

Advancing transit in  
Northern Virginia  
since 1964



April  
2025

Executive Director  
Newsletter

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## A Message From Kate Mattice

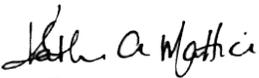
It's the most wonderful time of the year for the Washington region. No, not Christmas, but cherry blossom season. As the flowering trees bloom along the Tidal Basin, so do the crowds of people wanting to catch a glimpse of the magical buds. As anyone who's ever visited the National Mall during this season knows, those crowds lead to massive traffic backups.

However, we also know there's a better way to get around—take transit! In fact, just like the classic trees, we also see ridership on our region's transit systems bloom with the season. Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke recently predicted that cherry blossom visitors will push the system to over one million riders a day, only to have it [come true](#) days later.

Federal return-to-office mandates have also led to a surge in Metro and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) riders. In March, average daily ridership on VRE nearly doubled from a year ago. NVTC has long called for federal workers to return to working in person because we knew that would be vital to the financial stability of Metro and VRE and we are delighted to see the results.

Looking at [statewide numbers](#), the Department of Rail and Public Transportation reported significant gains in transit ridership in 2024, even before the new administration took office. We expect to see even stronger results by the end of 2025.

Just as spring and flowers bring us new hope for the season, we're also optimistic about the continued strength and importance of our vital transit network.

  
Executive Director



# In This Issue

- 4, 5 Public comment open for proposed I-395/95 Commuter Choice projects
- 6 MAC previews 'Microtransit 101'
- 7 NVTC report looks at transit connections with bicycles and scooters
- 8 DMVMoves reviews updated Metro funding needs approach
- 9 Metro Board reviews recommended FY 2026 budget
- 10 DRPT proposes reexamination of MERIT program
- 11 Metro, VPRA represented at Spanish Embassy event
- 12 Two new program analysts join NVTC
- 13 Staff training offers clues to workplace relationships
- 14,15 NVTC adds Bluesky social media platform



**April 15**  
Commonwealth  
Transportation Board

**April 24**  
Commuter Choice  
Public Hearing

**April 24**  
Joint Program Advisory  
Committee/Joint  
Commission Working  
Group

**April 25**  
VRE Operations Board

**May 1**  
Commission Meeting

**May 16**  
VRE Operations Board

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## Public comment open for proposed I-395/95 Commuter Choice projects

The I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2026-2027 public comment period remains open through April 11 as NVTC seeks feedback on 14 applications. The 14 funding requests from Arlington County, DASH, Fairfax County, OmniRide, Virginia Railway Express and Metro collectively seek approximately \$29.5 million. Proposed projects are located up and down the I-395/95 corridor and include bus service enhancements, a new bus route and rail station improvements.

To promote the public comment period, staff produced videos in English and Spanish with Program Advisory Committee Chair Dalia Palchik, as well as static and animated graphics which are being featured on our social media channels.



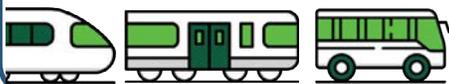
ENGLISH



SPANISH



Scan the code or click above to watch the Commuter Choice public comment promotional videos in both English and Spanish!





## Join the Commuter Choice Public Hearing!

**What:** Virtual Public Hearing for Commuter Choice  
**When:** Thursday, April 24 at 4 p.m.  
**Where:** Online



NVTC's Commuter Choice program would boost service on **OmniRide's Route 1 and Prince William Metro Express** routes.

Tell us what you think at [novatransit.org/commuterchoice](http://novatransit.org/commuterchoice)




NVTC's Commuter Choice program would boost **DASH and Metrobus** service on routes in **Alexandria**.

Tell us what you think at [novatransit.org/commuterchoice](http://novatransit.org/commuterchoice)




NVTC's Commuter Choice program would support improvements to **VRE's Leeland Road Station**.

Tell us what you think at [novatransit.org/commuterchoice](http://novatransit.org/commuterchoice)




NVTC's Commuter Choice program would boost **ART Route 87** service in **Shirlington and Pentagon City**.

Tell us what you think at [novatransit.org/commuterchoice](http://novatransit.org/commuterchoice)



## Share your thoughts today!

1

Complete a brief [online survey](#).

