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## Dulles project waits on state for rail timeline

By Gary Emerling

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Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project officials expect to know by next week when construction can begin on the rail line, depending on whether Virginia officials decide to build part of the line above or under the ground.

"When the governor announces the final plan, we'll have a much more concise time for when construction will start," said Jennifer D. Aument, a spokeswoman for the project.

Officials had hoped to begin construction by December on the project, a 23-mile track extension from near Falls Church to eastern Loudoun County. But a team of engineers is considering placing about four miles of the rail underground through Tysons Corner, instead of on a mostly elevated track.

The minor delay, which has caused the \$4 billion project to lose \$1 million a week since July 1, likely will keep crews from starting construction until the first half of next year.

Officials discussed the delay and other aspects of the project Friday with a group of adult students from the Richmond-based nonprofit Lead Virginia. The group was in the area as part of a three-day course to study economic, transportation and other important issues affecting the region.

"It prepares these leaders to really understand what these issues are," said Susan Timmons, president and chief executive officer of Lead Virginia. "They can take that knowledge and have a new type of civil engagement."

The students -- most of whom are senior-level executives and community business leaders from across the state -- also heard from Dulles project Director Charles S. "Sam" Carnaggio and John Milliken, a former Virginia secretary of transportation, about the rail project, which is intended to alleviate the area's traffic congestion and boost the region's economy.

Officials expect the entire project to be finished by 2015.

"Everybody gripes about the transportation issues in Northern Virginia," Mr. Milliken told about 40 students in attendance. "This project is intended to be at least a piece of that solution."

The Northern Virginia tour was the fourth of seven visits to different regions of the state for the Lead Virginia course. The group also visited George Mason University; heard from area politicians such as Gerald E. Connolly, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; and examined leadership case studies on housing and immigration in the area.

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James D. Campbell, executive director of the Virginia Association of Counties and a participant in Lead Virginia, said the Northern Virginia visit gave the group more appreciation of the local economy and more understanding of regional issues.

"The transportation issues that Northern Virginia faces can bring difficulties in continuing [its] economic growth," said Mr. Campbell, 57, of Richmond. "By recognizing that, the folks [in Lead Virginia] from other parts of the state will recognize the need to try to find state support."

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## State Leadership Group Gets Insiders' Perspective on N.Va. Issues

by **BRIAN TROMPETER, Staff Writer**

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It's one thing to base impressions of people and places on news reports or personal intuition, but quite another to experience them in person.

Karen Cameron, executive director of the Central Virginia Health Planning Agency in Richmond, said she's learned much while touring Northern Virginia with the nonprofit Lead Virginia group.

"There have been thoughtful approaches to transportation here," Cameron said. "I've been impressed with the local jurisdictional cooperation. Jurisdictional politics play a much greater role in Richmond."

Lead Virginia, a Richmond-based nonprofit charitable and educational organization, was founded in 2005 to encourage networking and understanding among statewide leaders. The group's 42-member Class of 2006 will tour seven regions of Virginia this year.



The Center for Innovative Technology in Herndon was one stop for the Lead Virginia group on its tour of Northern Virginia. (Photo by Brian Trompeter)

Susan Timmons, president of Lead Virginia, said the organization has highlighted common interests between disparate groups and had some successes.

"We've seen people bring that new perspective to state boards and handle issues in new ways in their localities," she said. "We're all in the same boat."

Lead Virginia participants, on their fourth tour this year, met recently with some of the region's top business and political leaders.

On Thursday, July 20, participants traveled to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and heard presentations by Arlington County Board Vice Chairman Paul Ferguson and Alexandria Mayor William Euille.

Later, they heard a keynote address from U.S. Rep. Tom Davis (R-11th).

Participants on July 21 traveled to the inverted-trapezoid-shaped Center for Innovative Technology building in Herndon, where they learned about technology initiatives in Northern Virginia.

Tom Weithman, the center's vice president for entrepreneurship and investment services, outlined the organization's program for supporting fledgling technology companies.

The center supports start-up technology companies earlier than some organizations do and lends them money over a 12- to 18-month period at 8 percent interest, Weithman said.

Bobbie Kilberg, the center's president, urged participants from other regions in the state to support transportation efforts in Northern Virginia.

"We really need to convince southside Virginia legislators that if we don't do something about transportation up here, it will affect economies up here and down there," she said.

Carl Grivner, chief executive officer of XO Communications in Reston, told the audience that his company is concerned about traffic congestion and affordable work-force housing in Northern Virginia.

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority president and CEO James Bennett, who outlined the economic importance of Reagan National and Washington Dulles International airports, voiced similar concerns.

"It's difficult to recruit people from outside the region," said Bennett, who added that only about 18,360 of the 28,570 employees at those two airports live in Virginia.

