

Dulles Rail Now! Press Conference

Remarks of Delegate Kenneth R. “Ken” Plum,
Chairman Dulles Corridor Rail Association
July 29, 2002 – 11:00 a.m. – Sheraton Reston

I’m delighted to be here today as Chairman of the Board of the Dulles Corridor Rail Association, convener of ***Dulles Rail Now!*** As you can see, we are a diverse group of environmental, civic, health, and business organizations that have often been at odds with one another over regional transportation investments. Today, we have come together united in our vision for the future of the Dulles corridor.



I direct your attention to the joint statement endorsed by the organizations represented here today. I want to note also that this coalition of organizations is a work in progress, and I fully expect that additional organizations will join the list probably even later today.

We see rail transit extending out the Dulles Corridor from East Falls Church on the Orange line to Tysons Corner, Reston, Herndon, Route 28, Washington Dulles International Airport, and Loudoun County. This rail facility will bring mobility and freedom of choice to people of all income levels living in, working in, and visiting the corridor. People living here will find easier access to jobs and cultural and educational facilities. People throughout the region will have access to the job-rich Dulles Corridor, particularly those in blue-collar or hotel/service related jobs whose household incomes may limit car ownership.

Our second major reason for supporting rail is because of the kind of communities it will make possible around the transit station areas and the economic vitality it will support in the region.

Rail transit supports walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. Fairfax County adopted a Comprehensive Plan that provides incentives for residential and retail development in the suburban office areas you have seen that border the Dulles Toll Road along the Dulles Corridor. Loudoun County, likewise, adopted a Comprehensive Plan in July, 2001, that enhances opportunities for transit-oriented development around its two transit station areas.

Market research conducted by the Dulles Corridor Rail Association and the findings of the **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)** for the Dulles Rapid Transit Project indicate that rail is the preferred transit mode by far, roughly two to one by residents (59% say they are likely to use rail versus 34% BRT – **Bus Rapid Transit**) and three to one for employees (49% said they would use rail versus 16% for BRT). The DEIS also shows that rail is the one mode that is able to substantially increase “person throughput,” the number of people who are able to move to various destinations along the corridor and throughout the region.

I note that the recent study effort accepted by the Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has determined that areas served by roadways will only decrease in accessibility, while those served by rail transit, such as the Dulles Corridor, will significantly increase in transit accessibility, a plus for businesses located in the corridor as well as residents living there.

The Dulles Corridor rail project continues to be economically viable irrespective of the downturn in the economy and the tightening of state and local budgets. The financial analysis included in the draft environmental impact statement indicates that the project as far as state and local governments are concerned is essentially self-funded. A combination of federal funds, excess toll revenues, and receipts from a special tax district make the project possible. It is not affected by the recent cutbacks in the state transportation budget; it can go forward regardless of the outcome of the fall sales tax referendum.

For all these reasons, we say collectively, ***Dulles Rail Now!***