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For Immediate Release
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DCRA applauds Dulles Rail Milestone -- Submission of PE Request to Federal Transit Administration

Reston, VA. Today, Karen Rae, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, announced that the state was submitting a request to enter Preliminary Engineering for the first phase of the Dulles rail project to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

"We applaud this critical next step in the implementation of the Dulles rail project," said Delegate Kenneth R. Plum, Chairman of the Dulles Corridor Rail Association (DCRA). "Virginia is requesting approval to use federal funds to complete PE for the first phase of the project to Wiehle Avenue. By bringing rail through Tysons Corner and into the corridor, the state and its local partners are indicating their commitment to extending rail out to Washington Dulles International Airport and into Loudoun County as soon as possible."

During the past six months, DRPT and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA), the technical managers of the project, have worked closely with FTA to address project funding, ridership and other project issues and have reached agreement on the project's phasing and scope. The PE phase will finalize station location and design, and further refine project costs.

"This is a significant milestone for the project," Delegate Vincent Callahan, DCRA Vice Chairman said, "Access to Tysons Corner, the inner core and Washington, D.C., as well as Reston and Herndon will be dramatically improved." Plum, a Reston resident, noted that Wiehle Avenue is currently the site of two parking facilities, which are served by an extensive express and local feeder bus network. "The project is envisioned to move seamlessly out the corridor," Plum said "so that Wiehle will not be the end of the line for long. Project planners are working to provide direct bus service from Loudoun to the inner core to reduce potential traffic impacts. Additional studies will be undertaken to address access and other transportation and land uses to ensure that the Wiehle station area becomes the kind of walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood envisioned by the Reston community."

Residents, employees, businesses and property owners benefit today from the tremendous investment that has been in transit in the corridor over the last five years: peak period bus headways of six to eight minutes, numerous parking facilities (4,150 spaces) including a 1,700 space-garage at Herndon-Monroe and use of the Dulles Airport Access road, a restricted roadway, for much of the trip. Further bus rapid transit elements are being added to the existing express bus service as endorsed by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to enhance transit use including improvements to the Herndon-Monroe and West Falls Church transit stations and construction soon of a new Reston Town Center Transit Center.

Noting that the tolls on the Dulles Toll Road have not been raised since the opening of the facility in 1984, Plum said, "DCRA has advocated restructuring the tolls to raise revenues to complete the rail component of the multi-modal Dulles corridor. Everyone will benefit from the rail extension whether they personally use it or not. Other members of their households are likely to use rail for some trips. Rail will attract former vehicle drivers and passengers and free up road space for those who want to drive or cannot use transit. We also see opportunities for increasing the person throughput of the corridor by exploring opportunities for high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, which make use of congestion pricing to ensure a free-flowing lane, and incentives for transponder use and carpools or vanpools."

Next steps in the process include completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, securing formal federal approvals, and inclusion of the project in the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation act.