



The Committee of 500
Post Office Box 1697
Spotsylvania, Virginia 22553
committee500@pobox.com
www.committee500.org

Virginia Railway Express Talking points

Contact: John LeFebre at lefebjo@comcast.net

1. Each VRE member jurisdiction pays an annual VRE subsidy out of revenues collected via a 2% gas tax. This surcharge is mandated by the state. Any money left over after paying the subsidy is available to the jurisdiction to use for transportation projects as they see fit.
2. The VDOT budget cuts mean local funding sources for Spotsylvania County road and transportation-related projects will become even more essential. Moreover, by FY2011, the county's transportation fund - revenues from decal fees and proffers - will be fully obligated and depleted, meaning that the phase II bond projects and other improvements cannot begin. VRE membership will provide sorely needed incremental transportation revenue for the county, estimated at between \$1.5 - \$2 million dollars annually above the costs of VRE membership.
3. An objective comparison of gas prices with regional VRE members Fredericksburg and Stafford shows that the 2% surtax on gasoline has negligible effect on gas prices. (Gas prices are actually the same or lower at many stations in those two jurisdictions.) And of great importance, the additional revenue will be generated in the most equitable way, paid for by all who purchase gas in Spotsylvania, not just Spotsylvania residents.
4. Every time you buy gas in Fredericksburg (e.g. Central Park) and Stafford, you're paying 2% to fund their local transportation projects. Every time you (or a transient) buy gas in Spotsylvania, you're paying that 2% to the fossil fuel industry. That 2% does not stay in your pocket.
5. In the last 8 years (2001 through 2008), VRE membership has generated nearly \$16 million for local transportation projects in Stafford, nearly \$9 million for projects in Fredericksburg. That was **revenue left over** after paying their VRE obligations.
6. VRE membership will help Spotsylvania attract the high-tech businesses that provide better paying career opportunities. Member respondents to a Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce survey last year overwhelmingly supported Spotsylvania membership in the VRE.
7. A solid majority (61% to 39%) of Spotsylvania voters supported a 2005 county transportation bond referendum that included \$12 million for a VRE station. Support for the referendum was 63% to 37% in the Courtland District and 69% to 31% in the Salem District. Current estimates for a VRE platform and shelter, comparable to Leeland Road, are around \$4 million. That's one third the amount approved in the referendum. And most (if not all) of this cost could be covered by grants to the county and VRE.
8. The George Washington Regional Commission's 20-year transportation plan defines nearly \$2 billion in transportation improvements. Even if the plan could be executed, the projection is still a level of service grade of "D" or "F". The experts agree we cannot solve our transportation problems this way. If we keep doing what we're doing traffic is going to get worse, not better. We must reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. If we reduce the number of vehicles, then roads will work better. VRE is one way to make transit more convenient and more available. A single VRE train replaces 100 cars. The added convenience and service of Spotsylvania membership will help stimulate VRE use, further reducing roadway congestion.
9. Attorneys have advised the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization that a member jurisdiction can withdraw from VRE without the consent of all parties. According to Lloyd Robinson, FAMPO's director of transportation planning, attorneys say a member can withdraw from the contract upon satisfying its financial commitments to the VRE. This would include a proportionate share of capital commitments while a member. (see [FLS link](#) – "20070601 FAMPO Clears Up Confusion Over VRE Membership ")