2

Send an email to [commuterchoice@novatransit.org](mailto:commuterchoice@novatransit.org)

You may also contact this address with any questions about the projects under consideration for funding.

3

Leave a voicemail message (up to **3 minutes**) at **(571) 234-1355**.



## MAC previews 'Microtransit 101'

Members of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) got a preview of a key presentation that will be given to the Commission in April. "Microtransit 101" seeks to define what microtransit is and isn't and examines how the umbrella term can mean different things to different agencies.

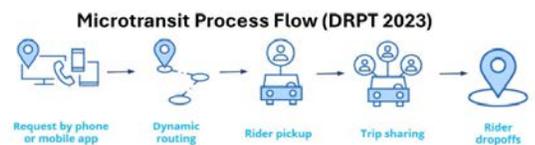
The MAC is made up of NVTC and jurisdictional and transit agency staff and is designed to foster

regional collaboration as well as to provide information for those who brief elected officials. Members heard from NVTC's Xavier Harmony, as well as representatives from Arlington and Loudoun Counties and OmniRide. Topics included the history of microtransit in Virginia, OmniRide's experience running microtransit service and plans for Arlington and Loudoun to run pilot programs.

### What is Microtransit? It depends on who you ask.

- **Microtransit characteristics:**

- On-demand
- Typically reserved with an app
- Typically smaller vehicles
- Flexible route structures and schedules
- Often serve a zone
- Riders are grouped with other riders traveling in the zone
- Typically public-private partnerships (e.g., Via, RideCo) but can vary



**Microtransit Vehicle Examples**



<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/25414/chapter/3>





## NVTC report looks at transit connections with bicycles and scooters

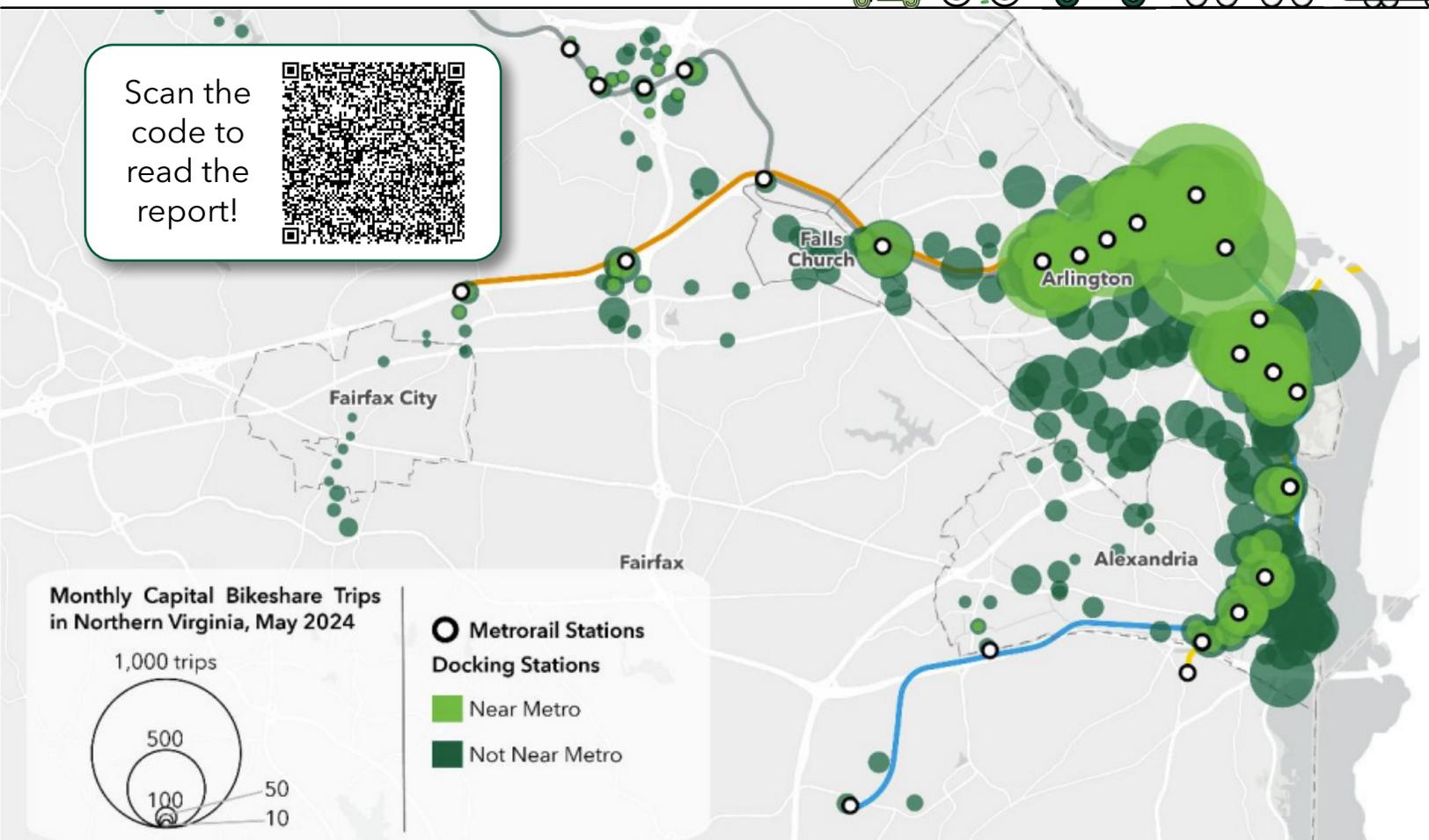
The Commission accepted the findings of a new report at the March meeting that explores the question, what do bikes and scooters have to do with public transit?

