

*Advancing transit in
Northern Virginia
since 1964*

September 2026



Executive Director **Newsletter**



NoVaTransit.org | NoVaRides.org | @NoVaTransit



A Message From Kate Mattice

Once again, it feels a bit like summer ends earlier than it used to. With most school systems starting before Labor Day and the wrapping up of the “August recess,” it means the return of school bus routes and dropoffs and back-to-work routines. For those of us who live and work in Northern Virginia, this also means an increase in congestion.

That makes now the ideal time of year for us to remind people about the benefits of getting out of our cars and riding public transit. That’s exactly what we’re doing with our NoVa Rides marketing campaign that launches this month.

The concept for this campaign centers around the theme of “connection”— our transit network connects the region and the people, places and moments riders want to go to. The spark for this campaign came from the desire to get people back on transit after the series of summer shutdowns on Metro’s Blue and Yellow Lines for construction of a second entrance at Crystal City Station and other maintenance work. With that work finished, we want to encourage people to use this important transit corridor. This campaign is not just about Metro, but also encouraging people to ride Virginia Railway Express, ART, DASH, Fairfax Connector and the bus systems that serve the larger region – CUE, Loudoun County Transit and OmniRide.

(Speaking of our transit partners, if you aren’t following them on social media, give them a follow. They are making transit fun and relatable, while promoting the benefits of riding.)



The campaign launches September 8 on Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, Spotify and online ads and you’ll see them across Northern Virginia until mid-November.

I’d like to thank the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for making this campaign possible with a generous grant. Our work relies on the support of the Commonwealth and our localities and we strive every day to maximize these investments and ensure Northern Virginia has the most effective, efficient and safe public transit network possible.

Kate A Mattice
Executive Director



In This Issue

- 4 VRE offers first-ever Sunday service for IndyCar race
- 4 Happy 40 years, OmniRide
- 5 Metro Board hears rail modernization, maintenance planning updates; Previews platform door concept
- 5 Metro Board moves forward with transit improvements at RFK Campus
- 6 NVTC Commissioners share insights with Alliance and NoVa chamber members
- 6 APTA seminars focus on board members and administrators
- 7 Trainings provide readiness for next phase of Envision Route 7
- 8 *Charting Transit*: The workforce that keeps transit running
- 9 Congratulations Sophie Spiliotopoulos on 5 years at NVTC
- 10 Summer travels don’t stray far from public transit
- 11 Good luck, Shannon Bacon!



Save the Date

September 15 - 16
Commonwealth Transportation Board

September 17
Joint Commission Working Group and Program Advisory Committees
(Virtual Meeting)

September 17
Joint WMATA/ Legislative and Policy Committees

September 18
VRE Operations Board

October 1
Commission meeting

October 13-15
Governor’s Transportation Conference

October 14-15
Commonwealth Transportation Board



VRE offers first-ever Sunday service for IndyCar race

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) engineered a win as it offered its first-ever Sunday rail service to carry passengers to the Freedom 250 Grand Prix in Washington August 23. That service enabled riders to skip the traffic and widespread road closures.

VRE ran morning trains northbound on both the Manassas and Fredericksburg Lines up to Alexandria King Street Station, with southbound service beginning at Washington Union Station and serving all VRE stations.

VRE ran Saturday service earlier in the summer to support July 4th fireworks on the National Mall.

