



Dulles Corridor Rail Association Press Release

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DCRA applauds Fairfax Board's Approval of Rail Tax District

The Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project reached a major milestone last night when the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the creation of a tax district for the Phase 1 extension of Metrorail from East Falls Church to Wiehle Avenue in Reston (February 23, 2004, Board Meeting.)

"This is the most important action that could be taken to relieve growing congestion in the Dulles corridor," Dulles Corridor Rail Association (DCRA) Chairman Delegate Kenneth R. Plum said. "The communities along the way in Fairfax, Herndon, and Loudoun have been planning for the rail extension for many years and have put in place incentives to encourage transit-oriented development. More than 40 years ago, experts planning for Washington Dulles International Airport reserved the median in the right-of-way of the Dulles Airport Access Road for the eventual extension of rail. And now, finally with the Board's action, rail is moving from plan to reality. "

The Fairfax County Board approval of the tax district will put in place a funding mechanism to finance the County share (25 percent) of the \$1.5 billion, 11.6-mile rail extension. The state share (25 percent) will be provided from programmed funds and Dulles Toll Road toll revenues. The federal share (50 percent) will be financed from federal transit "New Starts" funding.

The powers of the district will be exercised by a commission consisting of four members of the County Board appointed by the Board and the Chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board or his designee. The Board will also appoint six members to a district advisory board. These members shall own or represent the owners of real property within the district zoned or used for commercial or industrial purposes. Properties that are classified as commercial and industrial uses will be taxed. The petition submitted to the Board provides that the aggregate costs of the Phase 1 Transportation Improvements should not exceed \$400 million. The tax rate for these properties will initially not exceed 22-cents per \$100 of the assessed fair market value of real estate and improvements and taxable leasehold interests to create an initial rate stabilization fund. To pay for the costs of the improvements and maintain appropriate reserves, the rate subsequently is not to exceed 29 cents per \$100 of the tax base.

LEADER (The Landowners Economic Alliance for the Dulles Extension of Rail) chaired by former Senator and Governor Charles Robb and former Governor Linwood Holton facilitated the creation of the tax district petition.

"This is a major statement of commitment and leadership on the part of the private sector that should be welcomed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and indeed all citizens of the Metropolitan region," Plum said.

DCRA Vice Chairman Delegate Vincent Callahan said, "We will not be able to sustain the economic prosperity of Northern Virginia unless we provide rail to serve development in the corridor and the expansion under way at Washington Dulles International Airport."

Next steps to make rail a reality include undertaking preliminary engineering (PE) for rail. The state has requested approval from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to do PE. The current project schedule calls for completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement in Spring 2004 and a Record of Decision from FTA by Summer 2004.