The study by Xavier Harmony and Sophie Spiliotopoulos finds that integrating bike parking and bike and scooter rentals at public transit stations benefits all modes of transportation.

It expands the reach of transit access and increases the use of bikeshare and “dockless” options. [Integrating Transit, Bicycling and Micromobility in Northern Virginia](#) outlines key strategies to improve transit and “micromobility” connections and evaluates current infrastructure to identify opportunities for growth.



Scan the code to read the report!



The map above shows Capital Bikeshare trips near Metro stations in Northern Virginia during the month of May 2024.



## DMVMoves reviews updated Metro funding needs approach

The DMVMoves Task Force [met](#) March 24 as members discussed the [updated approach](#) to Metro's funding needs. Due to revenue growth and modernization efforts, Metro no longer has an anticipated operating budget gap in FY 2028, although regional economic uncertainty could impact this outlook.

It is important to remember that through the Commonwealth's biennium budget, Virginia provided additional state aid to help temporarily close Metro's operating budget gaps in FY 2025 and FY 2026. However, beginning in FY 2027, no funding has been identified that would continue Virginia's share, split between the Commonwealth and NVTC jurisdictions, of the additional regional investments necessary to keep Metro's operating budget fully funded.

On the capital side, Metro has developed an updated, refined set of needs that focuses on maintaining the existing system and implementing advanced signaling over time.

These estimates assume that the 2018 dedicated funding and Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) amounts do not change or grow. The cost to maintain a state of good repair and implement advanced signaling is estimated at approximately \$450-500 million in additional funding per year from the region, starting in FY 2028 and then growing at 3% per year. This amount will allow Metro to maintain a sustainable, revolving debt program and adequately manage its state of good repair backlog at reasonable levels. Advancements in rail automation and advanced signaling help move the needle in capturing operating budget efficiencies and improving safety through capital investments.

Commissioner Paul Smedberg co-chairs DMVMoves, with additional representation by Commissioners Matt de Ferranti and Mark Sickles.

# DMVMOVES

Moving our region forward, together.





# Metro Board reviews recommended FY 2026 budget

The Metro Board of Directors [met March 27](#) and reviewed a staff-recommended FY 2026 [budget](#) that features \$19 million in cost savings relative to the prior budget proposal. These savings are generated by scheduling and fleet efficiencies, lower levels of station entrance staffing during late nights and weekends, deferring service changes on the Yellow Line to Greenbelt until December and technology and modernization investments. The Board is anticipated to approve the FY

2026 Operating Budget and FY 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Program on April 10.

To keep the system safe and combat crime, the Board approved a [banning policy](#) as a tool to prevent repeat and egregious offenders from causing harm on the system. The banning policy will prevent those who commit sex crimes, assaults on Metro employees or contractors and assaults on any kind of customers from using the Metro system.