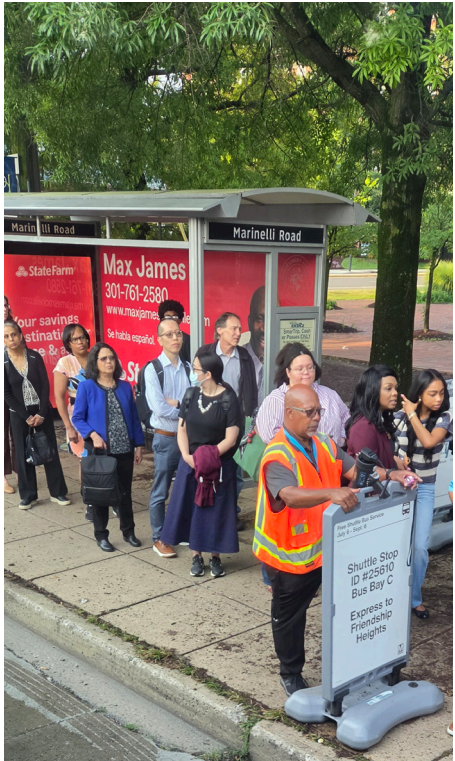
For its part, Metro said L'Enfant Plaza Station set a record for a Sunday with 36,000 trips.



Metro Board hears rail modernization, maintenance planning updates; Previews platform door concept

The [Metro Board](#) met July 23 and received an update on Red Line rail [modernization](#), including findings from an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) peer review with representatives from Copenhagen Metro and Transport for London, as well as Metro's initial concept for partial-height platform doors. The review supported beginning systemwide modernization on the Red Line and recommended evaluating the costs and benefits of installing doors at all 27 Red Line stations. Metro says the doors would support automated train operations while improving safety and reliability by reducing track intrusions, debris and related service disruptions.

The Board also reviewed Metro's long-term [maintenance strategy](#), which emphasizes shifting from reactive repairs toward proactive, predictive maintenance. Metro plans to improve coordination across maintenance teams, establish a centralized Maintenance Operations Center and combine more work into each outage as growing weekend ridership and major regional events reduce available maintenance windows. Metro also previewed [future shutdowns](#) and service adjustments planned to support major track, signal and station rehabilitation projects, including short- and long-term work in Northern Virginia.



Red Line shuttle bus service

Metro Board moves forward with transit improvements at RFK Campus

At a [special meeting](#) on July 30, the Metro Board authorized management to negotiate and execute two [reimbursable agreements](#) with the District of Columbia to advance transit improvements associated with redevelopment of the RFK campus. The agreements provide \$300 million in District funding for planning, design, construction, testing and commissioning of improvements at and around Stadium-Armory Station and \$5 million to advance Gold Line bus rapid transit (BRT) Phase 1 through environmental review, public engagement and preliminary 30% design. Public engagement for the project is scheduled to begin in September.

The Gold Line BRT agreement represents a significant new role for Metro in leading BRT planning and project development. Metro will manage the planning and design process in coordination with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) through a joint project management structure, while DDOT retains final authority for 30% design decisions.



NVTC Commissioners share insights with Alliance and NoVa chamber members

Commissioners Walter Alcorn and Mariia Zimmerman were joined by Virginia Railway Express CEO Katie Choe for the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance Policy Makers event July 28. The panel discussion focused on regional transit developments, opportunities for collaboration and critical funding needs for the future of transit in our region. Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Assistant to the Executive Director Genoveva Cutrell attended the morning event hosted at Cooley LLP.

NVTC staff attended the 11th Annual Northern Virginia Regional Elected Leaders Summit at the Fuse building on George Mason University's Mason Square campus in Arlington August 26. Current and past Commissioners Matt de Ferranti and Jeff McKay, along with Loudoun County Chair Phyllis Randall and Alexandria Mayor Alyia Gaskins, were featured panelists. Drew Wilder, reporter for WRC-TV, moderated the panel and navigated lively topics such as affordable housing, transportation funding and economic development.



