



NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

MAY 2015

Rust Urges VTA Members to Partner with Legislators



“For Virginia to remain competitive, transit in all forms must continue to be an integral part of our transportation network,” said Thomas Davis Rust in a keynote speech at the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) annual conference on May 21. Rust, who gave an overview of transit policy in the Commonwealth, underscored transit’s contribution to Virginia’s “business-friendly” reputation. He emphasized that while recent

legislation – including HB2313 and HB1887 – has provided transit funding, more is needed to address the coming funding shortfall, as capital projects revenue bonds expire. And, Rust challenged those in attendance to “demonstrate the value of transit to Virginia and help legislators find the necessary resources” to meet needs across the state.

Drawing on five decades as a civil engineer affiliated with roads, Rust shared what he’s learned about transit – and what it means to the people of and communities in the Commonwealth. “I now know that roads alone don’t solve the problem. Yes, they are important. But, they are not the only answer. We in Northern Virginia must maximize our highways by investing in transit.”

See VTA Conference Page 2

Transit Integral to I-66 Project

At the Commonwealth Transportation Board’s May Workshop, Transportation Secretary Aubrey Layne reviewed the public and private funding options for the I-66 Multimodal Corridor Project Outside the Beltway. Irrespective of the financing mechanism for I-66, transit will be a permanent centerpiece, improving congestion, access and mobility in the corridor, said Layne. The Secretary expects that the Transportation Public-Private Partnership Committee will consider a funding recommendation late this summer.

I-66 Materials of Interest

Sec. Layne’s Comparison of P3 and Public Finance Options

Projected Revenue from I-66 Project

Considerations for P3 & I-66

Tell VDOT What You Think

Attend one of the upcoming I-66 public hearings:

May 27, VDOT Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Dr., Fairfax

May 28, Oakton High School, 2900 Sutton Rd., Vienna

June 02, Battlefield High School, 15000 Graduation Dr., Haymarket

June 03, Bull Run Elementary School, 15301 Lee Hwy., Centreville

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## Businesses Value Transit

NVTC's *profiles of businesses that value transit* garnered numerous mentions at the May 8 *Transit Means Business!* forum and the May 20-21 VTA conference. The nine profiles include corporations, a nonprofit educational institution and a small business. Over the next few months, NVTC's Executive Director Report will highlight several of these area businesses.

*B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group* — Existing transit and the promise of new transit weigh heavily into this company's decisions about where to locate its hotels. Proximity to transit makes the hotels more appealing to travelers and allows B.F. Saul's Hospitality Group to attract both hourly and salaried employees from a wider geographic area. The company recognizes that transit attracts knowledge-based employers, which form the most important market segment for business-class hotels.

*Bittersweet Catering & Café/ Waterfront Market & Café* — Old Town's transit-rich environment is key to the cafés' employee recruitment and retention strategy and provides tourists and locals with easy access to the restaurants. About 60 percent of the cafés' workforce commutes via transit, which includes Alexandria Transit Company's DASH bus service, Metrobus, Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express and the King Street Trolley.

## VTA Conference Amplifies NVTC's Message of Transit Means Business

Such an investment is vital to Northern Virginia's economy and global competitiveness. As an example, Rust pointed to Loudoun County, where the extension of Metro's Silver Line has allowed the county to compete for development projects that were previously unimaginable. To underscore the value businesses place on transit, Rust drew from recent *NVTC research* showing that 59 percent of all jobs in Northern Virginia are within a quarter mile of a Metro or VRE station or bus stop.

NVTC's research on transit's economic value and *profiles of businesses that value transit* were highlighted by speakers throughout the VTA conference. Commission staff shared lessons learned from NVTC's *Transit Means Business!* forum with transit providers from other regions. Staff also led two VTA conference sessions – one on transit-oriented development (TOD) in smaller cities and towns and another on technology and urban mobility options.

TOD, popular in many urban areas, is finding a home in smaller jurisdictions, according to panelists Chris Zeilinger, assistant director at the Community Transportation Association of America, and Jimmy Mills, owner of Infrastructure and Highway Solutions. Coordinated by NVTC's Kate Mattice, director of programs and policy, and David Koch, regional planner, the session explored TOD benefits, such as increased tax revenues and sustainability. Panelists shared examples of TOD, including Crossroads Station, a mixed-use development under construction adjacent to the future VRE Spotsylvania Station.

New technology and urban mobility options were the focus of a panel that NVTC Chairman David F. Snyder moderated. Panelists – including Steven Higashide from the TransitCenter, Marlene Connor from Marlene Connor Associates, LLC and Kevin Webb from Conveyal – noted increasing interest, particularly among millennials, in how technology can enhance the passenger experience.

## NVTC Testimony Links Transit Funding to Economic Health

Citing the strong relationship between high-quality transit and the economic vitality of Northern Virginia, David F. Snyder, NVTC chair and vice mayor for the City of Falls Church, called for increased investment in Northern Virginia's regional transit network when he appeared before the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on April 28, 2015. Snyder underscored critical issues for regional transit, including investments in Metro and VRE. He also highlighted NVTC's comments on the VTrans 2040 vision and the HB2 prioritization framework. *Snyder's testimony highlighted key provisions of the draft FY2016-FY-2021 Six-Year Improvement Program.*

## Transportation Planning Board Reports

*WMATA briefs TPB on Connecting Communities*

*Improving Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Select NoVa Metrorail Stations*

*Unfunded Transportation Projects in the Region*

*DC to Richmond (DC2RVA) High Speed Rail Update*

## WMATA News

**FY 2016 Budget Up for Consideration** — The WMATA Board will consider the approval of the FY2016 operating budget and FY2016-2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on Thursday, May 28. The FY2016 operating budget is expected to be adopted without the fare increases or major service changes proposed in the GM/CEO Budget. *Given outstanding questions including several pending with the FTA, the approval of the full FY2016 capital budget is less certain this month.*

**Ridership Up** — In its *third quarter report* on WMATA’s FY2015 operating and capital budgets, the transit agency reported that ridership for the first nine months of FY2015 is up 0.9 percent over FY2014, but is 6.4 percent below the total budgeted trips. Revenues are \$34 million, or 7 percent, below budget for the year. WMATA also reported that it delivered \$442 million, approximately 40 percent of the FY2015 capital budget, through the end of the third quarter.

