

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION
CREATING A REGIONAL PANEL
TO ADDRESS DEDICATED FUNDING FOR WMATA

WHEREAS, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) is facing substantial ongoing operating and capital shortfalls for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, in 2002 the General Accounting Office (“GAO”) noted that the Metro system is suffering from both aging and growing pains and recognized that WMATA, without a dedicated revenue source to fund its capital needs, is subject to the vagaries of federal, state, and local appropriations processes, and

WHEREAS, in February, 2004 the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (“TPB”) issued a report, *Time to Act*, concluding that substantial additional financial commitment at federal, state, regional, and local levels is necessary to meet WMATA’s capital funding needs; and

WHEREAS, in June 2004, the Brookings Institution report, *Washington Metro: Deficits by Design*, found that WMATA’s unprecedented lack of dedicated funding sources necessitates an over-reliance on annual appropriations of general funds from state and local governments that makes Metro vulnerable to recurring and chronic financial crises, particularly when Metro’s needs tend to parallel other financial needs of the region’s governments; and

WHEREAS, WMATA, is responsible for the fourth largest transit system in America, but has the lowest percentage of dedicated funds of any transit system in the nation; and

WHEREAS, a unique federal, state, and local partnership was formed half a century ago to create Metro as a world-class transit system, reflecting the unique federal, state, and local needs for the National Capital Region; and

WHEREAS, this partnership has invested over \$9.4 Billion in public funds, (valued at \$24 Billion in today’s dollars) to create and maintain this world-class transit system, which investment and which system must be protected; and

WHEREAS, extension of this federal, state, and local partnership and commitment is necessary to address WMATA’s need for long-term stable, predictable, and reliable capital funds; and

WHEREAS, based on the foregoing premises, both the WMATA Board of Directors and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority have called for the creation of a regional “blue ribbon” panel to examine alternatives for a dedicated revenue source, or sources, for WMATA.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments that:

1. There is hereby authorized and established a “Panel on the Analysis of and Potential for Reliable and Adequate Dedicated Revenue Sources for WMATA” (hereinafter the Dedicated Revenue Panel” or the “Panel”).
2. The Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Federal City Council are hereby requested to co-sponsor the functions, activities, and results of the Panel jointly with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.
3. The Panel shall consist of 13 persons with a knowledge of and background in transit, public finance or economics, or political science and with a reputation in the community for public and political credibility. Persons named to the Panel should not be currently serving as an elected official or a senior administrative official of a compact jurisdiction or a local government served by WMATA.
 - a. Nine members representing local governments, transit stakeholders, user populations, or the transportation and public finance interests of the compact jurisdiction: three members representing each of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.
 - b. Three members representing regional governmental and business interests: one representing each of the sponsors.
 - c. A Chairman: with professional or academic credentials in regional transportation, infrastructure, or public finance.
4. The Panel should review all existing research and analyses addressing:
 - a. The current and future financial needs of WMATA.
 - b. Studies or recommendations to date on possible dedicated revenue sources for WMATA.
 - c. Studies on dedicated revenue sources for other transit systems or similar regional services with significant current and future capital requirements.
 - d. Legal authorities for or impediments to creation of dedicated revenue sources in the three compact jurisdictions.

5. On or before December 15, 2004, the Panel should issue a report to the three sponsors and to the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, including
 - a. Underlying financial and legal assumptions which must be addressed in creating possible dedicated revenue sources for WMATA.
 - b. A catalog or narrative list of the various alternative dedicated revenue sources currently or historically used by transit or similar regional services.
 - c. Pro and con analysis of each of these alternative dedicated revenue sources, recognizing that the pros and cons may differ among the three compact jurisdictions.
 - d. A menu of findings, conclusions and recommendations indicating which alternative dedicated revenue sources might be financially and legally workable for each of the compact jurisdictions, recognizing that alternatives may be workable in one jurisdiction but not in others.
6. The Executive Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, in consultation with COG participating jurisdictions, and in conjunction with his counterparts at the Board of Trade and Federal City Council, is authorized to invite and select persons for the Panel consistent with this resolution, and giving due deference to political entities and other stakeholders in the region with an abiding interest in the development and maintenance of an efficient, effective, and financially stable transit system. Further, the sponsors are authorized to invite up to two federal representatives to participate in an ex officio, non-voting basis.
7. The Executive Director, pursuant to existing delegation, is authorized to commit and expend funds to support this effort jointly with co-sponsors without further action of this Board.