

2023 LEGISLATIVE & POLICY AGENDA

2023 STATE PRIORITIES



Protect Existing Transit Programs and Funding

NVTC supports continuing the existing state transit programs and revenue sources that benefit our local transit providers and protecting the state dedicated funding for WMATA and VRE. In 2018, the General Assembly established dedicated funding for both WMATA and VRE, setting forth a continued investment in these two transit systems. In 2020, the General Assembly adopted an historic transportation omnibus bill that streamlined Virginia's transportation funding allocation model, secured sustainable revenues for local transit operators, created the Transit Ridership Incentive Program and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and restored \$30 million/year to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. NVTC strongly supports the continued implementation of these historic legislative packages and will continue to seek full realization of anticipated revenue levels.



Restore Transportation Revenue Gap Resulting from the Elimination of the State Sales and Use Tax on Groceries

NVTC supports identification of revenues to replace the loss of transportation funding as a result of the elimination of state sales and use tax on groceries passed by the General Assembly in 2022. The elimination of this revenue source was estimated to result in a \$190 million reduction in the Commonwealth Transportation Fund in the 2022-2024 biennial budget and a \$741.4 million loss over the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP). If not addressed, this funding loss will negatively impact all transportation programs in the Commonwealth, including highways, rail and public transit.



Preserve NVTC Stewardship of NVTC Programs

NVTC supports preserving its programs and interests in Northern Virginia. NVTC provides a venue for and is a model of policy coordination and program implementation that works in Northern Virginia and has the participation of its component jurisdictions and their elected leaders. As an experienced steward of transit funding and regional partner to the Commonwealth, the General Assembly should continue to support NVTC's role in administering programs that promote transit and multimodal options that serve Northern Virginia.



Modify Approach to State Operating Support for Virginia Railway Express

NVTC supports VRE-advanced legislation that would create a direct allocation for commuter rail from the Mass Transit Fund to reflect the distinct operational differences of a commuter rail system, considering that the Commonwealth's Transit Operating Assistance Program continues to be based upon a bus-focused formula.



Restore Funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

NVTC continues to support restoration of the revenue losses to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority as a result of several General Assembly actions. In 2019 and 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation to secure additional revenue for NVTA, but prior funding levels have still not been restored. NVTC continues to advocate for restoring full funding to NVTA. Two of the NVTA's three revenue streams were redirected due to the implementation of the WMATA Capital Fund in 2018. In 2019 and 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation to secure additional revenue for NVTA, but prior funding levels have not been restored. To return to the pre-2018 revenue levels, the Authority requires dedicated funding of \$38.5 million. The loss of these revenues directly affects funding available for transit capital, as well as the local revenues to support transit operations.



Support Funding to Implement Zero and Low-Emission Public Transit

NVTC endorses legislation that will provide funding and remove barriers for public transit operators to implement innovative transit technology, such as zero and low-emission vehicles, zero and low-emission required infrastructure and training for the necessary workforce to implement zero and low-emission transit vehicles. NVTC supports ongoing and comprehensive coordination between the state and federal government on this issue.



Continue Support for the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program

NVTC encourages continued support for state funding initiatives for the Long Bridge expansion and Transforming Rail in Virginia projects and protection of funds currently allocated for those projects. Furthermore, NVTC supports requiring that future gubernatorial appointees to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board of Directors for the NVTC/PRTC districts are selected from lists provided by the NVTC and PRTC boards of commissioners.



Continue to Support Flexibility for Remote Public Meetings

In 2022, the General Assembly passed legislation that allows certain public bodies to conduct all-virtual public meetings where all of the members who participate do so remotely and that the public may access through electronic communications means. NVTC stands by efforts to maintain flexibility for public bodies to conduct all virtual public meetings, allowing greater access to the public and opportunities for members to participate remotely outside of a declared state of emergency.

2023 FEDERAL PRIORITIES



Secure Project Funding for the Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit Project

As community-based projects as well as federal discretionary funding becomes available, NVTC will continue to seek federal support to complete important milestones in the development and implementation of the Route 7 bus rapid transit project.



Identify Operational Funding Opportunities for WMATA

NVTC supports innovative approaches to leverage federal funding in support of local transit operations in light of changing commuting patterns. As the region adjusts to pandemic influenced travel patterns, WMATA face an operating deficit while trying to remain a key player in the Washington, D.C. regional transportation network. While WMATA needs to redefine its operational funding model, NVTC seeks to identify innovative opportunities to leverage federal funding to address the operational funding gap.



Encourage Federal Return-to-Work Policies Focused on Transit Use

As the federal government reexamines their telework policies, NVTC supports the active encouragement of transit use – and the maximum flexibility of transit benefits – for those employees who return to their offices. NVTC will stay engaged with actions affecting federal in-office and work-from-home policies and encourage commuting days to be spread uniformly across the work week. These strategies will help ensure that our regional transit systems run in a more efficient and balanced way by evening out the current mid-week bell curve that our transit systems are currently experiencing.



Continue Support for Commuter Tax Benefits

Commuter tax benefits make transit service more attractive to commuters in single occupancy vehicles. NVTC supports the continuation of federal transit commuter benefits that are on par with the tax incentive provided for parking. Further, NVTC encourages federal programs that support the use of carpools, vanpools, rideshare, bike share and transportation demand management (TDM) as effective tools to eliminate traffic congestion.



Identify Long Term Structural Fix to the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account

While the IJA authorized major investment in surface transportation, it did not provide a solution to ensure the long-term solvency and sustainability of the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The HTF shortfall must be addressed to meet the needs of transit today and ensure needs can be sufficiently addressed in the future.



Maximize the Region's Access to Funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

NVTC applauds the enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which authorizes up to \$108 billion, including \$91 billion in guaranteed funding for public transportation. In Northern Virginia, WMATA, VRE and PRTC/OmniRide immediately benefited from formula funding changes. Other local transit systems may wish to participate in competitive grant funding opportunities.

As the Federal Transit Administration implements the IIJA, NVTC supports the following:

- Timely and transparent implementation of the latest programs and changes to existing programs.
- Opportunities for local transit systems to participate in discretionary federal funding programs without unnecessary administrative burdens, such as requiring system-wide audits or other expansive federal oversight efforts that may overwhelm jurisdictional resources.
- Access to competitive and formula funding opportunities for zero and low-emission public transit vehicles and supporting infrastructure, as well as workforce training.
- Funding opportunities to support major capital investments, such as the Long Bridge, a second Metrorail station/additional tunnel at Rosslyn and both the Envision Route 7 and Richmond Corridor bus rapid transit systems.

Transit Systems that Serve NVTC's Communities

