

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Draft EIS Comments

State Agency Comments

Need to Service Growth at Dulles Airport

State Comment: With the addition of a fourth runway and other major airport improvements and passenger amenities, Washington Dulles International Airport is poised for significant growth. Forecasts for passenger trips for 2010 have been increased from 30 million 37 million, an increase of more than 20 percent. Forecasts for 2025 have been increased from 55 to 63 million passenger trips. The Dulles Center of the National Air and Space Museum will open in December 2003 and is expected to generate three to five million visitors per year. While these visitors should be able to use transit, the growth of jobs in the hotel and restaurant and service industries will also bring additional employees and visitors to the area who could benefit from rail transit. (0131, 0131-T –6)

Response: *As noted in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, increasing air travel and employment at Dulles Airport are important factors underlying the need for rapid transit improvements in the Dulles corridor. The project goals and objectives outlined in Table 1.6-1 of the Final EIS include more frequent service for trips to Dulles Airport as well as other regional activity centers.*

Need to Service Growth in the Corridor

State Comment: Development in the corridor has proceeded more quickly than forecast. Twice as many jobs were created in the Dulles corridor as in the rest of the region over the last decade, fueling construction of office space. Regional forecasts indicate that the corridor will continue to grow at nearly double the rate of the rest of the region in employment and residents, adding 206,000 people, an increase of 56 percent, and 203,000 jobs, a 71 percent increase in employment levels, over the next 25 years. While vacancy rates and office space are high now, there is no doubt in my mind that this region will see the energy and entrepreneurship of our local business community lead us into new and promising directions that we will see business form and grow. (0131, 0131-T –4)

State Comment: We have problems to solve and they include, among other things, congestion, air quality, growth. But we want to, I would suggest to you, simply not solve these problems for today, we want to solve them for the long-term future. I would say to you that I speak today also in another capacity, in that of being a grandfather. My son Christopher, sitting here on the front row, and I want us to solve the problems not simply for me and for us today, but for Christopher and the other people who will live in our communities in the future. (0131, 0163-T –4)

Response: *As outlined in detail in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, the purpose of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is to provide transit system enhancements that would provide a direct connection to the existing Metrorail system. These enhancements would offer an alternative means of travel for the growing number of residents, employees, and visitors in the Dulles corridor as well as a high quality transit link to the Metrorail system, to improve mobility throughout the region. These proposed improvements will address the issues raised in the comments listed namely improving transportation service, providing an alternative mode of travel to that of the automobile, increasing transit ridership, and supporting current and future population growth and development in the Dulles corridor and region.*

Regional Agency Comments

Need for Connections Between Dulles Airport and the District of Columbia

Regional Comment: Rail between the region's designated international airport and the national capital is long overdue. As other people have already said, Dulles airport is expected to increase passenger trips from 20 million in 2000 to 37 million by 2010, and expects to double the number of employees from 15,000 to 30,000. The Dulles Center of the National Air and Space Museum projects 3 to 5 million visitors per year when it opens in December 2003. (0132, 0132-T –3)

Response: *As noted in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, increasing air travel and employment at Dulles Airport are important factors underlying the need for rapid transit improvements in the Dulles corridor. The project goals and objectives outlined in Table 1.6-1 of the Final EIS include more frequent service for trips to Dulles Airport as well as other regional activity centers.*

Need to Provide Access to Jobs

Regional Comment: Commuters from the urban core and other parts of the region need to be able to reach jobs at Tysons, in the corridor, and at Dulles airport. Commuters from the growing western perimeter of Washington need access to jobs in other parts of the metropolitan area as well as in the corridor and at Tysons, and air travelers need to be able to reach Dulles airport by transit from any part of the metropolitan area. (0132, 0132-T –4)

Response: *As outlined in detail in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, the purpose of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is to provide transit system enhancements that would provide a direct connection to the existing Metrorail system. These enhancements would offer an alternative means of travel for the growing number of residents, employees, and visitors in the Dulles corridor as well as a high quality transit link to the Metrorail system, to improve mobility throughout the region. These proposed improvements will address the issues raised in the comments listed, namely improving transportation service, providing an alternative mode of travel to that of the automobile, increasing transit ridership, and supporting current and future population growth and development in the Dulles corridor and region.*

Need for Design Flexibility to Meet Regional and Local Needs

Regional Comment: The Dulles Corridor has the potential to become one of, if not the most heavily used section of the region's Metro rail system. The potential is conditioned upon:

- a) Effective service from the entire Corridor to Tysons Corner;
- b) Optimization of the transit system with land use, including the future evolution of mixed use air rights developments above stations where such developments would enhance county objectives and where they would be compatible with neighborhood desires;
- c) Careful integration of stations with their surrounding land uses such that the maximum number of people are attracted to transit from the automobile;
- d) Journey times for the commuter, which over the longer distances at least, are comparable or superior to automobile travel during the peak hour times projected for 2025 and beyond;
- e) A service oriented system that meets the requirements of the sophisticated, well-educated denizens of the Dulles Corridor.
- f) A system that is operated as a transportation system designed to attract ridership rather than as a heavily subsidized social service - the normal attitude toward transit.

