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in Northern Virginia
since 1964



Executive Director Newsletter



February
2024

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A Message from Kate Mattice

As of this writing, we are a few weeks into the 2024 General Assembly Session, a time of year when we keep a close eye on what's happening in Richmond and make sure that lawmakers hear from NVTC, our local governments and transit agencies about the policy decisions that matter to public transit and the greater transportation network.

It's also an ideal time to remind everyone about our "[Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth](#)" study which found that our region's transit network generates \$1.5 billion in annual personal income and sales tax revenue for Virginia. That revenue makes up nearly 5% of the Virginia general fund! Another cool resource is our new [online mapping tool](#) that overlays transit routes on Virginia House and Senate districts and Congressional districts.

Avoiding devastating service cuts for Metro is our top goal for this 60-day Session. Each year the Commission adopts a [legislative and policy agenda](#) outlining priorities at the state and federal level. Our state legislative priorities this year include:

- Seek administrative or legislative opportunities to permit Metro to re-baseline its FY 2025 operating subsidy bill to reflect the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the transit system without financially penalizing NVTC jurisdictions.
- Advocate for additional state aid in FY 2025 to match local funding for Metro while regional stakeholders work for a long-term solution to fund Metro's capital and operating programs.
- Advocate for long-term, sustainable, dedicated funding to ensure Metro, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and all Northern Virginia transit systems meet the growing needs of public transit in our region.

We also include long-term capital and operating funding opportunities in our federal priorities, as well as return-to-office policies that would support ridership for Metro and VRE. We are hopeful that policymakers have heard us. Gov. Glenn Younkin has [signaled his support](#) for Metro and members of our Northern Virginia delegation have introduced bills reflecting our priorities.

As the Session moves forward, we'll continue to watch as these bills make their way through committees and how the biennial budget takes shape while NVTC and our regional partners keep making the case that Metro is vital to the economic health of Northern Virginia and all of the Commonwealth.


Executive Director

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Save
the
Date

February 15
Program Advisory
Committee

February 16
VRE Operations Board

February 20
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

February 29
WMATA Committee

March 7
Commission Meeting

March 15
VRE Operations Board

March 19
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

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de Ferranti becomes NVTC Chair; Juli Briskman sworn in as Commissioner

Immediate Past Chair Dalia Palchik swore in Matt de Ferranti as NVTC's 2024 chair at the January Commission [meeting](#). de Ferranti serves on the Arlington Board and joined NVTC in 2020. David Snyder of Falls Church became vice-chair, while Sarah Bagley of Alexandria is the new secretary-treasurer. NVTC also welcomed Juli Briskman as a new Commissioner from Loudoun County.

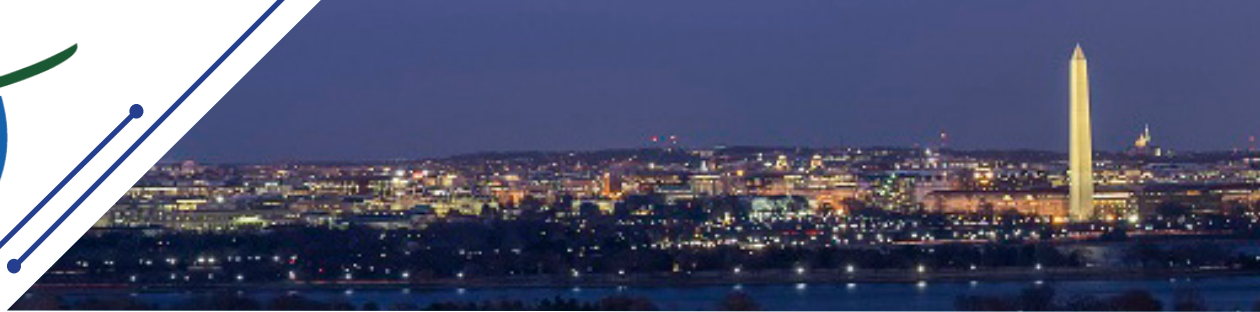
The Commission also thanked outgoing Commissioner Jeff McKay for his long service. Mr. McKay joined NVTC in 2008 and served as chair in 2013 and 2017. Commissioners also

lauded Mike Turner of Loudoun County for his service since 2020. Finally, incoming Chair de Ferranti honored Immediate Past Chair Palchik for her active year of leadership.

