

The Washington Suburban Transit Commission, created by Chapter 870, Acts of 1965, consists of seven commissioners, of whom three are appointed by the Montgomery County Executive, three by the Prince George's County Executive, and the Secretary of Transportation who serves as an *ex officio* member of the Commission. Commissioners who are appointed serve at the pleasure of the Executive, and commissioners who are not appointed from among the members of the governing bodies serve for a period of three years.

The Commission was established for the purpose of administering the activities and functions of the Washington Suburban Transit District, with powers to develop, on a bi-county basis, a transportation system including mass transit facilities for the needs and growth of both counties. The Commission appoints two of its members, and two alternates, to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the interstate agency charged with the overall responsibility of planning, financing and operating the regional rapid rail and bus transit operations for the Washington metropolitan area. The Commission works in

conjunction with the interstate authority in the development of the regional rapid rail transit system which has been under construction since December, 1969. The first segment of that system — 4.5 miles extending from the Rhode Island Avenue Station to Farragut North Station in downtown Washington, D. C. — began revenue operations March 29, 1976. The complete system is expected to be operational by July, 1983.

In February, 1973, the interstate authority acquired the operations of the areas' four privately owned bus companies and began immediate plans for improving transit service in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Commission acts as the financial conduit through which funding of mass transportation projects within the counties will take place. The Commission acts as the coordinating body with regard to mass transit matters within the bi-county area and as such, coordinates mass transit activities of the two county governments with each other, with WMATA, and with the Maryland Department of Transportation.

*By law, chairmanship of the Commission rotates on an annual basis between Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.