Image: Mariia Zimmerman, Katie Choe and Walter Alcorn

APTA seminars focus on board members and administrators

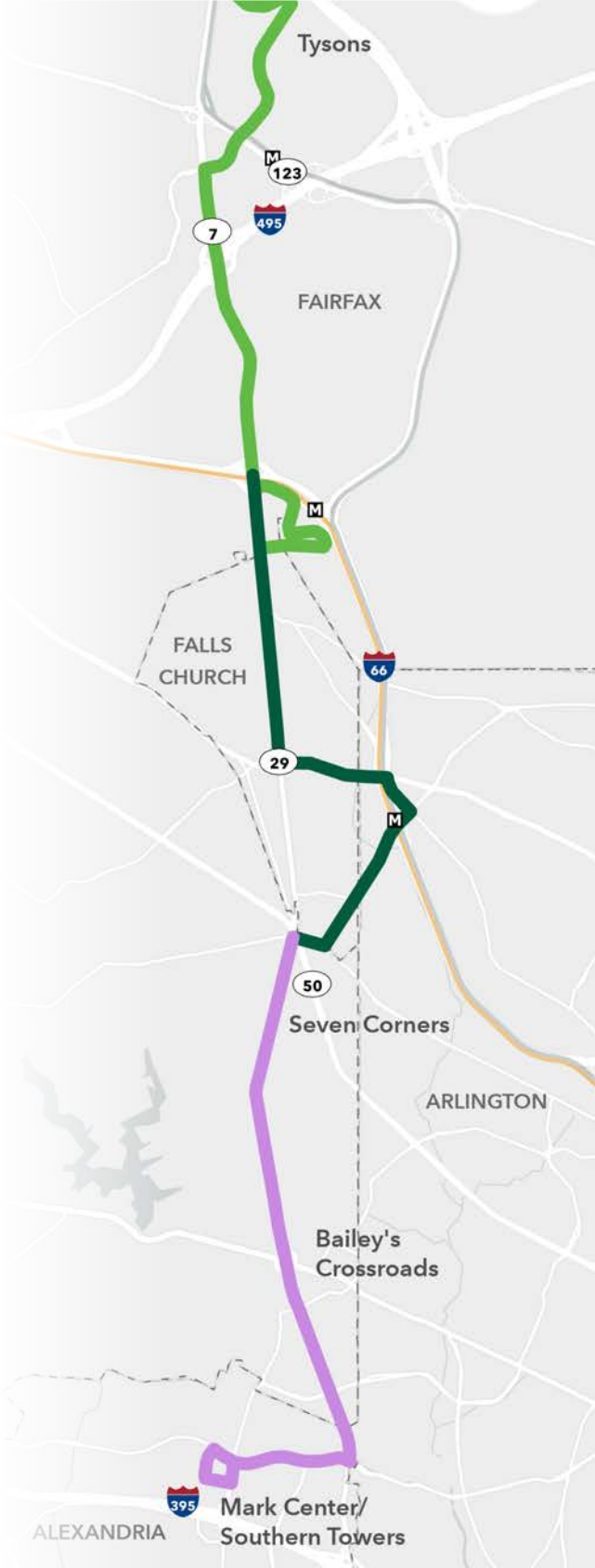
Commissioner Kate Burns and Board Administrator Rhonda Gilchrest attended the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) [Transit Board Members & Board Administrators Seminar](#) in Detroit in July. According to APTA, the Board Administrators Seminar provides specialized professional development on core operational functions, such as effective member onboarding, board management best practices and building organizational resiliency. Rhonda plays an instrumental role at NVTC, ensuring that Commission and committee meetings run flawlessly and serves as a key contact for our Commissioners.

Commissioner Burns participated in the Transit Board Members seminar in her role as the Commonwealth's appointee to the Metro Board.

