

and enter into agreements with respect thereto and for any studies, plans, demonstrations or projects;

(g) *Contracts for providing transit facilities and services.* To enter into and perform contracts with the State of Maryland, or any agency or political subdivision thereof, for providing transit facilities and services, including service in any county contiguous to the District and for any other purposes incidental to the establishment, financing and operation of the regional transit system;

(h) *Joint use of property.* To enter into and perform contracts with any public utility, railroad, transportation company or private carrier for the joint use of property or rights:

(i) *Agreements for reduced or free fares.* To enter into and perform contracts and agreements with the Federal Government, State of Maryland, or any agency or political subdivision thereof for payments of the Authority for free or reduced fare transportation of employees or other persons for whom such governments, agencies or political subdivisions desire such transportation;

(j) *Arrangements for providing transit service.* To provide or cause to be provided transit service with the transit facilities owned or controlled by the Authority, or to enter into contracts or leases with others to provide transit service with the transit facilities owned or controlled by the Authority or with transit facilities owned or controlled by others, including service in any county contiguous to the District;

(k) *Personnel.* Create and abolish offices, employments and positions (other than those specifically provided for herein) as it deems necessary and fix and provide for the qualification, appointment, removal, term, tenure, ~~compensation, pension and retirement rights,~~ AND COMPENSATION of its officers and employees without regard to the laws of the State of Maryland relating to other State employees with respect to such matters:

(1) *Personnel system; pension and retirement plans.* Establish, in its discretion, a personnel system based on merit and fitness and, ~~subject to eligibility, participate in the pension and retirement plans of the State of Maryland, upon terms and conditions mutually acceptable;~~ SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 73B, PARTICIPATE IN THE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, UPON TERMS AND CONDITIONS MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE AUTHORITY AND THE SYSTEM. THE AUTHORITY MAY ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A SYSTEM OF PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR ITS OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT OF THE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

(m) *Technical and consulting services.* To enter into contracts or agreements for planning, engineering and technical services and to contract for or employ, consultants, engineers, attorneys and other professional, planning, engineering and technical services;

(n) *Security force.* To contract for, or to provide and maintain, with respect to the transit facilities and property owned, leased, operated or under the control of the Authority, a security force to protect persons and property, disperse unlawful or dangerous as-