Photo: Dalia Palchik, Matt de Ferranti (above, left); Juli Briskman, Dalia Palchik (above, right)

Jeff McKay, Dalia Palchik (below, left); Mike Turner, Dalia Palchik (below, center); Sarah Bagley, Matt de Ferranti, David Snyder (on screen), Dalia Palchik (below, right)





Transurban celebrates 5th payment to I-395/95 Commuter Choice program

Transurban, operator of the I-395/95 Express Lanes, [announced](#) in January that it made its fifth annual payment to our Commuter Choice program, bringing total contributions over a five year period to nearly \$80 million. This year's \$16.5 million payment enables Commuter Choice to continue funding projects that move people more efficiently through the congested corridor.

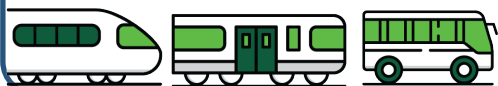
"Transurban is committed to getting people where they need to go. Helping provide the communities we serve with more ways to get from point A to point B beyond our Express Lanes achieves that goal," said Beau Memory, President, Transurban North America, in a news release.

Since its inception in 2019, the I-95/395 Commuter Choice program has a record of success:

- Enabling 2.6 million transit passenger trips
- Saving 370,000 hours of travel time
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled by 35 million
- Saving commuters \$5 million in fuel costs
- Avoiding 43 automobile crashes
- Bringing \$10 million in regional economic benefit from reduced travel delays
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 69% vs. a single-occupancy vehicle trip

The next I-395/95 Commuter Choice call for projects, covering FY 2026-2027, is expected to open this fall. The Commuter Choice team, led by Senior Program Manager Ben Owen, is currently reviewing applications to the recent I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025-2026 call for projects and expects approval of a Program of Projects in June. The Commission will receive an update on the process and eligible applications in March.

Transurban
operator of **expresslanes**





NVTC's 2023 annual report highlights milestones

We published the NVTC annual report in January, highlighting a year full of milestones and record achievements for the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission including the release of a key study examining the Value of Northern Virginia Transit, finding that the Commonwealth of Virginia receives \$1.5 billion in annual tax revenue as a direct result of the region's transit network. You can read the report, developed by Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman [online](#).

Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther produced a companion video to promote the report. Be sure to check it out.

Online tool explores transit service in legislative districts

Just in time for the start of the 2024 General Assembly Session, we have a new tool we want to share with you. It's our interactive map showing what transit routes serve each House of Delegates, Senate and U.S. House district in Northern Virginia.

The tool allows you to:

- Compare legislative districts
- Filter to specific districts, transit agencies and jurisdictions
- Find details on population, household, number of transit routes and which delegate, senator and member of Congress represents the locality

A special thanks for Senior Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos for her work creating the maps and the online tool. Try it [here](#).



NVTC Northern Virginia ZEB Strategic Plan approved

We published NVTC's Northern Virginia Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan January 9, following Commission approval. NVTC is coordinating among transit agencies in Northern Virginia on the transition to zero-emission bus (ZEB) fleets. The plan, under the leadership of senior program manager Ann McGrane, outlines regional strategies to help the agencies reach sustainability goals while providing safe, reliable and cost-effective transit service to riders.

ZEBs produce zero tailpipe emissions and can be either battery electric buses (BEBs) or hydrogen-powered fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs).

NVTC'S strategies include actions that are already underway, such as facilitating a ZEB working group and educating staff and local elected officials on ZEB advancements. The plan

also identifies the quick wins that staff can begin in 2024 and build from in the coming years.