Trainings provide readiness for next phase of Envision Route 7

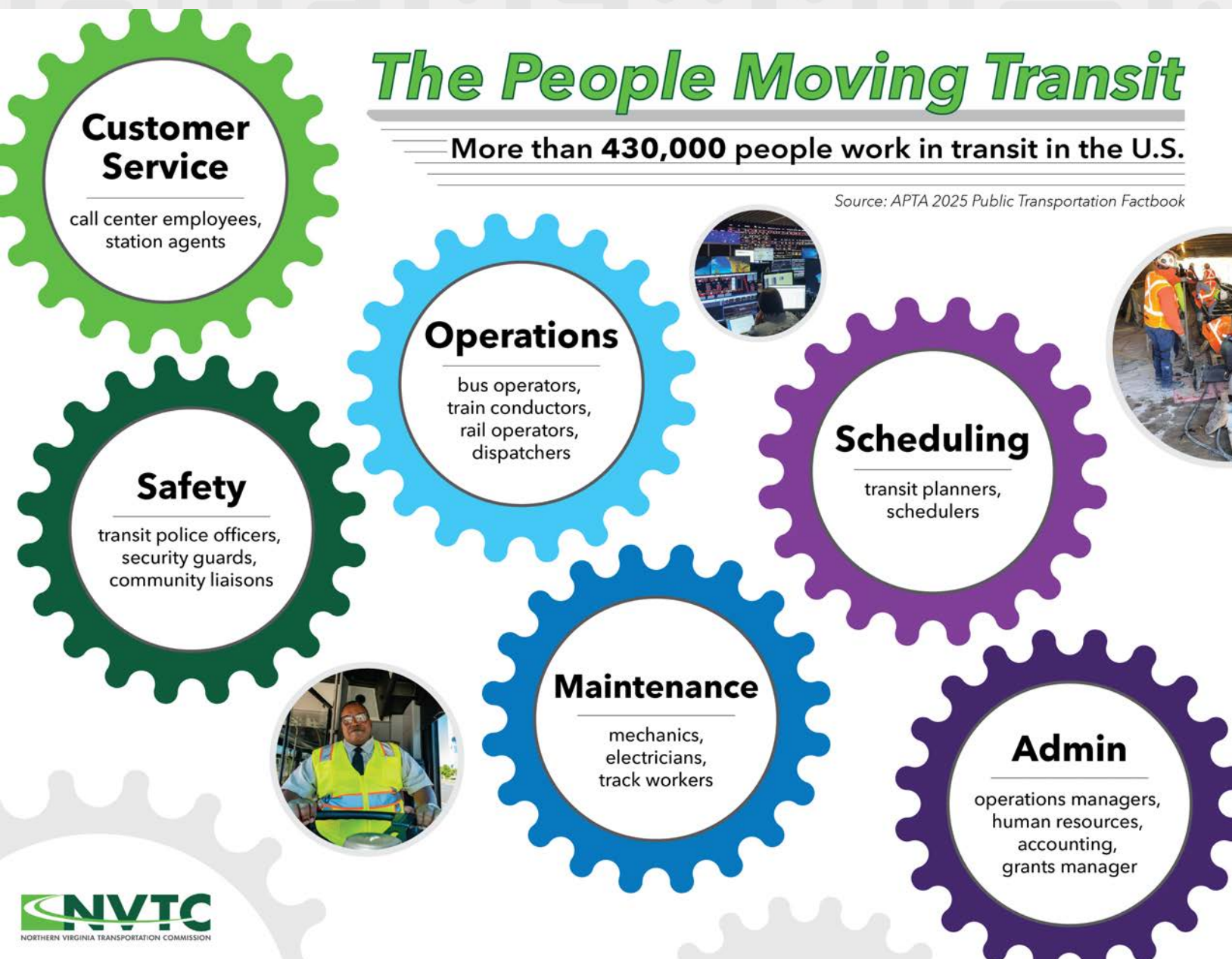
[Envision Route 7](#) Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha attended a three-day training in July at DASH headquarters in Alexandria on Management of Transit Construction Projects. The course covered the basics of good project management and encouraged discussion of real-world everyday transit construction issues among participants. Participants ranged from local staff from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Arlington County to Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority and Charlotte Area Transit System. The free training was provided by the [National Transit Institute](#) and funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

Vikram also attended the inaugural American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) [2026 State of Infrastructure Summit](#) on August 6, which included a session on the State of Regional Transit & Multimodal Integration. The one-day event included a roster of leaders in the field, including representatives from DASH, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



—Charting Transit— The workforce that keeps transit running

Nationwide, more than 430,000 people work in transit: operations staff who run the service, maintenance crews who repair vehicles and track, schedulers and planners who design the routes, customer service agents who answer questions, safety personnel who keep riders secure and administrative teams who manage budgets, hiring and grants. Together, they keep a system running that gets people to jobs, school and appointments and, in doing so, fuels our economy.