Requested Action: Provide flexibility in the locally preferred alternative to enable the design team to meet these objectives. (0133, 0405-L –3)

Response: *Comment noted. Your participation in the public hearings and opinion as to which alternatives or alignments you think would best serve the needs of the Dulles corridor and region are important to us and have been considered by decision-makers in the selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).*

Local Agency Comments

Need to Meet Mobility Accessibility Goals

Local Comment: But what is more important here is that unless these issues are addressed successfully, this will not be a project that works for the citizens of this region. We note that in the handout this evening that one of the objectives is to increase mobility and accessibility, and another key objective is to accommodate future increases in transportation demand. We certainly now and in the past and will be in the future are committed to achieving those objectives along with our colleagues and those others who share the region with us. (0165, 0165-T –4)

Local Comment: We are absolutely committed to the objectives of increased mobility and accessibility, we are absolutely committed to mass transit, and we have shown it in every way possible. We do tonight and we will in the future, and we certainly want to accommodate future increases in travel demand more effectively than we have been able to in the past. (0165, 0165-T –9)

Response: *As described in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, goals for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project include improving transportation service, increasing transit ridership, and supporting future development and environmental quality, among others. These goals correspond to many of the objectives cited by the commenters.*

Need to Serve Population and Employment Travel Demand

Local Comment: Mr. Chairman, we stand at a critical moment in Fairfax County's history. The last two decades elected officials, government agencies, and the public have talked about extending rail to and through Tysons Corner on the way to Dulles. While that was taking place, Tysons Corner grew up. Businesses flocked there, creating over 30 million square feet of office space and lots of retail space and bringing in close to 100,000 jobs every day. Millions of people began visiting Tysons Corner Center and Tysons II and it became a retail center for the region. Tysons Corner grew to become a business district that if it was its own city would be larger than the commercial and retail spaces of Baltimore, St. Louis or Miami. All of this economic success, however, has not come without a price. Without mass transportation, all of these workers and visitors are forced to travel, by and large, to Tysons by automobile. Finally, after years of talking, we have reached the point to take some action. We are ready to bring mass transit to Tysons and the Dulles corridor. We must move forward. (0130, 0130-T-1)

Local Comment: The Mid-Corridor of the DC RTP consists largely of Hunter Mill District, from Tysons Corner to Dulles International Airport. This area comprises over 120,000 residents, 12 million square feet of office space and six of the nine proposed rail station locations. Today, many of these residents, employers and employees face inconvenience, diminished quality of life and the risk of economic stability as they await relief from congestion in their communities. While there are concerns that must still be addressed in the Final EIS, it is now time for federal, state and local officials to respond to the transportation needs of this community by supporting the DC RTP. (0437, 0437-E –2)

Local Comment: The current density and size of Tysons Corner justifies the extension of transit now. Predicted growth in jobs and retail space only underscores the urgent need for mass transportation. Equally as important is growth in the number of residents in Tysons Corner that has occurred and will continue to occur as Fairfax County encourages increased transit-oriented residential development pursuant to the 1994 comprehensive plan. It is imperative that mass transit be provided to serve these people and our future residents in Tysons Corner. (0130, 0130-T –3) (0130, 0289-T-3)

Local Comment: Washington, D.C. is one of the only capitals in the industrialized world whose international airport is not served by rail. Demand for a rail link to Dulles will only increase as travel volume is expected to grow to nearly 32 million passengers by 2010. The opening of the new Air and Space Museum next year will attract millions of tourists in that corridor, and if we needed a reminder about how important rail was, the events of September 11th were a wake-up call. When the Federal government decides to close the other airport, National, Reagan Airport, and the spillover has to go to Dulles, we need help from the Federal government and we need it now in getting a rail link to Dulles airport. By 2020, Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor will be the second largest employment cluster in all of metropolitan Washington, next only to the core in Washington, D.C. That's an astounding statistic. If we fail to act now and we don't provide multi-modal transportation alternatives, growth in jobs and population will only make congestion much worse. We cannot afford to be a victim of our own success. We cannot let the high quality of life that's attracted so many of us and the jobs to Fairfax County in the first place be undermined by that traffic congestion. (0130, 0130-T –7)

Local Comment: And yet unless the issues are addressed which we have outlined in our written submission and we have talked about this evening, this will be like a beautiful, attractive island surrounded by a sea of sharks that you can't get to. (0165, 0165-T –5)

Local Comment: By 2020 Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor will be the second largest employment center in the region (second only to downtown D.C.). If we fail to act and provide multi-modal transportation alternatives, growth in jobs and population can only make traffic congestion on our area roadways worse. We cannot afford to be a victim of our own success, we cannot let the high quality of life that attracts so many people and jobs to Fairfax County in the first place be undermined by traffic congestion. (0130, 0289-T –6)

Local Comment: We stand at a pivotal moment in Fairfax County's history. For the last twenty years, elected officials, government agencies, and the public have talked about extending rail through Tysons Corner to Dulles Airport. While that was taking place, Tysons Corner grew up: businesses flocked there creating 30 million square feet of office space and close to 100,000 jobs and more than 20 million people began visiting Tysons Corner Center and Tysons II annually. Tysons Corner grew to become a business district that, if it was its own city, would be larger (in terms of employment) than St. Louis or Miami. All of this success, however, has not come without a price. (0130, 0289-T –1)

