



September 30, 2013

The Honorable John McGlennon
Chairman
Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee
c/o DRPT
600 East Main Street, Suite #2102
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable John McGlennon:

The Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) adopted a final white paper outlining its recommendations on the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) Performance-Based Operating Assistance Allocation Implementation Plan at its August 22nd meeting.

While the County supports the proposal to distribute new operating funds based on performance, we remain concerned with elements of TSDAC's proposed methodology for allocating funds. Among other data sources, the current proposal relies on system-wide Metrorail trips made by residents of Virginia compact jurisdictions only. This approach does not recognize the substantial Metrorail ridership in Northern Virginia made by non-residents, nor by residents of outlying jurisdictions such as Prince William and Loudoun Counties, and consequently significantly underestimates transit use in our jurisdiction and throughout Northern Virginia.

Many visitors traveling to the region for business or leisure come through Reagan National Airport, which served over 19 million passengers in 2012. Many of these travelers rely on Metrorail to access the airport. According to the 2012 Metrorail ridership survey, 3,150 people travel to and from the Reagan National Airport station on an average weekday. Over half of those riders originated in the District of Columbia and Maryland. An additional 760 passengers accessing the station daily do not reside in any of the WMATA compact jurisdictions. Riders such as these are not accounted for in TSDAC's recommended operating assistance allocation plan. This shortcoming will be further exacerbated by the opening of the Silver Line to Wiehle Avenue and ultimately to Dulles Airport. Both of these additions to the transit system will add significant numbers of people from destinations beyond Virginia to the Metrorail system.

In addition, limiting trips to only those taken by Virginia residents excludes workers traveling to Virginia-based jobs. Approximately 43 percent of workers in Arlington County do not reside in Northern Virginia. Transit facilities and their operations must be sized to accommodate these workers and the methodology for allocating performance-based operating assistance should consider these riders and the additional burden they place on the transit network. Arlington County concurs with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's proposed approach as stated in its September 6th letter to TSDAC, which would include any trip that either originates or ends in Virginia for the purpose of sizing the level of system utilization. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and are grateful to all those that have served on the TSDAC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Leach', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dennis Leach
Deputy Director, DES - Transportation and Development

cc: Members of the Arlington County Board
Members of the Arlington County General Assembly Delegation
Barbara Donnellan, County Manager
Greg Emanuel, Director, Department of Environmental Services
Pat Carroll, Legislative Director
Stephen Del Giudice, Transit Bureau Chief
Jennifer Fioretti, Principal Planner, DES - Transportation Planning
Kelley Coyner, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission