Resolution No.:	15-888
Introduced:	February 1, 2005
Adopted:	February 8, 2005

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Councilmembers Nancy Floreen and Mike Knapp

SUBJECT: Support for the Development of a Long Range Funding Plan for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and for Increasing the Federal Government's Contribution to WMATA

Background

1. The Panel on Metro Funding was formed on September 8, 2004 by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Federal City Council to develop options for additional funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The thirteen-member Panel, operating under a charter from the Board of Directors of COG, was tasked to research funding options for the Washington region's major public transit system and to report to the COG Board and the elected officials Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

2. The project was undertaken as a result of the serious projected operating and capital funding shortfalls WMATA will experience throughout the Metrorail and Metrobus system over the next decade. The estimated shortfall between 2007 and 2015 is $2.4 billion, predominantly in capital investment. Because funding gaps will increase rapidly after 2007, timely attention to the report is critical. The projected shortfall is over and above the Metro Matters funding recently approved by the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

3. The Panel's final report, released on January 6, 2005, reviewed the underlying financial and legal issues, offered potential dedicated revenue sources, and analyzed the legal and financial feasibility of these revenue options. The report's major finding was that insufficient resources are available for renewal of the aging components of the system and for adding system capacity to meet growing demands, i.e., purchasing additional train cars or making improvements in existing stations.

4. On January 12, 2005, the COG Board of Directors adopted a resolution accepting the Report and encouraging the member jurisdictions to work towards finding a solution to WMATA's funding shortfall.

5. Because the Metro system is a critical segment of the entire transportation system in the area, its continuation is vital. WMATA serves 1.1 million customer trips a day on rail and bus. During peak travel periods, 18 % of all trips and 42 % of all trips to the region's core are made on transit. Metro reduces congestion on the region's highways, saves drivers approximately 35 hours in travel time annually, and avoids using 75 million gallons of gas per year.

6. WMATA received the smallest amount of dedicated funds (1.6%) of any transit agency in the United States. The average, nationwide, is 34.7%.

7. Metro's funding comes from passenger revenue (fares and parking fees), state and local contributions, non-passenger revenue (advertisements and joint development) and federal appropriations.

8. Federal funding amounts to only 2% of the budget and is limited to capitalized maintenance. However, of the 83 Metrorail stations in the system, 35 directly serve federal facilities, and 47% of Metro's peak period riders are federal employees. Metro also plays a significant role in all federal homeland security planning for the Washington region.

9. More than 12.5% of Maryland users of the Metrorail system come from areas outside Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The County Council strongly encourages the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia to develop a long-range funding plan for WMATA.

The Council strongly recommends that federal funding be significantly increased for WMATA's capital and operating budget needs.

The Council encourages the Governor of Maryland to ensure the proposal for a funding plan includes the entire state.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Elda M. Dodson

Elda M. Dodson, CMC
Acting Clerk of the Council