ms. Cristol stated she strongly agrees with Mr. Letourneau’s comments. The Legislative and Policy Committee has made Ms. Siebert well aware of these nuances. Neither bill would have been what NVTC would have drafted. There is disappointment as well as tempered optimism to get something passed.

Mr. Dorsey stated that the three percent cap cannot be talked about as a preference. It is essential for all the reasons discussed. Legislators need to understand that three percent for a transit agency is very aggressive.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Wiedefeld for his participation in these discussions.

#### FY2018 I-66 Commuter Choice Program Update

Patricia Happ, project manager, presented the Commission with the results of NVTC’s technical evaluation and scoring of projects for consideration under the FY2018 I-66 Commuter Choice Program. NVTC received applications from Arlington County, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, City of Manassas, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, PRTC and VRE. Using criteria approved by the Commission, the 17 submitted applications, totaling \$29.6 million, were evaluated. NVTC staff assessed all applications received and determined that each met the eligibility criteria established in the Memorandum of Agreement. Since that time, one application from VRE was removed for consideration as it was funded through the I-66 Outside the Beltway Concessionaire payment.

Ms. Happ announced NVTC will hold two open houses and public hearings on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce and April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Navy League Building in Arlington prior to the NVTC April Commission meeting. In May, staff will present a proposed FY2018 program of projects to the Commission for consideration and approval to submit to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for its May 2018 Workshop. The CTB will be asked to approve the NVTC I-66 Commuter Choice FY2018 Program at its June 2018 Action Meeting.

Ms. Mattice gave a brief explanation of why two design projects, although technically eligible, did not receive scores. The program is about moving more people through the corridor, and design projects do not demonstrate this. She stated the full Commission may want to have a bigger policy discussion on this topic in the future as the program moves forward.

Mr. Snyder stated he would like to meet with staff to discuss the technical scoring of several projects. Chairman Smedberg stated NVTC is forming a I-66 Commissioner Working Group to do that very thing. Commissioners Foust, Garvey and Greenfield have



agreed to participate. Mr. Snyder also agreed to participate. The group will meet in April. Chairman Smedberg urged any other Commissioners interested in joining the Working Group to contact staff.

#### NVTC FY2018 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Ridership Report

Dr. Daito gave a brief update on the NVTC FY2018 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Ridership Report, which shows ridership among Northern Virginia transit agencies changed -0.2 percent during the quarter when compared to the same period in FY2017. This quarter represents the second quarter after SafeTrack, and implementation of WMATA's new service and fare policies. While nearly all agencies showed some level of decline in ridership, Metrorail and VRE showed increases of 2.4 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively.

Mr. Snyder stated he would like more detailed analysis (i.e., loss of ridership to ridesharing services, what is the market communicating about bus service, what needs to be done differently, etc.). Mr. Dorsey stated WMATA's bus study will look at these issues. Ms. Mattice stated NVTC is participating in that study, as well as MWCOG's bus study, to represent the Northern Virginia perspective. NVTC also has an established group of jurisdictional staff who are working on the Regional Bus Analysis.

Mr. Snyder stated a national study shows that for major congested urban areas with transit, people are willing to pay significantly more to use Uber/Lyft services compared to bus. He asked what needs to be done differently to be competitive with these new markets. Mr. Corcoran stated that some of it is a safety perception of riding a bus, as well as Uber gets a person exactly where they want to go. Ms. Bulova observed that Attachment 8 shows dramatic increases at some of the station. Dr. Daito stated that these results are due to SafeTrack. Ms. Bulova noted that it is still a hopeful sign that people are coming back to the system.

#### Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Ms. Mitchell directed Commissioners to her written report. She provided some more information about the upcoming TSDAC meeting, which was discussed earlier in the agenda.

#### Virginia Railway Express

Chairman Smedberg stated there are no action items. Mr. Swartz stated Mr. Allen was not able to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Swartz reported that average daily ridership for February was 18,990 with on-time performance of 91 percent. Ms. Bulova noted that VRE is scheduled to meet the Positive Train Control deadline of December 31, 2018.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Mattice directed Commissioners to her written Executive Director Newsletter. She updated Commissioners on several upcoming events, including a Transportation Leadership Forum and a Transit 101 presentation to the Northern Virginia Delegation.

The Financial Report for January 2018 was provided to Commissioners and there were no questions.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chairman Smedberg adjourned the meeting at 9:12 P.M.

Approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 2018.

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Paul C. Smedberg  
Chairman

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Katie Cristol  
Secretary-Treasurer



## RESOLUTION #2356

**SUBJECT:** Authorization to Amend NVTC's Office Lease

**WHEREAS:** The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's current office lease at the Navy League Building, 2300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 620 in Arlington expires on May 31, 2021;

**WHEREAS:** The present suite lacks adequate space for existing staff and anticipated growth due to increasing responsibilities of the Commission;


**WHEREAS:** At the December 7, 2017 meeting, the Commission authorized the Executive Director to negotiate an amendment to the existing lease for a larger suite through MGA, NVTC's broker; and

**WHEREAS:** Based on those negotiations, an amendment was prepared and provided to the Commission for consideration.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission authorizes its executive director to execute the lease amendment, subject to such further non-substantive modifications designed to correct typographical errors and clarify language as may be approved by the executive director in consultation with legal counsel, with an effective date of March 1, 2019, for a 5,915 square foot suite at the present location, for an additional period of 10 years and five months from the termination date of the existing lease.

Approved this 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 2018.

  
Katie Cristol  
Secretary-Treasurer

  
Paul C. Smedberg  
Chairman