Response: *As outlined in detail in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, the purpose of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is to provide transit system enhancements that would provide a direct connection to the existing Metrorail system. These enhancements would offer an alternative means of travel for the growing number of residents, employees, and visitors in the Dulles corridor as well as a high quality transit link to the Metrorail system, to improve mobility throughout the region. These proposed improvements will address the issues raised in the comments listed namely improving transportation service, providing an alternative mode of travel to that of the automobile, increasing transit ridership, and supporting current and future population growth and development in the Dulles corridor and region.*

Need for a “World Class” Transit System

Local Comment: Most importantly, a Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project (DCRTP) should provide a world class, comprehensive transit system, which will allow the Dulles Corridor and its surrounding communities to contribute to the ease of transportation in the capitol region. In addition, the project will connect Dulles Corridor to Dulles International Airport, which is vital to the continued growth and development of the region. (0437, 0437-E –1)

Response: *Comment noted. Your participation in the public hearings and opinion as to which alternatives or alignments you think would best serve the needs of the Dulles corridor and region are important to us and have been considered by decision-makers in the selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).*

Public Comments

Need to Provide Transportation Enhancements and Travel Choices

Public Comment: As the population in Virginia increased, especially in the Northern Virginia area, from new businesses to new homes, very little was done in conjunction with this growth to handle the increase of commuters. The Tysons Corner area is a perfect example of this. As this area grew and expanded onto every available piece of real estate, nothing was done to ease congestion. No thought was given as to how to keep the congestion outside of the Tysons Corner area. Virginia and the businesses should have combined to develop a transit system around the Tysons Corner area and within to keep the vehicles out. At the time all the new corporations were building this would have been a perfect partnership. (0123, 0123-L –1)

Public Comment: So my bottom line in all that is I think that probably we will find the traffic congestion is as good as it's ever going to get in the Northern Virginia region on the whole, and that what we have to do is build for the future capacity and hope that we can stay in terms of transit times as good as we have right now. I think that the physics make that very difficult to just meet that goal. (0258, 0258-T –1)

Public Comment: As a long time commuter in this area, I know that traffic congestion in the DC area, especially the Dulles corridor is always congested. Anything you can do to alleviate this problem would be a great help. (0019, 0019-E –2)

Public Comment: Proposal merely connects several points along the greenway but it fails to establish any transportation means between these points where most of the needs are. (0094, 0094-CC-1)

Public Comment: This area is still dependent on local automobile use and this important need has not been addressed. (0094, 0094-CC-2)

Public Comment: BRT and/or Metro proposals appear to be good and proper by themselves (i.e., between stations) but this is not the problem. The problem is that the present development in the area developed because of and is dependent on the automobile and BRT and Metro will not change this situation. (0094, 0094-CC-3)

Public Comment: What we've got out there now are office parks, single-use office parks, and you can't do a darn thing without getting into your automobile. (0141, 0141-T –2)

Response: *The purpose of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is to improve mobility throughout the region by providing transit system enhancements that would offer an alternative means of travel for the growing number of residents, employees, and visitors in the Dulles corridor, and as a link to the Metrorail system. In a similar way the Northern Virginia 2020 plan, the Statewide Transportation Plan, and county comprehensive plans detail the roadway and transit improvements planned to address the current and future transportation needs in Fairfax and Loudoun counties. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 6 of the Final EIS, these current and future transportation needs have been incorporated into the analysis of both No-Build and two Build Alternatives (Wiehle Avenue Extension and the Full LPA). In addition, the operating plans for the two Build Alternatives include local and feeder bus service.*

Need to Service Dulles Airport

Public Comment: The Dulles rail corridor clearly already serves today as a critical gateway to our Nation's capital. Just 26 miles from downtown Washington, Dulles airport provides daily nonstop service to more than 75 cities and direct service to over 30 foreign countries. Additional cities will be added by 2012. (0153, 0153-T –2)

Response: As noted in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, increasing air travel and employment at Dulles Airport are important factors underlying the need for rapid transit improvements in the Dulles corridor. The project goals and objectives outlined in Table 1.6-1 of the Final EIS include more frequent service for trips to Dulles Airport as well as other regional activity centers.

