

# Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

*Comments on the  
Draft FY2016-2021 Six-Year Improvement Program  
at the hearing of the Commonwealth Transportation Board*



**VDOT Northern Virginia District Office  
4975 Alliance Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
April 28, 2015  
6:00 p.m.**

## **Northern Virginia Transportation Commission Comments on FY2015-FY2021 Six-Year Improvement Program**

Good evening. I am David Snyder, chairman of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you tonight and share NVTC's regional perspective. But, before doing so, I would like to thank each of you – Secretary Layne, Director Mitchell and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board – for your ongoing commitment to investments in high-quality, high-capacity transit infrastructure and service throughout Northern Virginia.

As you well know, in Northern Virginia transit connects people to jobs and relieves congestion. Each work day in Northern Virginia, transit accounts for a half million trips. Every person who travels to work on VRE, local or commuter bus, or Metro eases the commute a bit for those who drive. By taking almost 20,000 daily trips off the roads, VRE alone frees up one lane of rush-hour traffic on I-66 *and* I-95/395.

Northern Virginians rely on transit to get to work and travel throughout the National Capital Region. A strong transit system is key to our ability – at both the regional and state levels – to compete for and retain businesses. Recently, here and across the country, companies such as Marriot, State Farm, Kaiser Permanente, and Amazon have announced that access to transit is a necessity when considering where to locate their businesses.

Next week, we will release a new report by researchers at George Mason University that details why a strong network of transit service is key to the region's ability to compete globally for new businesses and new jobs. We will discuss this new research on May 8th at NVTCs Forum: *Transit Means Business!* I hope you will join us as we learn from business leaders and researchers how transit is a key ingredient in our economic success. We are excited that Secretary Layne will kick off this discussion.

Northern Virginia's transit network is the product of a strong regional partnership and a commitment from the Commonwealth to provide a range of transportation options to a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse populace. To meet the evolving transportation needs of our communities, it is essential that the CTB implement policies for both project selection and long-range planning that result in sound transit investments in this region and throughout Virginia. Let me highlight five key areas where we must work together to ensure that we have the strong transit system required for continued economic growth.

1. **Continue support of WMATA through PRIIA and other state assistance to localities**

The \$50 million in matching funds that you provide annually to WMATA under PRIIA is essential to maintaining timely service, safe operations and a state of good repair. Those funds, in combination with other state and local assistance, help ensure that Metro can meet its capital and operating expenses.

2. **Fund VRE Track Lease & Support the VRE System Plan**

The five-year funding agreement put in place last year provides much-needed support for track leases with Amtrak, CSX and Norfolk Southern. NVTC and PRTC look forward to working with you to support implementation of Phase I of the VRE system plan including the vital Gainesville-Haymarket extension.

3. **Adopt policy guidance that recognizes transit's contribution to congestion relief and to other outcomes identified in HB2.**

Transit has an essential role to play in relieving congestion, improving accessibility and fostering economic development. Through the adoption of the policy guide for HB2, the CTB has a historic opportunity to establish a rating system that brings transparency to the project selection process and establishes a level playing field for all modes of transportation. We have submitted detailed comments about how to achieve these objectives.

4. **Focus the vision of VTrans2040 to include the movement of people as well as goods**

The vision for a multimodal transportation system that will benefit Virginia's businesses and communities should focus on the movement of both people and goods. Because VTrans2040 will establish the long-range vision and goals for transportation in the Commonwealth, coordination with localities and regional agencies is key.

5. **Identify a stable and reliable source of funding for transit**

The passage of HB 1887 provides \$40 million in transit assistance statewide. It is a first step to filling the funding gap expected in 2018. We ask that the Commonwealth continue to work to identify a stable, reliable and dedicated source of funding going forward.

On behalf of NVTC, I ask that the CTB continue to give top priority to Northern Virginia's transit funding needs. When you consider the growing demand for transit and the record of NVTC jurisdictions in providing quality transit service, it is clear that the region merits your continued support. The economic health of the Commonwealth depends on it.