

**Joint Subcommittee to Study Regional Rapid Transit Networks  
(SJR 122, 2008)**

**Northern Virginia Community College  
Woodbridge, Virginia  
October 1, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Meeting Summary**

The first meeting of the joint subcommittee was called to order by Senator Colgan on October 1, 2008. Senator Barker was unanimously elected Chairman, and Delegate Watts was unanimously elected Vice Chairman. Following opening remarks by Chairman Barker, Mr. Tom Hirst, President of the Rapid Transit Action Committee, and Mr. Bill Vincent, Deputy Director of the Breakthrough Technologies Institute, addressed the Committee.

According to Mr. Hirst, there are two crises facing Virginia: transportation and revenue. Congestion is increasing and the increase in gas prices and other economic concerns are having a big impact on household budgets. Mr. Hirst looked at the historical perspective on Northern Virginia's growth. The job and population centers are moving further apart, creating longer commutes, congestion, and infrastructure needs. The state transportation model was established in the 1930s and requires reexamination. But, according to Mr. Hirst, there are transit opportunities. There are 15 major activity centers in Northern Virginia and connecting these activity centers would provide a cost-effective, efficient transportation option and new opportunities for economic growth at the transit stations.

Mr. Vincent then explained bus rapid transit ("BRT"). BRT is a public transport system that improves travel times, creates a premium image for public transport, and promotes transit-oriented development around stations. BRT's features include traffic avoidance, better service, new technologies, and real-time vehicle tracking and control. Mr. Vincent looked at the "Quick Start" or "BRT Lite" option, which identifies a options that can update existing buses. "Full BRT" or "BRT Heavy" is a more extensive BRT system. Mr. Vincent explained that BRT works because it takes cars off the road and creates a more efficient use of existing lanes.

Mr. Hirst and Mr. Vincent looked at the possible next steps for the longer term. These include: recognizing and redefining the expanded Northern Virginia, establishing a regional rapid transit network to connect existing and emerging activity centers within the region, and improving the link between land use plans and transport capacity.

After further discussion by the committee members, Senator Barker adjourned the meeting. The next meeting of the committee will be held on October 22, 2008.