Need to Support Future Development While Maintaining Environmental and Community Quality

Public Comment: The Coalition for Smarter Growth is a coordinated effort of environmental, civic and transit groups in the Washington, D.C. region. We advocate continued urban revitalization and the focusing of regional growth in transit-oriented centers and other town centers that are mixed use and pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. Analysis demonstrates that this will be the most effective way to reduce regional traffic congestion. One of those analyses is Network of Liveable Communities, a report by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, which found that if we revitalize Washington, D.C. and use transit-oriented development regionwide, we can significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled and regional congestion. (0149, 0180-T -1)

Public Comment: The Greater Washington Board of Trade is the regional chamber of commerce for Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and suburban Maryland, and represents businesses and nonprofits that employ over 40 percent of the private sector workforce in our region. We are committed to the efficient movement of people and goods and the high quality of life that a good transportation system can provide. (0142, 0142-T -1)

Public Comment: The Reston Citizens Association enthusiastically supports the statement of the Dulles Rail Now coalition for all of the many reasons offered in supporting statements presented at the hearings. These include arguments regarding (a) the high capacity, (b) the high ridership, particularly the high "new riders" whose switch to transit yields so much in the way of congestion relief and environmental benefits, (c) the ability to accommodate new growth without excessive congestion, (d) the greater mobility provided to the transit-dependent, and (e) the importance of having the rail link to the nation's capital. (0478, 0484-E -1)

Response: As described in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, goals for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project include improving transportation service, increasing transit ridership, and supporting future development and environmental quality, among others. These goals correspond to many of the objectives cited by the commenters.

Need to Support Future Growth and Travel Needs

Public Comment: Our community, our whole community, needs public transit in the Tysons-Dulles Corridor and we need it now. (0157, 0157-T -1)

Public Comment: We are writing to express interest in the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project which should be of help as part of the solution to the area's traffic congestion. (0483, 0483-E-1)

Public Comment: We have heard people talk about some of the growth statistics, but maybe it's worth mentioning a little bit again how large, how Tysons Corner has grown up and is now a place of 30 million square feet of office space. Even Reston and Herndon combined have as much office space as Tysons Corner does. There's plenty of growth out in the Route 28 area, and we have heard about what's happening at the airports, even despite the terrorists attacks. International travel has increased and we are seeing increasing flights out there at Dulles International Airport. (0141, 0141-T -1)

Public Comment: We face a future that will include many new residents and jobs. Over the next 25 years the Greater Washington region will add 1.4 million people, 32 percent increase, and 1.1 million jobs, 39 percent increase. In the Dulles corridor alone, this increase will amount to an additional 206,000 people, an increase of 56 percent, and 203,000 jobs, a rate of growth nearly twice the rate of the region as a whole. For purposes of perspective, this rate of growth will be equivalent to the corridor accommodating the populations of Arlington and the city of Fairfax and approximately the number of workers who are currently employed in Loudoun, Prince William, and Manassas. At the same time, the council of government also forecasts that vehicle miles traveled, VMT, in our region will increase by 46 percent by 2025, while freeway and arterial lane miles are forecast to increase by only 13 percent, a recipe for further gridlock compounding our current ranking as the Nation's third most congested region. (0142, 0142-T -2)

Public Comment: We face a future that will include many new residents and jobs. Over the next 25 years the Greater Washington region will add 1.4 million people (+32%) and 1.1 million jobs (+39%). In the Dulles corridor alone, this increase will amount to an additional 206,000 people (+56%) and 203,000 jobs (+71%) - a rate of growth nearly twice the rate of the region as a whole. For purposes of perspective, this rate of growth will be equivalent to the corridor accommodating the populations of Arlington and the City of Fairfax and approximately the number of workers who are currently employed in Loudoun, Prince William and Manassas. At the same time, the Council of governments also forecasts that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in our region will increase by 46% by 2025, while freeway and arterial lane miles are forecast to increase by only 13 percent - a recipe for further gridlock compounding our current ranking as the nation's third most congested region. To complicate this problem, our region has severe air quality problems, and we are struggling to meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. As you may know, today was a "code orange" day, indicating poor air quality - one of 12 this year already. In addition, we have already had four "code red" days - those days when air quality is at its worst. If we cannot reach our air quality goals we run the risk of losing billions of federal transportation dollars, while allowing the increased health risks of breathing polluted air. (0142, 0219-M -1)

Public Comment: All of us are being inconvenienced. We are being inconvenienced by unbearable traffic and pollution, inconvenienced by the lack of consideration for pedestrian amenities, and lack of consideration for our residential communities as we continue to increase zoning densities and attempt to expand roads into mega-facilities to service those increased densities. It may have been unintended, but we have planned and zoned our way out of the ability to rely on the automobile. Now the only choices that we have left are the tough choices involved in planning rational alternative transportation systems for the future. And the future is an integrated transportation plan serving the most people most effectively. (0148, 0148-T -7)

Public Comment: After September 11 last year, the Congress of the U.S. saw firsthand the transportation problems that exist in our region when the city of Washington was not able to be timely evacuated in response to the terror attacks. The metro system did work on that day in the midst of traffic gridlock. (0144, 0190-T -1)

Public Comment: Analysis demonstrates that this will be the most effective way to reduce regional traffic congestion. Changes to land use are also the fastest thing we can do to cut vehicle miles traveled and are critical for making transit work. (0149, 0149-T -1)

Public Comment: This is all about vision. Two pieces of vision. What is Fairfax now, and what do we want it to become, and how is the process for what is it going to become being made to happen? (0191, 0191-T -1)

Public Comment: As someone who manages human resources for a company with 110 employees located in Tysons Corner, I can't tell you how many times I hear from our employees about the miserable traffic in our region. While we offer flexible working hours to try and alleviate this problem for our employees, it only helps so much. Many of our employees are located at the Dulles Toll Road and most of them have indicated they would use a rail system if it were available. (0393, 0393-L -2)