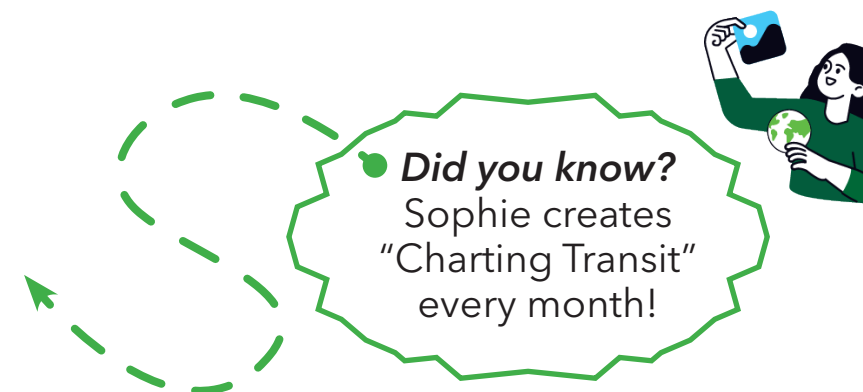


Congratulations Sophie Spiliotopoulos on 5 years at NVTC

We celebrated Sophie Spiliotopoulos' five-year anniversary at NVTC in August. Sophie joined us as a program analyst supporting the Transit Resource Center, Metro and Transit Technology programs. She has made valuable contributions to our data analysis work and now serves as our data visualization manager, bringing facts and figures to life. Thank you, Sophie, for all of your contributions.