## Recommended FY2026 Budget

FY2026 Budget Update

(\$ in millions)	FY2026 Revised (February)	FY2026 Recommended (March)	FY2027 Forecast
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$565</b>	<b>\$564</b>	<b>\$583</b>
<b>Gross Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,567</b>	<b>\$2,547</b>	<b>\$2,618</b>
PM above \$60M	-\$49	-\$49	-\$73
<b>Net Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,518</b>	<b>\$2,498</b>	<b>\$2,545</b>
<b>Gross Subsidy</b>	<b>\$1,953</b>	<b>\$1,934</b>	<b>\$1,963</b>
Prior Year Savings	-\$28	-\$28	\$0
<b>Net Subsidy</b>	<b>\$1,924</b>	<b>\$1,906</b>	<b>\$1,963</b>

Notes:  
\* Amounts may not sum due to independent rounding  
\* Total preventive maintenance transfer in FY26 and FY27 is \$109M and \$133M, respectively

# DRPT proposes reexamination of MERIT program

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) proposed a reexamination of its Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) transit capital and operating formula program during a meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) [Rail and Transit Subcommittee](#) on March 18. DRPT will work through the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC), of which Executive Director Kate Mattice is a member, to provide policy recommendations to the CTB by the end of this calendar year.

MERIT is a statewide grants program that provides financial assistance to support public transportation throughout Virginia.

That includes operating and capital money for all of Virginia's public transit agencies, excluding Metro and Virginia Railway Express.

The program includes a project prioritization method that was adopted in 2018 and modified in 2022, emphasizing state of good repair and funding awards that have the greatest impact on the delivery of public transit services.

The Youngkin Administration proposes, "stronger, more meaningful emphasis on performance-based metrics," along with other modifications. DRPT presented a timeline that shows final adoption of new scoring methods in October or December.

## Potential MERIT Improvement Areas for Consideration

- Stronger, more meaningful emphasis on performance-based metrics
- Standardized verification of effective agency asset utilization and need
- Increased focus on the right-sizing of agency requests
- Additional incentives to promote operational efficiency, route optimization/innovation, and good grants management practices
- Develop metrics to evaluate the return on investment

### Goals:

1. Strive to remain best in class in our review/scoring/award of grant funds.
2. Deliver the most value and the best outcomes for our customers as efficiently as possible.



# Metro, VPRRA represented at Spanish Embassy event

Executive Director Kate Mattice attended a transportation-focused panel at the Spanish Embassy in Washington March 10. The panel featured several speakers who may be familiar to our audience, including Metro Chief Operating Officer Andy Off and Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) Chief Operating Officer Michael McLaughlin. Also on the panel were Morteza Farijian, Executive Director of USDOT's Build America Bureau and Martha Gross from the Maryland Transit Administration. Part of an all-day event, the panel explored the transportation environment in the U.S., public-private partnerships and projects being undertaken by state agencies.



# Two new program analysts join NVTC

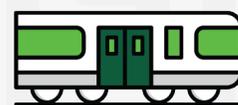
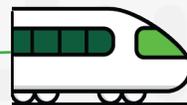


Jason Adle is a native of the Washington metro area and is excited to bring his local knowledge and professional expertise in transit to NVTC. His transportation career includes positions as a Transit Analyst at Jarrett Walker & Associates, where he supported transit service planning and analysis for various agencies across the U.S. and around the world, and as a Student Planner with TransLink in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributing to the development of its most recent long-term regional transportation strategy.



After receiving her bachelor's degree from Western Washington University, Shannon Bacon moved to the District to pursue public transportation research and planning. She most recently worked as a Policy Analyst for the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee under Chair Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Shannon is excited to join NVTC to engage more closely with localities working to support and strengthen public transit in Northern Virginia.