Public Comment: Bringing transit to the Dulles corridor from West Falls Church to Loudoun County has long been discussed as a necessary transportation initiative in Northern Virginia. Tysons Corner and the Reston-Herndon-Dulles Airport-Eastern Loudoun corridor are two of the largest employment and residential centers in the country with the Council of Governments forecasting significant additional jobs and residential growth in the corridor through 2025. Currently planned transportation improvements will be unable to accommodate the projected growth (71% increase in jobs and 56% increase in population) without implementation of expanded transit options to compliment the baseline projects. Advocates on behalf o Washington Dulles International Airport have long desired rail access. (0396, 0396-L -2)

Public Comment: The Federation supports the concept of rapid transit service in the Dulles corridor. Rapid transit service has long been needed in this corridor because of the existing and projected communities, non-residential development, and employment centers along and beyond the corridor that would most efficiently be served by transit. This would reduce the disparity between development and supporting transportation infrastructure. (0402, 0402-L -1)

Public Comment: Our organization has held the longstanding position that the lack of adequate mass transit options for commuters living and working in Northern Virginia's employment and population centers represents a key shortfall of the Washington metropolitan region's transportation system. Nowhere is this deficiency more glaring than in Tysons Corner and the Dulles corridor which collectively represent approximately 300,000 residents and 182,000 jobs. With respective population and employment increases of 56 and 71 percent projected over the next 25 years in the business districts fueling Northern Virginia's economic engine, additional strain will be placed on the region's already congested traffic conditions and region's air quality. For this reason, the provision of integrated mass transit service to Tysons Corner and throughout the length of the Dulles corridor in addition to a baseline roadway and transit network improvements is necessary to sustain the Washington metropolitan region's economic vitality and to facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region. (0233, 0426-M -37)

Public Comment: An integrated Metrorail system is critical to the quality of life in the Dulles corridor as it would limit future congestion on our already overcrowded highways. It would further allow our business community to develop with increased flexibility and reliability of transportation for the work force. Shifting vehicle traffic to public transportation will also have a very positive effect on air quality. (0027, 0027-L -3)

Public Comment: I agree completely that something has to be done about the traffic situation in the Tysons Corner area and I do believe we need more public transportation including a means for getting to Dulles International Airport, expeditiously. (0085, 0085-L -1)

Public Comment: Whether we like it or not this area is growing beyond all previous plans or expectations. There are way too many cars on our roads. People are looking for alternate ways to travel from point to point. Roads have been widened taking homes and trees as the expansion occurs without regard for the environment. (0098, 0098-E -1)

Public Comment: The parking at Tysons Corner and Dulles Airport is often difficult and expensive. The bus service is not that great. It is practically impossible to walk to most public places because of the great distances. Some form of transportation is needed to make this area accessible to everyone including the workers who cannot afford to live close to their jobs and do not even have a car. (0098, 0098-E -3)

Public Comment: A diversified transportation is the only way to relieve congestion on the roads, an increase everyone's quality of life. It is time America caught up with the rest of the world in this regard. (0103, 0103-E -3)

Public Comment: I think something has to be done to alleviate congestion and encourage the use of public transportation to get cars off the road. But I don't know if the current plans are the answers. (0011, 0011-E -2)

Public Comment: Finally, the effort to bring the 2012 Olympics to the Metropolitan area, the opening of the Air-Space Museum Annex at Dulles, and the need to increase the ways of improving dispersion of the population in case of further attacks on the regional core are collateral benefits for completing the Rail to Dulles Project as soon as possible, but they are not integral to the need for rail. Rail is needed to address the needs of the citizens to get from here to there without wasting inordinate amounts of time sitting in a SOV consuming non-renewable resources and aggravating air quality. (0208, 0208-M –7)

Public Comment: Since I don't think -- since the commute times will be so long on this rail or bus system, I don't think it will benefit me from a time standpoint. I do think it's necessary to have some sort of transportation system to the Dulles area, though. (0262, 0262-T –3)

Public Comment: This area desperately needs more public transit, to improve the air we breathe, to get drunk drivers off the road, to get us to work in a stress-free, productive way - the reasons go on and on. (0232, 0232-L –1)

Response: As outlined in detail in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, the purpose of the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is to provide transit system enhancements that would provide a direct connection to the existing Metrorail system. These enhancements would offer an alternative means of travel for the growing number of residents, employees, and visitors in the Dulles corridor as well as a high quality transit link to the Metrorail system, to improve mobility throughout the region. These proposed improvements will address the issues raised in the comments listed namely improving transportation service, providing an alternative mode of travel to that of the automobile, increasing transit ridership, and supporting current and future population growth and development in the Dulles corridor and region.

