

# JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY CREATING A REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT NETWORK.

(SJR 122)

<http://dls.virginia.gov/transit.htm>

December 18, 2008

9:30 a.m.

Potomac-Rappahannock Transportation District Headquarters  
Woodbridge, Virginia

## Meeting Summary

Following a call to order by Chairman Barker, the joint subcommittee was addressed jointly by Hon. Paul Milde, member of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Lloyd Robinson, director of the Fredericksburg area Metropolitan Planning Organization on mass transit plans and opportunities for the Fredericksburg/Stafford County area. The presentations and the questions, answers, and discussions that followed centered on several points: the ability to address transportation projects beyond those directly linked to mass transit (especially Virginia Railway Express [VRE]) using the 2 percent motor fuel tax imposed in localities that are members of the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation District (PRTC), the serious need for additional park-and-ride facilities serving commuters along the Interstate Route 95 (I-95) corridor, the likelihood of continued growth of VRE use, and the ongoing question of whether Spotsylvania County will or should join PRTC. It was repeatedly pointed out that Spotsylvania and Stafford counties are, and are likely to continue to be, the fastest growing in Virginia, and that, while there is no shortage of ideas and plans for addressing transportation needs in general, and the potential for using mass transit programs to address those needs, financial resources needed to take productive action have been scarce. It was pointed out that both financial needs and a need to address land-use planning on a regional basis continue to be problematical. One of the most vexing questions involving mass transit continues to be the question of how to get the transit rider from his kitchen table to his mass transit access point.

A second pair of presentations was made by Mr. Michael Setzer, Vice President of Veolia Transportation and Mr. Michael Ake, General Manager for Veolia Transportation. The gentlemen used Veolia mass transit operations in Bogota, Columbia, Rouen, France, York, Ontario [Canada], and Las Vegas, Nevada to support the general assertion the bus rapid transit (BRT) was a "good fit" for Northern Virginia. In many ways, it was repeatedly emphasized, it is the "R" ["Rapid"] that is the crucial component to success of a BRT program, and that a

number of techniques could contribute to bringing this about, among them being, off-board (or at least electronic on-board) fare collections, exclusive use of rights-of-way by BRT vehicles, and traffic management treatments that help give BDT vehicles preferential treatment at traffic signals. In a discussion as to whether BRT was best suited for the I-95 corridor or the U.S. Route 1 (or possibly both), it was pointed out that BRT works better providing transportation to commuters than to persons using the system to meet more general transportation needs, but that it also had more flexibility in meeting general transportation needs than most other forms of mass transit.

Following the presentations, the members engaged in a general discussion, guided by specific suggestions offered by Chairman Barker and by Mr. Tom Hirst (President of the Rapid Transit Action Committee and the first speaker at the Joint Subcommittee's first meeting on October 1), and the members unanimously agreed, a quorum being present, not to present any specific findings or recommendations to the 2009 Session of the General Assembly, but to ask that the present study be continued for a second year in order to concentrate on obtaining and analyzing data that would permit the Joint Subcommittee to build upon the knowledge gained in its first year in order to make concrete and actionable recommendations to the 2010 Session.

Thereupon, the meeting was adjourned.