**FMO** — By July 1, WMATA expects to address the remaining three Corrective Action Plan items in the Federal Transit Administration’s Financial Management Oversight (FMO) report.

**Safety** — The National Transportation Safety Board will hold hearings on June 23 and 24 on the L’Enfant Plaza incident.

## WMATA Initiatives

WMATA board was *briefed on new tool* that estimates ridership impact of development near stations

WMATA to launch “We Have Space” campaign to promote parking at stations with capacity along the Orange Line

WMATA will celebrate one-year anniversary of the Silver Line with customer testimonials.

## Emergency Preparedness

On June 2, NVTC staff will kick off the first phase of a new emergency preparedness initiative. Staff will work with transit providers, transportation planners and emergency managers from NVTC’s six jurisdictions to create local surface transit plans that complement WMATA’s Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan (EREP) and regional emergency response plans. The integration of these plans – to include emergency response planning, training and exercises – is critical to the rapid and reliable deployment of personnel and resources during an emergency.



NVTC staff attended a WMATA EREP assessment at Spring Hill Station.

## Technical Assistance Applications Due June 3

Local jurisdictions working on transportation plans and projects may be eligible for technical assistance from the Transportation Planning Board. Requests for planning technical assistance must be between \$30,000 and \$60,000. *Application materials are available online* and are due by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2015.

WMATA Virginia Ridership April 2015			
	April 2014	April 2015	% Change
<b>Metrorail</b>			
Total	10,044,678	9,917,231	-1.3%
Weekday Average	335,892	348,064	3.6%
<b>Metrobus</b>			
Total	1,873,889	1,849,788	-1.3%
Weekday Average	74,240	73,327	-1.2%
<b>MetroAccess</b>			
Total	28,027	28,116	0.3%

## Federal Support of Metrorail

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After a House committee in late April proposed halving a \$150 million federal contribution to Metrorail, lawmakers restored \$25 million, bringing Metro's total appropriation to \$100 million. U.S. Representatives Don Beyer, Barbara Comstock and Gerry Connolly worked closely with the chair of the House Appropriations Committee to close the \$75-million gap. The committee's spending plan, in addition to cutting funding, sets conditions for disbursement of the reduced funds. To receive PRIIA money, Metro would need to show that it "is making significant progress in eliminating material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, and minor control deficiencies" identified by a federal audit last year that indicated issues with financial management within the transit agency. Since 2008, Congress annually has provided \$150 million for Metro's capital improvement budget under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), which designated \$1.5 billion for the transit agency over 10 years. Maryland, Virginia and the District have matched the \$150 million in PRIIA money each year, contributing \$50 million apiece for capital improvements.

## Federal Transit Funding

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The House and Senate last week voted to extend federal Highway Trust Fund financing for two months. The stopgap measure prevents the shutdown of infrastructure projects across the country, keeping highway and transit funding flowing through the end of July without the need for new revenue. Reauthorization of MAP-21, which governs federal surface transportation programs, is essential to the viability of commuter rail and transit in Northern Virginia.

## VRE News

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Virginia Railway Express' mobile ticketing app, to be demonstrated at NVTC's June 4 meeting, has received positive press and public reaction. The app is available for download from Google Play or iTunes' App Store. VRE is the first transit system in the greater Washington D.C. area to offer riders an app that allows them to buy and use VRE tickets directly from a smartphone.

VRE recently honored Operations Board members who were instrumental in establishing VRE service, were early or long-tenured members, or whose extraordinary efforts contributed to its success. The names of honorees, listed below, will be affixed to the front of VRE locomotives.

- Edwin King, Prince William County, Original Member
- James Hugh Payne Sr., City of Manassas, First Elected Manassas Member
- Bernard Cohen, Virginia House of Delegates, Original Member
- Bob Gibbons, Stafford County, First Elected Stafford Member
- Sally H. Cooper, VDOT, Original Member
- Sharon Bulova, Fairfax County, Original and Continuously Serving Member
- John Jenkins, Prince William County, Long Serving Member
- Hilda Barg, Prince William County, Long Serving Member
- Elaine McConnell, Fairfax County, Long Serving Member

## Envision Route 7 Outreach

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Committed to engaging the public about Envision Route 7 – an examination of transit options for a 13-mile corridor between Tysons Corner and the City of Alexandria – NVTC has scheduled five community meetings. To request NVTC's participation at an event, visit the [Envision Route 7 website](#) or call 844-RT7-STUDY.

### Upcoming Meetings

- Bailey's Crossroads Rotary  
May 29 at 7:30 a.m.
- McLean Citizens Association  
Transportation Committee  
June 9 at 7:30 p.m.
- Bailey's Crossroads Seven  
Corners Redevelopment  
Corporation (BC7RC)  
June 16 at 7:30 p.m.
- Mason District Land Use  
Council  
June 26 at 7:30 p.m.
- Falls Church Chamber  
July 21 at 12 p.m.

## NVTC Welcomes Laurel Hammig

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Laurel Hammig, AICP is NVTC's new transit projects and policy manager. She will focus on NEPP (new electronic payments program) and emergency preparedness.



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