Potential Need to Service 2012 Olympic Games

Public Comment: We urge that all steps be taken to expedite a decision as soon as possible. The greater Washington area is a candidate for the 2012 Olympic Games, an event that could showcase the area as a premier place to live and work. Should the decision be made to move ahead with a rail system that would be fully installed prior to the 2012 games, our bid would be greatly enhanced. Even if the area is selected after the rail decision is made, a fully functional system by the time the Olympics arrive would provide an efficient mode of transportation that would be both expected and appreciated by the world community as well as our own area residents. (0027, 0027-L –4)

Public Comment: And in 2012, thousands upon thousands of the arrivals will be international visitors, spectators, athletes and members of the worldwide Olympic family. Easy rail access from major airports is a hallmark of most international capitals. As perhaps the world's greatest capital, Washington, D.C. can provide no less direct service and access to its multiple Olympic venues and visitor attractions, especially if our bid is to win the 2012 Olympic host city designation to be awarded in 2005, only a few years from now. (0153, 0153-T –3)

Response: With the region no longer in contention to host the 2012 Olympic Games, Olympic travel demand was not a factor in determination of the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Public Comment: And in 2012, thousands upon thousands of the arrivals will be international visitors, spectators, athletes and members of the worldwide Olympic family. Easy rail access from major airports is a hallmark of most international capitals. As perhaps the world's greatest capital, Washington, D.C. can provide no less direct service and access to its multiple Olympic venues and visitor attractions, especially if our bid is to win the 2012 Olympic host city designation to be awarded in 2005, only a few years from now. (0153, 0153-T –3)

Response: With the region no longer in contention to host the 2012 Olympic Games, Olympic travel demand was not a factor in determination of the Locally Preferred Alternative.

Importance of Seamless Service and Effects of Modal Transfers

Public Comment: It is occasionally cited that one of the main advantages offered by Metro was that it would offer seamless service to/from Dulles Airport and that changing modes at Falls Church, such as to monorail, would decrease ridership. This assumption is questionable and particularly so if a lower system cost structure permits a meaningful lower fare. Structure and elimination or reduction of the need for a subsidy. I have ridden Metro for years and frequently changed modes - Yellow Line to Blue, Blue to Orange or Red, etc. This never kept me or my colleagues from using our fine Metro system. (0266, 0390-M -2)

Response: *As described in Chapter 6 of the Final EIS, the number of transfers required to make a trip from an origin to a destination is one of the most important determinants of passenger convenience and comfort. Research shows that there are several reasons transfers decrease the attractiveness of a transit service. The added time associated with transfers increases a passenger's overall trip time. Also, there is a discomfort associated with uncertainty about the arrival of the vehicle being transferred to, specifically whether the vehicle will be early (and therefore missed by on-time arriving passengers), late, or will arrive at all.*

Intra-system transfers (like transferring from one Metrorail line to another) make much of the burden typically associated with a transfer between two modes less onerous, but still require moving between platforms and does not provide the convenience of a one-seat ride. Therefore, this type of transfer would still affect ridership levels.

As described in Chapter 8, it is assumed in the Final EIS that the two Build Alternatives of Wiehle Avenue Extension and Full LPA would use the same fare structure as the existing Metrorail system and that this fare would be adjusted for inflation over time. Currently the maximum fare on the Metrorail system is \$3.90. For trips between most parts of the corridor and Arlington and the core, the maximum fare would apply. In addition, parking fees would apply at the Project's Metrorail stations.

Need for Transit Service to Support Local Conditions

Public Comment: Fortunately, the Dulles corridor transit project offers us a very important option in linking our land use and transportation needs. Transit in the Dulles corridor is one of the board of trade's top transportation priorities. (0142, 0142-T -5), (0142, 0219-M -2)

Public Comment: Boston Properties is the owner and developer of the 162-acre Broad Run Technology Park located between the AOL Time Warner and MCI WorldCom campuses. We have completed one of the nine master planned buildings and the Park has an office development capacity of over one million square feet. In addition, Boston Properties has completed over three million square feet of development in the Northern Virginia Technology Corridor and has over 15 million square feet either completed or planned in the Washington Metropolitan area. Given this magnitude of office development in the Northern Virginia area, we are highly supportive of the efforts to bring rapid transit to the Dulles corridor. (0003, 0003-L -1)

Public Comment: I believe that public transportation is the only way to go to deal with the increased population in Fairfax County. Having lived in Europe for nearly 9 years, I have experienced the advantages of public transportation. The time is right for mass transit along the Dulles Corridor. The population density is high enough to warrant public transportation. I also believe that the benefits mentioned below clearly outweigh the costs:

- § Reduced emissions - leads to reduced ozone- better quality of life.
- § Reduced traffic jams - better quality of life.
- § Reduced commuting times - higher productivity & better quality of life.
- § Alternative means of transport for the disabled/elderly.

