

NVTA Alliance Report

A Business-Citizen Coalition Promoting Transportation Solution in Northern Virginia

August 2007

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New Funding Authorized! What's Next?

After more than 20 years, General Assembly-authorized new transportation revenues will soon start to flow. While far short of what's required, state and regional sums contained in HB 3202 are greater than what many thought possible one year ago.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority is presently hiring staff, opening a headquarters and pursuing a bond validation suit to secure court sanction of its ability to use new regional funding sources for debt service.

By November it hopes to present a six-year project investment program.

Will Authority Invest Well?

The extent to which the estimated \$300 million per year in new regional funds make a measurable dent in the region's estimated \$700 million annual shortfall will be determined by whether the Authority has the will to invest them in projects that address regional needs. Speaking at the Authority's July 12, 2007 public hearing, Alliance Chairman David Guernsey said: *"With great resources to spend comes great responsibility to spend them well. Invested well and leveraged with local, state and federal dollars, \$300 million per year in regional funds can make a major difference. However, perfectly proportional distribution among nine jurisdictions may well result in a lot of money being spent with little result. Regional needs are not proportional by jurisdiction."*

TAC Appointments Key

Another indication of the Authority's seriousness of mission will be the qualifications and objectivity of those it appoints to its Technical Advisory Committee. In 2002 legislation creating the Authority (SB 570), the General Assembly specifically called for a Technical Advisory Committee composed of individuals with expertise in "transportation planning, finance, engineering, construction or management."

Recently some have suggested place of residence and representation of specific modes including bicycle and pedestrian be included. However, by definition transportation professionals understand the relationship and benefits of all modes and make judgments regardless of where they live and

In short: the criteria for TAC membership should be the best and the brightest, not geographical, modal or political "balance."

Private Sector Instrumental in Funding

Last fall an Alliance-led coalition of 20 major business organizations declared the Virginia General Assembly's failure to enact new funding "unacceptable" and worked tenaciously to support bipartisan efforts to pass HB 3202 in Richmond.

Upon passage, Coalition members worked aggressively to persuade the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to adopt seven regional funding mechanisms. Virtually all of the more than 30 speakers endorsing the new revenues at the Authority's July 12th hearing attended at the Coalition's behest.

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Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

The New Kid on the Block

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority was formed in July 2002, but without dedicated regional funding has maintained a relatively low profile.

Passage of HB 3202 changed that and on July 12th the Authority exercised its new, General Assembly granted powers by voting to enact seven regional fees and taxes capable of generating more than \$300 million per year.

What You Should Know About the Authority

Member Jurisdictions

2005 Population Estimates for Authority Jurisdictions		
Jurisdiction	Population Estimate	Regional Percentage
Arlington	191,623	9.4%
Fairfax	1,008,764	49.4%
Loudoun	262,726	12.9%
Prince William	363,015	17.8%
Alexandria	132,176	6.5%
Fairfax City	23,075	1.1%
Falls Church	10,942	0.5%
Manassas	36,510	1.8%
Manassas Park	13,369	0.7%
Total	2,042,199	100%

Powers and Responsibilities

- Prepare long-term regional transportation plan.
- Construct or otherwise implement plan elements.
- Acquire land for transportation facilities or services.
- Provide oversight of regional programs.
- Advocate for regional needs/priorities with state and federal government.
- Appoint technical advisory, planning coordination and other committees.

Voting Procedures

Decisions by the Authority require:

- A quorum consisting of a majority of representatives of the nine cities and towns.
- Affirmative vote of two-thirds of the jurisdictions and two-thirds of the jurisdictions that are home to two-thirds of the population embraced by the Authority as determined by the *Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service* at the University of Virginia.

Performance-based Criteria

By law Authority policies and priorities must be guided by criteria such as the ability to:

- Improve travel times
- Reduce delays
- Connect regional activity centers.
- Improve safety and air quality
- Move the most people in the most cost-effective manner

“Ready-to-go”, Multi-Modal Bond Package Approved

As part of its bond validation suit and to demonstrate its intent to move quickly to address unaddressed needs, the Authority has approved a \$102 million bond package of projects that are ready to go to construction in one year or less.