Participants later received briefings from Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerald Connolly and Prince William Board of County Supervisors Chairman Sean Connaughton, as well as from Scott McCaffrey, managing editor of the Sun Gazette chain. The Loudoun County government was invited to send a speaker, but did not do so.

Rex Hammond of the Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce said that his region's transportation concerns center around access and economic development, while Northern Virginia's focus more on congestion and growth.

"Being located next to one of the world's largest economic engines, Northern Virginia enjoys different benefits and is faced with a variety of vexing challenges," he said.

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## Lead Virginia's business execs get a lesson in PW issues

By: Dan Roem  
07/27/2006

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### "In terms of transportation, something's got to happen."

It did not take Susan Timmons long to realize the impact transportation woes have on Northern Virginia.

The CEO and president of Lead Virginia took about 40 Virginia business and government representatives through Tyson's Corner on July 21. It was part of the group's three-day tour throughout Northern Virginia, to learn about the status of the region's economy, infrastructure and educational system.

On July 20, Rep. Tom Davis (R-11th) and mayors from Falls Church and Alexandria were among the speakers addressing the concerns of "inside-the-Beltway" residents, students and businesses.

The following day, Prince William Board of County Supervisors Chairman Sean Connaughton gave the Lead Virginia class a glimpse of life "outside the Beltway," speaking at a dinner at The Tower Club in Tyson's Corner.

"My county right now (has a population) around 380,000," Connaughton said. "Just to put that in perspective, it was 280,000 in 2000." Many in the audience simultaneously let out a gasp followed by several "wows."

"Our school system in just that short time period added, I think, almost 18,000 students," Connaughton continued. "So it's been a challenge.

Once a month for seven months, the Lead Virginia class of 2006 travels to different regions of state, learning about everything from the Norfolk Port Authority to "brain-drain" in Appalachia and transportation in Northern Virginia.

Now in its second year, Lead Virginia is in month four of its statewide tour. The purpose is to bring business executives together with civic leaders to give both a better understanding of business and community issues in the state.

Stuart Mendelsohn, one of the group's regional planners for Northern Virginia, said of the 2006 class, "We want to give the a sense of 'What is Northern Virginia?'"

"We're very proud of the fact that we're the economic engine for this state," Mendelsohn went on. "We want them to appreciate it. We want them to appreciate the issues we face because we need the state's help to solve a lot them."

Speaking about growth, Connaughton explained that, while Prince William County's population has grown by leaps and bounds over the past six years, it isn't alone in growth. Surrounding counties to the south and west have grown by at least percent during the same time frame.

The gathering of executives "wowed" again after the chairman told them Prince William County has built 21 schools since

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2000.

Connaughton began discussing transportation and economic development, mentioning the county "ended up building \$18 million worth of roads because we're one of the few counties that builds its own roads. In fact, we're going to go to our vote this November to ask for authority for another \$300 million road-bond authority.

"This is not to be meant as a dig at Fairfax," Connaughton said, looking at Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerry Connolly (D) who had addressed the group earlier. "But we've had as many jobs created in Prince William over the three or four years as Fairfax. Their jobs are much higher paying, but it does show we are getting the job growth. It's evolutionary as the jobs start to move out to Prince William County."

According to Connaughton, part of that evolution means people are commuting from farther away to reach work every day reason for that commute mainly lies in affordable housing being pushed farther south and west.

"Prince William County used to be the affordable housing community in Northern Virginia," Connaughton said. "When I toc office (in 2000)... the average home value was \$130,000. In 2005, our average home value was \$430,000."

Again, the crowd groaned a collective "wow." Since affordable housing for many people has been pushed to even more ru areas, Connaughton said commuters are being stuck with even longer drives.

"We can actually trace from our traffic counts that two-thirds of the traffic on Route 1, on 95, on Route 28, 29 and 66 ... is actually traffic generated from outside Prince William County and it's causing all types of problems for transportation not ju for my community, but for throughout Northern Virginia and the greater area," he said.

Connaughton tied economic development and education together by saying county officials have been successful in recru companies to come to Prince William by having local college representatives speak on the county's behalf.

"Our community colleges (and) George Mason University are at the table when we try to sell ourselves to companies," he said. "People show executives of companies where they're going to get their work force from. And just as importantly, whe are their kids are going to go to school?"

Asked about the county's relationship with the state, Connaughton railed against the General Assembly, including the county's legislative delegation.

"Our legislative package for the last few years has been, 'Just leave us alone,' " he said. "We're not asking anything from t state. 'Just don't take away our land-use authority. Don't take away our taxing authority.' If you look at our legislative packe it says, 'Just please, when you go down there, just leave us alone.' "

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