Please do consider implementing this project sooner rather than later. (0077, 0077-CC-1)

Public Comment: The National Capital Area League of Women Voters was founded to provide a forum for study and action on transportation policy in the Washington Metropolitan Area. We were among the earliest and most enthusiastic supporters for building a mass transit system. We have many positions that favor expansion of this system, addressing issues of access, safety, social equity, environmental quality, sound land use planning, regional governance, and public participation in decision-making. (0206, 0206-M –1)

Public Comment: Very happy to see public transit coming to Loudoun. I am a big supporter as someone who works in DC. The sooner the better. Please let me know if I can be involved. (0272, 0272-I –1)

Public Comment: Let me be very specific. I support the alternate transportation being considered in this process. However, we have only one opportunity to get this - get it right. Whether it is rapid rail or bus rapid transit, it needs to work for the greatest number of people. We must not get - we must get, we the people, out of our automobiles and onto the integrated public transportation system. (0148, 0250-T –1)

Public Comment: I endorse the establishment of alternative means of transportation to include rapid rail and/or bus rapid transit serving the Dulles Corridor and airport communities. Either seems to be a quite desirable capability, and now with the gridlock an absolute necessity. But it is only a good thing if it can be built and is actually used. (0148, 0148-T –1)

Public Comment: The following are some of our specific concerns:

- § 2010 is a long time to wait for service.
- § We may run out of money before we get there.
- § Too much State and County funding is coming from the Corridor itself, since the benefits are shared throughout the region.
- § The General Plans do little to help knit together north and south Reston.
- § Increased densities may appear before Metrorail service and mitigation plans are implemented.
- § Pedestrian and bicycle access is not yet adequately addressed. (0210, 0210-M –3)

Public Comment: We just have suffered through the dot com bust where we had the dot com bubble, and of course what happened during the dot com bubble is a lot of people invested a lot of money, ignored profitability and fundamentals, and I would suggest that as we march forward with this type of project, because I do think we need mass transportation in the Dulles corridor, and we need to do it the most cost-effective way possible, but we ought to get the fundamentals right. (0136, 0168-T –1)

Public Comment: The Northern Virginia transportation line strongly supports a balanced regional network that includes improved Dulles corridor transit. The issue is what priorities do the most to reduce congestion and when these investments should be made. (0446, 0146-T –2)

Public Comment: Recognizes the concerns of many people regarding growth in the area. Fully supports preserving open spaces and historical sites, however the growth is inevitable, so responsible planning is necessary for the future. Believes that the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project is an important part of an integrated growth strategy and should be pursued. (0036, 1-01)

Response: *Comment noted. Your participation in the public hearings and opinion as to which alternatives or alignments you think would best serve the needs of the Dulles corridor and region are important to us and have been considered by decision-makers in the selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).*

Relationship to Other Transportation Studies/Projects

Public Comment: That is particularly important, as I will note for the record. There is an ongoing beltway DEIS that has other impacts on the mall property that we would encourage WMATA and the Commonwealth to consider as well. These projects are not in isolation but in fact work together. (0143, 0143-T –6)

Response: *The Capital Beltway Improvements Draft EIS presents several alternatives that are under consideration. At the time of the Final EIS, a preferred alternative has not been determined. If a preferred alternative had been selected in time for incorporation into the Final EIS, the exact interactions with the mall would have been included in the secondary and cumulative effects analysis in Chapter 9 of the Final EIS. The Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project, now in preliminary engineering, is being coordinated with the Virginia Department of Transportation, which is conducting the Capital Beltway study, in order to ensure that the two projects will accommodate the each other and that all impacts are considered.*

Public Comment: At the Tyson station areas, there is a need for refinement of station locations while considering the eventual interconnection with a Purple Line linked to Metro at Dunn Loring and points in Maryland. (0158, 0475-L –9)

Response: *Connections to the future transit improvements cited in this comment were considered under the Metrorail Alternative, Alignment T3. This alignment was evaluated in technical memoranda prepared during Initial and Intermediate screening. The plans for these future transit improvements are not at a level that would make it appropriate or feasible to conduct detailed coordination efforts related to those improvements. Given these findings, Alignment T3 was not carried forward. Now that the Metrorail Build Alternative has been selected as the LPA, DRPT and WMATA will continue to fully cooperate and participate with the coordination efforts of the groups studying these future transit improvements.*

Project Purpose, Goals, and Outcomes

Public Comment: That DEIS goals do not include traffic congestion reduction. In fact, the DEIS says that no transit alternative considered reduces corridor or regional congestion. (0446, 0218-M –4)

Public Comment: What is the purpose of rail to Dulles? If to reduce traffic congestion, the present study shows that it will increase it. Why? (0189, 0448-E –9)

Public Comment: That the goals do not include improved corridor vehicular travel times. In fact the DEIS says that travel times for most corridor travelers are not improved by this project. (0446, 0218-M –5)

Public Comment: Other DEIS items the alliance finds of concern are, one, that the goals do not include traffic congestion reduction. In fact, the DEIS says that no transit alternatives considered reduces corridor or regional congestion; that the goals do not include improved corridor vehicular travel times. In fact, the study says that travel times for most corridor travelers are not improved by this project. (0446, 0146-T –5)

Public Comment: No one seriously contends that even after spending all this money traffic congestion will be less than it is now. Why don't we spend just a fraction of this money in ways that we know will reduce congestion? (0162, 0162-T –4)

Response: As identified in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, the goals for the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project include improving transportation service and increasing transit ridership, among others. One of the project purposes is to provide an alternative to auto travel to help meet increases in travel demand. However, the commenter is correct in stating that the two Build Alternatives of the Final EIS would not reduce traffic on most regional roadways. As shown in Section 6.2.3, only volumes on the DIAAH decrease enough to result in an improved level of service. The Metrorail extension, in combination with the planned transit-oriented urban form, will help to increase overall mobility in the corridor, the counties, and the region. Furthermore, it will increase overall transportation capacity and person throughput in the corridor.