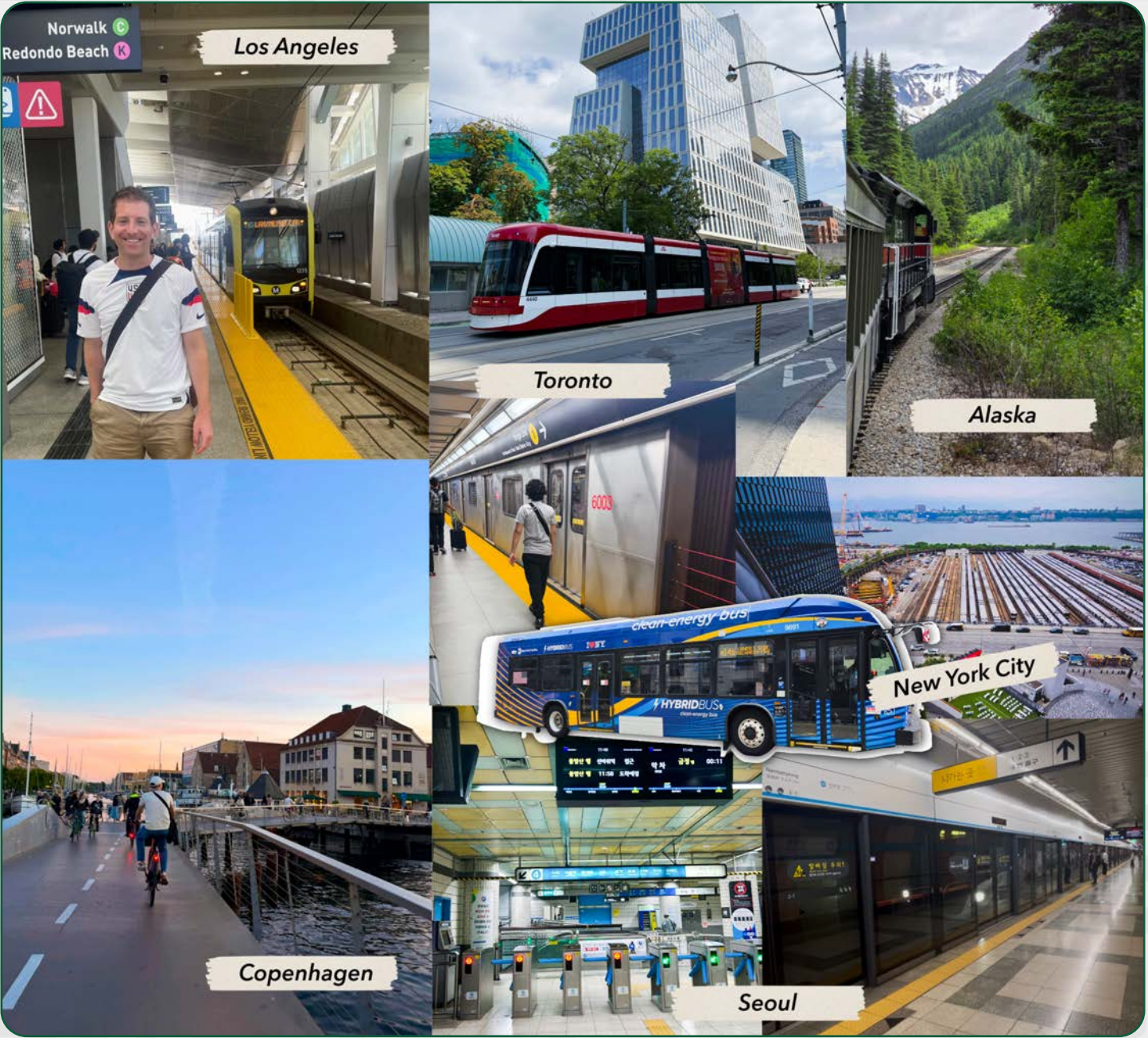


Kate Mattice and Sophie Spiliotopoulos



Summer travels don't stray far from public transit

NVTC staff saw the world this summer – and the public transit of many cities. Here's a sample of what we saw and rode. Commuter Choice Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein checked out LA Metro while taking in World Cup games. Deputy Director of Programs and Policy Amanda Sink snaked through the Alaska mountains by train. Communications and Design Specialist Colie Touzel rode MTA in New York City. Both Grants Manager Meg Johnston and Senior Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman explored Toronto's extensive transit network. Metro Program Manager Adam Hager rode a bike along Copenhagen's streets and Senior Accountant Hwajung Kim traveled furthest, visiting family in South Korea and riding Seoul's subway system.



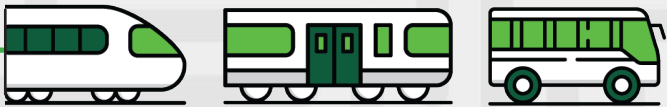
Good luck, Shannon Bacon!

In July, we said goodbye to Shannon Bacon, who has relocated to Seattle, Washington, to pursue a Master of Urban Planning degree at the University of Washington. Shannon joined NVTC as a Program Analyst in March 2025 and supported the Metro program through Metro Board communications, presentations to the WMATA Committee and work with jurisdictional staff to advance Virginia's priorities at the regional level. We wish Shannon the best of luck in her next endeavor!



NVTC staff and guests celebrating Shannon Bacon, bottom third from left

Farewell!



We also said thank you and goodbye to Josh Mattice last month. Josh stepped in to fill a last-minute need for a photographer and spent the summer as an intern supporting the NVTC communications team, traveling the region and taking photographs of our transit systems for use in our publications and presentation materials. He returns soon to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to begin his sophomore year.



*Advancing transit in
Northern Virginia
since 1964*



2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 230
Arlington, VA 22201
NoVaTransit.org
NoVaRides.org



@NoVaTransit