NVTC's ZEB Strategies:

- Serve as a regional ZEB forum
- Advocate for consistent and supportive ZEB standards and policies
- Provide regional ZEB funding coordination
- Support development of shared BEB charging infrastructure
- Evaluate opportunities for private partnerships related to ZEBs
- Support ZEB workforce training and education

Ann also answered questions for [Metro Magazine](#), which wrote a story about the plan. The [Gazette Leader](#) and [Mass Transit](#) also shared the news. Learn more on [our website](#).





Metro Board authorizes public comment on budget impacted by deficit

The Metro Board authorized staff to conduct public hearings on the proposed FY 2025 operating and capital budgets and FY 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at their meeting January 25. Metro faces a projected operating budget deficit of \$750 million and the proposed budget includes significant rail and bus service cuts, fare increases, station closures and preventive maintenance expense transfers from the capital to the operating budget. This proposal also meets the requirement that Metro presents a balance budget based on known available funding.

"The proposed service reductions and fare increases being finalized today are not where we hope to end up at the conclusion of the budget process," said Metro Board Chair [Paul Smedberg](#). "We are working diligently with our jurisdictional partners and elected officials to identify funding to offset these destructive cuts. I encourage our customers and stakeholders to

make your voices heard throughout this process." Depending on legislative and other actions in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, Metro's \$11 billion proposed CIP includes funding for near-term essential state of good repair projects, but limits the agency's ability to fund modernization needs which may have impacts on long-term system reliability.

As the three jurisdictions work to identify additional funding and other legislative actions that could avoid the service impacts in the proposed budget, the Metro Board is required to hold public hearings on a balanced budget early in the calendar year to keep the budget process on schedule. NVTC staff will be working with the NVTC WMATA Committee in February to develop comments on Metro's proposed budget. We'll share details about how to share your comments and information on the Virginia public hearings when Metro makes them public.

Summary -- FY2025 Proposed Operating and Capital Budget

- Proposed Operating Budget deficit of \$750 million is eliminated through drastic service & administrative cuts, fare increases, preventive maintenance transfers and cost savings initiatives.
- Key Service & Fare Changes:
 - **Bus:** Eliminate service on 67 bus lines/reduce service on 43 bus lines
 - **Access:** Service area reduced with reductions to the fixed route network
 - **Rail:** Major frequency reductions, 10pm system closure, 10 stations closed, Red Line and Silver Line turnbacks
 - **Fares:** 20% increase in fares and parking rates
- Funding constraints in the Six-Year Capital Budget negatively impact future state of good repair and modernization needs



Metro funding budget amendments introduced in Richmond

Several budget amendments aimed at shoring up funding for Metro were released in January. The proposed amendments would alter Gov. Glenn Youngkin's [budget proposal](#), which does include a provision for "rebaselining" Metro's budget to allow the agency to receive additional funding above the 3% cap.

Sen. David Marsden (D-Fairfax County) introduced an [amendment](#) that would suspend the 3% percent cap. A second [amendment](#) from Sen. Marsden includes no rebaselining and an additional \$65 million per year for Metro over the next two years.

Del. Mark Sickles' (D-Fairfax County) [amendment](#) adds \$65 million in state aid each year for Metro over the next two years and suspends the 3% cap. Del. Paul Krizek's (D-Fairfax County)'s [amendment](#) does not include rebaselining, but does include the \$65 million each of the two years for Metro. NVTC supports all of these amendments, though it's important to point out that both rebaselining and the additional funding are needed.

These budget amendments come as the second week of the 2024 Virginia Legislative Session wrapped up. During this year's [60-day session](#) crossover will be February 13 and the session will adjourn on March 9. Reconvened Session is scheduled for April 17. Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-Fairfax County) is chair of the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) and the [House Transportation Committee](#) is chaired by Del. Karrie Delaney (D-Fairfax County). We're also following the [House Appropriations](#)

Committee, chaired by Del. Luke Torian (D-Prince William County) and the [Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee](#), chaired by Sen. L. Louise Lucas (Cities of Chesapeake and Portsmouth). While there are only a few bills that directly pertain to NVTC, we are following a variety of bills that pertain to Metro, taxes that potentially impact transit funding, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as it relates to public and electronic meetings, membership of certain transportation entities, various transportation studies and transit working group proposals, cybersecurity, as well as the Dillon Rule.

