



**Dulles Corridor Rail Association
Fourth Annual Meeting
December 9, 2002, 5:30 to 7:30 PM**

**Remarks of Delegate Kenneth R. Plum
Chairman, Dulles Corridor Rail Association**

The Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project has had a remarkable year. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released in June. Three public hearings were held in July and a public hearing report was issued in September recommending rail as the locally preferred alternative. Nearly 80 percent of the 2500 who provided comments supported the rail alternative.

The Loudoun County Board endorsed the rail alternative. The Town of Herndon endorsed it, as did Fairfax County. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority endorsed the rail alternative, as has the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). This month, we fully expect the Commonwealth Transportation Board to formally endorse the rail alternative.

With these endorsements of rail alternative at the local and state levels, the major action in the year ahead will shift to the federal arena. Federal Transit Administration approval is needed to go forward with preliminary engineering (PE) for rail – the next phase of the project.

Just this past week, we learned that Congressman Frank Wolf held a summit that was attended by some of the major project stakeholders. It was reported from this closed door meeting that FTA had questions about the full rail alternative. From what we know of how major projects like this get developed, there are numerous meetings of the parties to determine the scope of financially and politically feasible alternative. We believe that questions raised by FTA can be adequately and fully answered as indeed they must be.



There are a number of indisputable facts that support rail in the Dulles Corridor. The fact that the region finds itself significantly short of meeting its air quality emissions targets and is being re-designated as a severe non-attainment area argues in favor of more transit use.

As many point out, it is unthinkable that the international airport of the capital of the United States does not have rail access.

The proposed extension would carry enough ridership to justify building rail. Just visit the Dulles Corridor to see the growth that has occurred and will continue. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recently published an impressive study, "Metropolitan Washington Regional Activity Centers: A Tool for Linking Land Use and Transportation Planning," that found that the corridor centers have a total of 182,000 jobs today and are projected to have a total of 280,000 in the future. The Dulles North and Dulles South areas have 68,000 jobs today and are projected to go to 162,000 in the future.

The number of jobs currently in the Dulles Corridor and Tysons Corner are more than double the 75,000 in the Rosslyn/Ballston corridor which is already served by five Metrorail stops. In 2025, the

Dulles Corridor will still have twice as many jobs as the Rosslyn/Ballston corridor, or about 280,000 jobs to 125,000.

The Washington Dulles International Airport had 20 million passengers in 2000, a figure that is projected to grow to 37 million by 2010 and 65 million by 2020.

In December of next year, the Dulles Center of the National Air and Space Museum will open and expects three to five million visitors per year. Wolf Trap on the rail line attracts 550,000 visitors a year.

Since the project started, both Fairfax and Loudoun Counties have revised their comprehensive plans to encourage transit-oriented development around the Metrorail stations in the corridor. New ridership projections were not included in the draft EIS. The transportation technical report notes that the comprehensive plan changes in Fairfax County alone would increase total ridership from 72,000 to 100,000.

Ridership will also be increased by public policy to encourage transit use. We have seen how employer-subsidized transit passes have increased transit use. The mix of land uses and the design of buildings at the transit station areas can increase ridership.

There will be a tremendous return on investment that will accrue based on increased economic activity and the high quality development that the rail extension will foster. These benefits accrue as increased real estate taxes, income taxes, sales taxes, and personal property taxes. The dollar spent in bringing Metrorail to the corridor is an investment in the future of the corridor and the region.

The Dulles Corridor Rail Transit Project is much more than a transportation project that will take people between destinations. It is a very important mobility option, particularly for older and younger people, immigrants who are used to taking transit, people who cannot afford automobiles and for people who would for a variety of reasons prefer to take transit if the choice were provided

Like previous investments in rail transit before it, this project will be a catalyst for investment in the region, for high quality development that will provide homes for thousands of people and transit-accessible jobs to many more throughout the region. This rail extension will open up the job-rich corridor with its expanding airport and hospitality industry base to the District of Columbia and other residents throughout the region.

We are asking you to work to help get favorable federal support and action on the Dulles Rail project. Clearly the ball is in the court of our Congressional delegation. We will be insistent that local and state authorities provide all the information required by the FTA as they fully expect to do. But we also expect as I know you do as well that the Congressional representatives from Northern Virginia and our Senators from the Commonwealth go to work for the needed federal funding. That's the next stop on the line to making rail happen in the corridor. Help us let our Congressmen know that we are watching and are prepared to help them. We ask no more of Congressmen Wolf, Davis and Moran than they said in their letter in October to Secretary Mineta "asking that the project be expedited." But our message is clear: We expect Dulles Rail Now!