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**COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD RECOMMENDS
IMPROVEMENTS TO DULLES CORRIDOR**
**Board supports decisions by local governments to back Metrorail
extension**

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) today endorsed extending Metrorail from West Falls Church to Route 772 in Loudoun County. The Board action is part of the federally required environmental impact statement process.

The Board's decision was based on strong support by Northern Virginia local governments, which have worked extensively over the last decade to select the best transportation option for the heavily traveled Dulles Corridor.

"Today's action by the CTB is a significant step toward the actual development of an extended Metrorail line," said Transportation Secretary Whittington Clement. "The Board's support is necessary in order to move ahead with the next phases of the project."

Plans call for the rail extension to begin from the Orange Line near West Falls Church, travel through Tysons Corner, out through the Dulles Corridor, continue through the Dulles International Airport, and end at Route 772 near Ashburn in Loudoun County. The selected alternative includes 11 new Metrorail stations, a rail yard site on Dulles Airport property, and the addition of storage tracks and a new yard connection to the existing West Falls Church Rail Yard.

"Among the alternatives considered, Metrorail would provide the highest ridership, the greatest capacity for moving people through the corridor, and the greatest impact on reducing congestion and air pollution," said Kate Hanley, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

"The extension of Metrorail conforms with regional air quality plans and is supported by more businesses, citizens and community groups than any other alternative," said Scott York, Chairman of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. "The Environmental Protection Agency has also encouraged the development of the full Metrorail alternative."

"We have a deep and long-term interest to see that rail – which has been in the plans for 40 years - make a substantial enhancement to transportation," said James Wilding, President and CEO of Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. "Rail will greatly improve access to the

Dulles International Airport. I would like to thank the CTB for keeping the project moving and listening to the stakeholders.”

With the CTB’s approval of the Metrorail alternative, the DRPT will seek Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval to start preliminary engineering for the project. That process may result in a phased approach to implementing rail in the Dulles Corridor. During the preliminary engineering phase, DRPT will develop more detailed cost estimates and financial plan for the project.

“The FTA supports completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to include a locally preferred alternative for the entire project to Dulles,” said Jennifer Dorn, FTA Administrator.

The final environmental impact statement is expected to be completed and submitted to the FTA in spring 2003. The final step in the environmental review process is for the FTA to issue a record of decision, which is expected in summer 2003.