Consideration of Regional Context

Public Comment: Achieving higher transit ridership, creating additional transit capacity and constructing stations around which to focus future densities are laudable goals. However, Dulles transit is a huge, complex issue that also must be looked at in a larger regional context. Something the Draft Environmental Impact Document (DEIS) doesn't do. (0446, 0218-M -2) (0446, 0146-T-3)

Response: Though many of the effects considered in the Final EIS are related to corridor-level impacts, the evaluation also includes anticipated impacts on regional transit ridership, roadways, and air quality. Other highway and transit improvements that would address the existing and potential future deficiencies in Northern Virginia's transportation system are recommended in the Northern Virginia 2020 Plan, the Statewide Transportation Plan, and local comprehensive plans. This program of improvements is being evaluated and developed by VDOT, DRPT, and others.

Effectiveness in Addressing Suburban Transportation Needs

Public Comment: States that the selected Locally Preferred Alternative is based on an incomplete and flawed analysis, and that it does not solve the suburban transportation problem that it is supposed to address. (0294, 1-01)

Response: The Project Team agrees that the selected Locally Preferred Alternative will not solve the congestion problems of the region; however, transit service in the Dulles corridor would provide an alternative to the automobile, while also increasing the overall transit capacity of the corridor and region.

Diversity of Potential Benefits

Public Comment: It appears that many of the comments were from people who stand to benefit directly from building a rail system or developing along the rail line. There appeared to be very few comments from people who were actually interested in using transit.(0294, 1-02)

Response: Comments on the Final EIS and Public Hearings Report were received from a variety of stakeholders representing the views of commuters, local residents, business owners, property owners, and local, state, and federal agencies.

Need for Facilities to Adequately Support Anticipated Demand

Public Comment: I do have 2 major concerns: 1. Parking and Access: Will I have to pay to use the Dulles Toll Road to get to the new Dulles Metro stop? Will there be enough parking? Lots of folk who would normally use Vienna, like me, would turn to the Dulles stop. The WMATA should have a good idea of what the rider numbers are and how they "normally" change over time before plans are laid and carried out. (0108, 0108-E -2)

Response: All stations will be accessible from the local street network so riders will not have to use the Dulles Toll Road to access stations. Parking at each station was designed and sized based on projected demand for spaces, site constraints, cost, and local land use plans. Consultation with local government was also an integral part of the sizing of parking facilities. The parking capacity identified in the Final EIS (see Table 6.3-3, page 6-39) and supporting documents such as General Plans – Facilities reflect this analysis and design process.

B. Supplemental Draft EIS Comments

Local Agency Comments

Relationships to Other Planning and Transportation Initiatives

Local Comment: While we understand the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit System is much further ahead of the Beltway Corridor rapid transit system, there is still a need and necessity to consider to the fullest extent possible how and where a Beltway Corridor rapid transit system will interface with the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit System. Further, is it our understanding that the Commonwealth of Virginia recently examined potential Beltway Corridors and has additional information that may prove useful in the Dulles Corridor analysis that we are requesting. It is very unlikely that another public opportunity for planning system integration will occur in the Tysons Corner area.

What we are seeking is a graphical depiction of the general connection of the Beltway Corridor to the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit System, so that in future years the figure in the Final EIS is a reminder and starting point for the facilities planning of that transfer facility. (0079, 1-01)

Response: Montgomery County has clarified its request that the Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit Project recognize to the extent possible the interface between the Project and a future Beltway rapid transit system. In response, the Project Team has inserted a figure on page 1-15 of the Final EIS to serve as a reminder and starting point for future planning.

Public Comments

Public Comment: The project team completely ignored the fact that the COG Board approved Version 6.3 in February '03, well in advance of the beginning of the SDEIS on LPA 1. (See attached again). The statement in the hearing report that Version 6.3 was not available until October '03 is false. Is the project team trying to avoid using 6.3 because the Loudoun Comp plan has fewer households that would feed into the rail system than the pre-2001 plan? Lastly, are you now saying that you are NOT going to use the official COG Version 2 travel demand forecasting model in the final EIS, as stated on page 94 of the SDEIS hearing report, despite the statement in the supplemental hearing report on the EIS: "If relevant, Version 2 may be utilized during the final EIS." Are you now saying Version 2 has no relevance to Dulles Rail? (0016, 1-01)

Response: As described in the Supplemental Draft EIS Public Hearings Report (February 2004) the Round 6.3 land use projections were officially adopted by the MWCOG Board on October 8, 2003 and were not available for the Supplemental Draft EIS. More importantly, the purpose of the Supplemental Draft EIS is to provide additional opportunities for the public and agencies to comment on refinements that have been made to the LPA since the publication of the Draft EIS public hearings report. As such, the analysis documented in the Supplemental Draft EIS must use assumptions that are consistent with those used in the Draft EIS, as per CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA, parts 1500-1508. The Round 6.3 land use forecasts have been used in the analyses of the Final EIS.