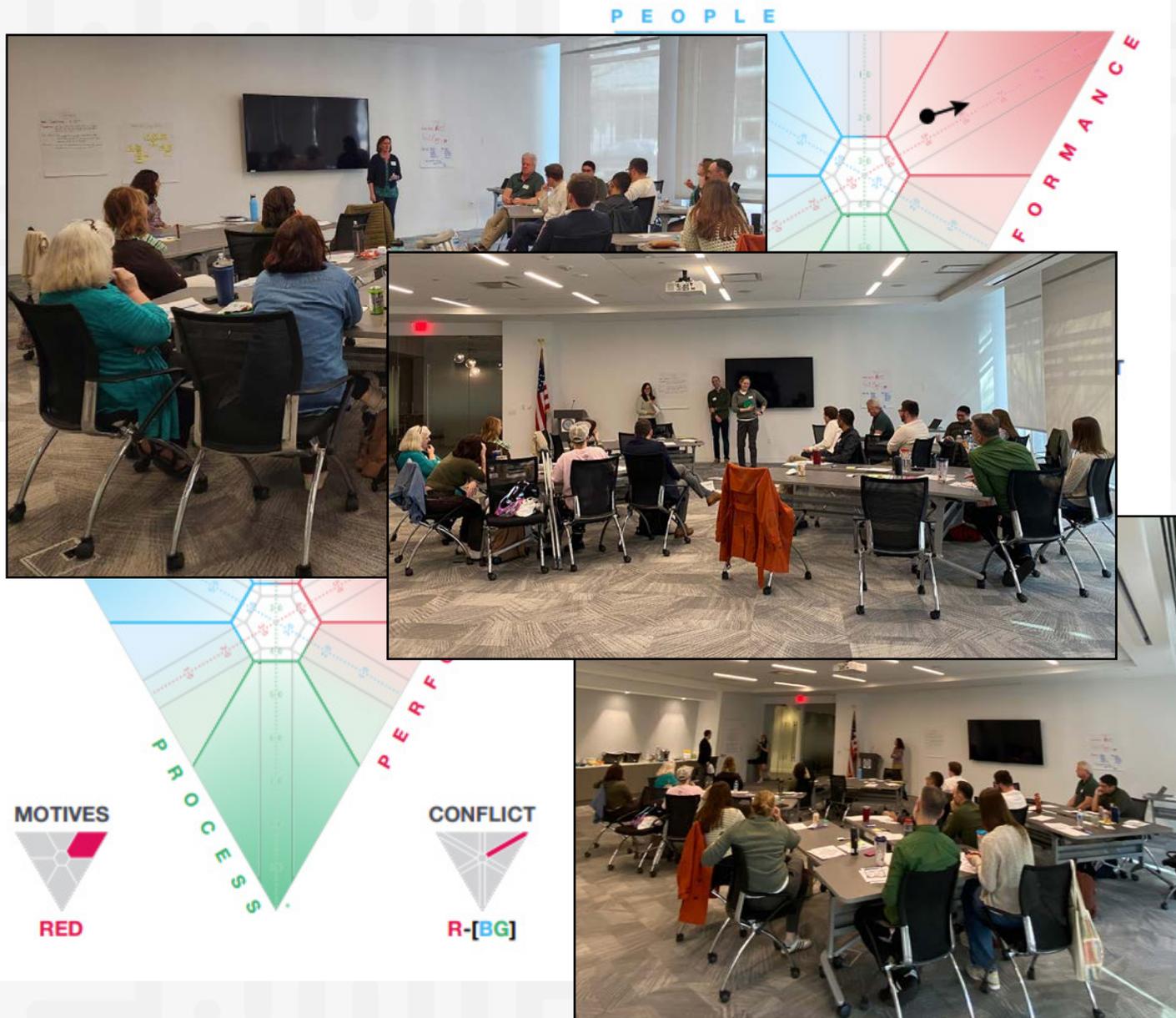
**WELCOME ABOARD!**



# Staff training offers clues to workplace relationships

NVTC's staff gathered for an all-day training March 17, focused on our individual Motivational Value Systems (MVS) and how they impact relationships in our work environment. Each staff member has taken the [Strength Deployment Inventory](#) (SDI), which is designed to "know yourself more fully, understand others more accurately, manage yourself more effectively

and achieve better results by building healthier relationships." By bringing everyone together to better understand ourselves and each other, NVTC hopes to foster a congenial and effective workplace. The training day also offered fun activities designed to break down barriers and was well-timed, as two program analysts joined our staff the prior week.





## NVTC adds Bluesky social media platform

NVTC recently joined [Bluesky](#), the social media platform reminiscent of the earlier days of Twitter. The addition of Bluesky adds to our already extensive social presence. If you aren't following us, be sure to check out NVTC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#), where we highlight the work of NVTC and our regional transit agencies. Don't forget [YouTube](#), where we broadcast Commission and committee meetings and provide additional video content.



### NVTC's Starter Pa

Starter pack by you

#### People



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