

## THE WASHINGTON SUBURBAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

The Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC) is a bi-county agency that provides planning and oversight for mass transit services in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The seven-member commission is composed of two representatives from each county, two members appointed by the Governor of Maryland, and the Maryland Secretary of Transportation, or his or her designee.

The WSTC has the legal authority to levy a property tax in each county to support mass transit services, as well as associated debt service and administrative costs. For Prince George's County this tax levy, combined with State and Federal aid, fares, and other revenues, funds a variety of regional transit services, local bus service and para-transit service. (Para-transit service includes the County's special services for senior and disabled citizens.) Regional rail and bus services are provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Local bus service and para-transit service are provided through the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation and by private companies. Because mass transit is capital intensive, debt service costs also make up a substantial share of WSTC-related costs.

The WSTC tax rate for FY2004 is \$.026 per \$100 of assessed value for real property and \$.065 per \$100 of assessed value for personal property. The tax rate has been altered based on the provisions of Maryland Senate Bill 626-2000 that provides that the real property tax rates be applied to 100% instead of 40% of the value of real property. The tax rate for real property was adjusted downward to ensure revenue neutrality. The personal property tax rate, since it was already based on 100% of the value of personal property, remains at the same rate as was in place previously.