One additional bill that we support, [SJ 28](#), a study put forth by Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Arlington and Fairfax Counties) to examine "long-term, sustainable, dedicated funding and cost-containment controls and strategies to ensure WMATA, VRE, and all Northern Virginia transit systems meet the growing needs of public transit in the region." There are a few bills that we oppose which are [HB 305-Ballard](#) and [HB 854-Baxter-Ennis](#). Both tax bills which negatively impact transit funding. There may be more tax bills added to that list, but we are waiting on financial impact statements for more information.

Don't forget that you can check out our [interactive maps](#) of legislative districts showing which transit routes run through them.





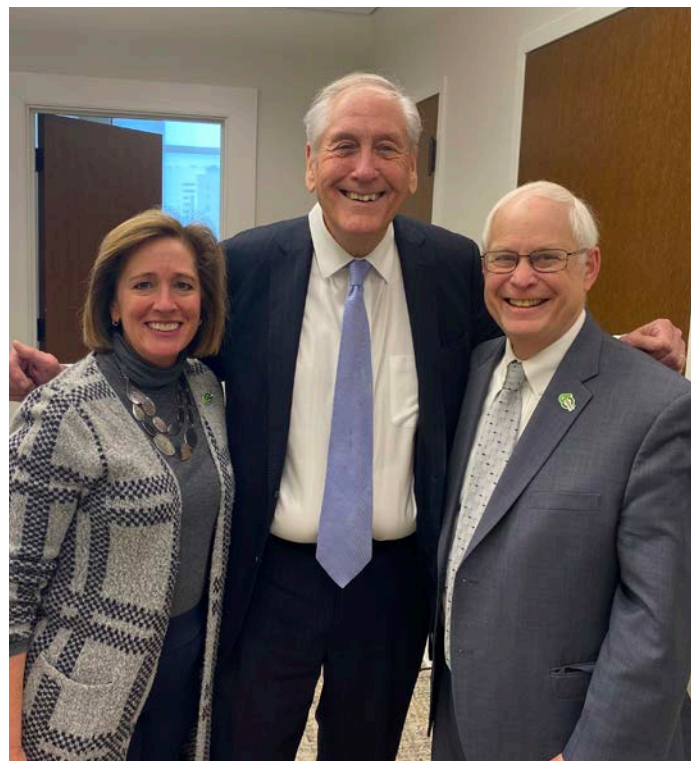
Advocating for public transit in Richmond

Executive Director Kate Mattice, several Commissioners and members of the NVTC staff traveled to Richmond on January 22 for the annual [Virginia Transit Association](#) (VTA) advocacy day. Elected officials and transit partners from across Virginia come together once a year to remind members of the General Assembly of the importance of public transit to all Virginians.

The day started off with remarks from Sen. Mark Warner and NVTC Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane, who spoke about our important “Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth” report that found transit in our region generates \$1.5 billion in tax revenue for the state.

Following the morning kickoff, Kate met with staff for a number of legislators to discuss public transit and critical funding for Metro. Meanwhile, staff met with state transit officials and visited the [newly-opened](#) Virginia General Assembly building, featuring offices, committee rooms and a spacious cafeteria.

