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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

[Matt Friedman](#), NVTC
571-457-9516

NVTC SUPPORTS ENHANCED AND CONNECTED TRAIN AND BUS FARE COLLECTION

Strategic Plan update includes adoption of mobile technologies

Arlington, Va. - Last night the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission approved the Northern Virginia Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan update which envisions an enhanced and connected train and bus fare collection system across the Washington region. Near term goals support safe fare collection during the COVID-19 pandemic while other parts of the plan look to adoption of emerging technologies to make paying fares easier and improve the potential for attracting new riders.

Since the last Strategic Plan in 2018, there have been notable developments in the region including Metro completing its Fare Payment System Vision and Strategy, expansion of mobile payments and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic led to the pause in bus fare collection and implementation of safety measures like rear-door boarding and driver barrier doors, the crisis has also spurred innovation and accelerated regional implementation of fare payment technology including rear-door validation and mobile payments.

Highlights of the 2021 Northern Virginia Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan update

In the immediate term NVTC will:

- Work with Metro and regional transit systems on implementation and promotion of the SmarTrip App and mobile wallet as a new self-service payment option. NVTC will also monitor local mobile ticketing activity for ways to minimize regional fragmentation.
- Facilitate the exchange of information between transit systems on their experiences with installation of bus operator barriers, which is viewed by many as a prerequisite to resuming front door boarding and fare collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the near term NVTC will:

- Represent the Northern Virginia's needs in Metro's project for new bus fareboxes with standalone SmarTrip validators to enable rear-door payment and all-door boarding.
- Support transit systems implementing off-board fare collection solutions for bus rapid transit services. Regional coordination is needed with Metro, other regional partners and vendors for developing solutions that are cost effective and compatible with SmarTrip.
- Participate in planning discussions for regional back office systems upgrades to enable fare capping, as implementation requires technology and policy changes. Fare capping promotes equity and simplifies fares by allowing riders to "pay-as-you-go," automatically issuing a pass after meeting the fare payment equivalent of a daily, weekly or monthly pass.
- Facilitate information exchange between transit systems and Metro on new fare products offerings and programs to attract customers to transit.

In the long term NVTC will:

- Represent the transit systems' needs in Metro's planned project to expand the retail network that can be used by customers to load money to fare payment cards or accounts using cash.
- Represent transit systems' needs in planning for contactless open payments, which would enable customers to use contactless bankcards and mobile wallets to pay for transit with a tap of the card or device they already have—just like they can at many retailers.
- Support the integration of Virginia Railway Express (VRE) into the SmarTrip program as part of Metro's transition to a new back office system.
- Work with Metro and transit systems to develop additional features, which will address customer and local transit system needs.

Read the full Strategic Plan update on our [website](#).

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NVTC works to ensure that businesses and residents are served by a high capacity, high quality network of transit systems that allows the region to thrive. It funds and promotes transit in the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. NVTC supports five local bus systems (ART, CUE, DASH, Fairfax Connector, Loudoun County Transit), WMATA (Metrorail/Metrobus) and the Virginia Railway Express. Visit NoVaTransit.org or call 703-524-3322 to learn more.



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Our mailing address is:

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Boulevard
Suite 230
Arlington, VA 22201

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