Litigation Pending

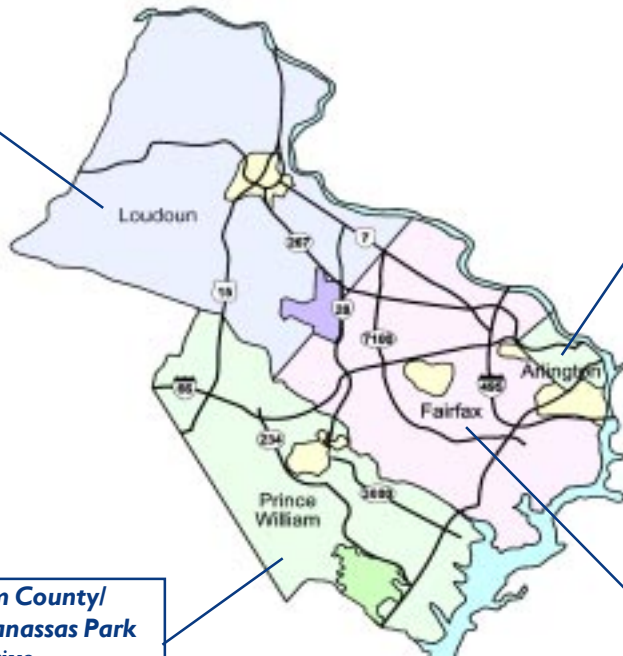
In the great American tradition, the courts will decide what parts of HB 3202 count and what don't.

As this newsletter went to press, law suits related to regional provisions and statewide were filed in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. More law suits are likely to be filed.

Bond Projects by Jurisdiction

Loudoun County

- Battlefield Parkway (Rt 7 to Kincaid Blvd.)
- Bull Run Post Office Road (Cedar Ridge Blvd. to FFX line)
- Loudoun County Parkway (VA 621 Evergreen Mill Road Interchange)
- Pacific Blvd. (Auto Word Circle and Severn Way)
- Purcellville Traffic Calming, Main Street improvements and Park and ride lot
- Village of Aldie Traffic Calming



Alexandria/Arlington/Falls Church

- Crystal City/Potomac Yards transit way
- Lee Highway/Harrison Street intersection
- Old Dominion Blvd.curbs/sidewalks/bike lanes, bus stops
- Sidewalk improvements (Falls Church)
- Wilson Blvd. roadway, sidewalk, bus shelter improvements

Prince William County/ Manassas/Manassas Park

- Manassas Drive Intersections
- Prince William County Parkway (6-lanes Hoadly Rd. to Old Bridge Rd)
- Route 15 Park and Ride Lot
- Route 28 overpass (Manassas)

Fairfax County

- Fairfax County Parkway/ Fair Lakes/Monument Ave. Interchange
- Huntington Metro station escalator canopy
- Metro platform upgrades at W. Falls Church and Vienna stations
- Richmond Highway (US1) pedestrian improvements
- Route 123/Eaton Place multi-modal improvements

Rail

- Signage upgrade at 20 northern Virginia Metro stations.
- Virginia Railway Express locomotives (Local match)

New Funding Sources and Uses

Statewide

Sources

- Abusive drivers fee (8+ demerit points)
- Auto/Light Truck Registration Fee (\$10)
- Heavy Truck Reg. Fee (\$10 plus wgt. Fee)
- Diesel Fuel (1.5-cents)
- Existing Insurance Premiums Taxes (1/3 total)
- Existing Recordation Tax (3 cents)
- General Fund Surplus (2/3rds uncommitted surplus)
- \$3.0 billion bond authorization (10 years at \$300 million/year)

Uses

- Bond Debt Service (Insurance Premiums)
- Transportation Trust Fund (General Fund Surplus)
- Transit Operations (2-cents recordation tax)
- Highway Maintenance (Other taxes/fees)

Regional

Sources

- Grantor's tax (40-cents/\$100)
- Car rental (2%)
- Hotel/motel tax (2%)
- Safety Inspection fee (\$10)
- Initial vehicle registration fee (1%)
- Auto Repairs Sales Tax (5%)
- Regional registration fee (\$10)

Uses

- Localities (40%)
 - Secondary Roads
 - Transit
- Regional (60%)
 - Debt Service
 - \$50 million/year Metro
 - \$25 million/year Virginia
- Railway Express
 - Balance to Transportation Authority for regional roads/transit

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Contact Information

<http://www.thenovaauthority.org/>

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