Photo: Commissioners David Snyder and Canek Aguirre with Kate Mattice and staff (top, left); Ann McGrane (top, right); Kate Mattice, Sen. David Marsden, Commissioner David Snyder (below)







Staff present at global transportation conference

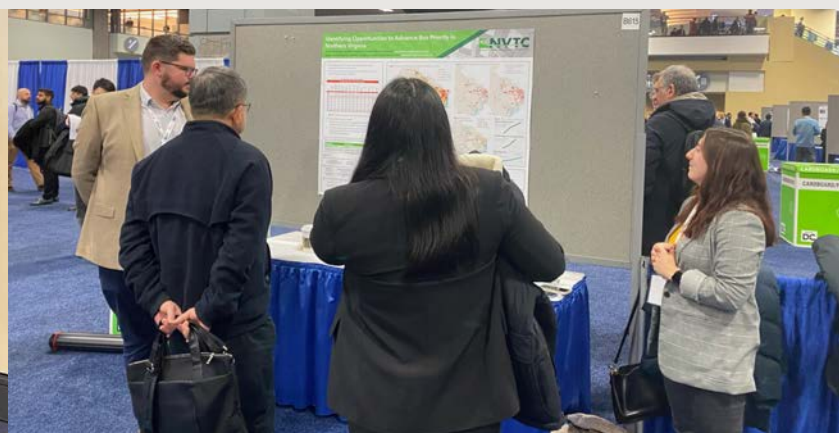
NVTC staff had a significant presence at the [TRB Annual Meeting](#), the world's largest transportation conference, held at the Washington Convention Center in January.

Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony and Senior Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos were joined by former Transit Fellow Rachel Inman to share their report on bus stop [amenities](#).

Separately, Xavier and Sophie presented their work on advancing [bus priority](#) in Northern Virginia. Xavier also served as a judge for research posters focusing on Equitable Access and Transit Ridership and presided over a session on transit

supply and demand.

Ben Owen, NVTC's Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager, presented to a TRB managed lanes and transportation demand management subcommittee on Northern Virginia's effective framework for reinvesting toll revenues into transit and other travel improvements. The subcommittee had an extensive and robust discussion on regional programs around the country that use toll revenues to increase the use of alternatives to driving alone and some of the unique considerations with the use of such revenues.





ART celebrates 25 years of service

Executive Director Kate Mattice took part in Arlington Transit's (ART) 25th anniversary celebration on January 24. ART launched in 1998 with one route in Crystal City and served 118,156 passengers that first year. Today, ART serves 16 routes and two million passengers. The celebration included former Arlington Board Member and Commissioner Chris Zimmerman and bus planner Jim Hamre, who talked about the creation of ART and the recognition that it needed to make better

connections within the county.

Arlington Transit Bureau Chief Lynn Rivers announced that rides will be free on a specially marked bus on the 25th of each month. The Arlington County Board is also looking to the future. The Board approved a new 10-year Arlington Transit Strategic Plan (ATSP) in November, which will guide service for the next decade.



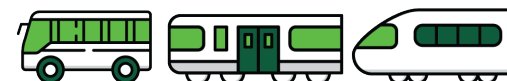


all the best

Best of luck to Transit Fellow Nathan Varnell!

We say goodbye today to Transit Fellow Nathan Varnell, who spent the last year as the first fellow dedicated to supporting our communications team. He's provided valuable support for all of our outreach efforts, especially in assisting planning efforts for NVTC's 60th anniversary this year. Nathan is a Master of Public Administration

student at George Washington University and will soon join the Government Accounting Office as an analyst graduate intern. We wish him well in his endeavors. We also extend our gratitude to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for their ongoing support of NVTC's Transit Fellow program.



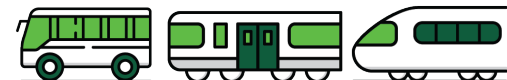


to our new Transit Fellow

We welcomed Robert Rudesill as our new transit fellow in January. Native to Northern Virginia, Robert hails from Fairfax County and recently graduated from Drexel University, majoring in Political Science and minoring in Communications and Law. Robert is supporting the communications team, including marketing and social media campaigns and events for our

60th anniversary celebrations.

NVTC thanks the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for its ongoing support of NVTC's Transit Fellow program, which seeks to prepare the next generation of transportation professionals.





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