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DCRA Honors Fairfax and Loudoun Counties for Bus Service Success

Tysons Corner, Virginia. More than 125 members and friends of the Dulles Corridor Rail Association (DCRA) attended the organization's Spring Reception on Wednesday June 4. DCRA Chairman Delegate Kenneth R. Plum told the gathering "The Dulles rail project continues to make progress. Last year, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was issued, public hearings were held, and the rail alternative has emerged as the Locally Preferred Alternative. Karen Rae, Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), has joined us today to honor Fairfax and Loudoun County leaders and celebrate the remarkable increase in transit ridership and the implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements that are leading the corridor to rail-readiness."

"We are pleased to recognize Fairfax and Loudoun counties for the significant improvements both counties have made to their express bus systems," Plum said. "Since 1998, average daily transit trips in Fairfax County have grown from 4,800 in 1998 to more than 14,000 today. Loudoun's transit trips have doubled since 1998 to 1,200 per day. When the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Route 5A trips are included, there are 16,000 daily transit trips being made. New parking facilities have been added that provide more than 4,100 spaces. Slip ramps provide access to the restricted lanes on the Dulles Airport Access Road. Major improvements are underway at the West Falls Church transfer facility to increase bus capacity, improve safety, provide prepayment facilities using SmarTrip cards, and make it easier for timed transfers between bus and rail. A new transit center is being designed for Reston Town Center. Fairfax and Loudoun are to be congratulated and we are pleased to present Chairmen Hanley and York and their fellow board members a certificate in recognition of their efforts."

DCRA Vice Chairman Vince Callahan said that "Taken together, past and proposed bus transit improvements have built and will continue to build transit ridership making the Dulles corridor rail-ready! Rail is essential for our economic prosperity and that of the state. With the opening of the Dulles Center of the National Air and Space Museum in December and the decision to remove the widening of I-66 within the Beltway from further study at this time, implementation of rail needs to be accelerated."

Karen Rae said that the project staff from DRPT and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority are advancing the Final EIS, working with the Federal Transit Administration to identify the project scope and phasing for inclusion in the upcoming reauthorization of the surface transportation act, and will be seeking agreement to move forward with preliminary engineering for rail. Rae said, "The improvements that have been made to transit service produce a quality of rapid transit service in the Dulles Corridor that easily fits the definition of Bus Rapid Transit as the term currently is used in most parts of the country." Rae noted that she was pleased to join DCRA in honoring Fairfax and Loudoun for their transit improvements, and she looks forward to working with the community and business leaders to implement the rail and related bus improvements as quickly as possible.

The reception was hosted by Capital One at its new headquarters in Tysons Corner. Capital One is a Fortune 500 financial-services company with 900 employees in Fairfax County and more than 10,000 employees in the Commonwealth of Virginia.