

Executive Director Newsletter

January 2020



As we welcome the start of a new decade, we also look ahead to big leadership changes that will shape the future of NVTC and our region. We'll welcome eight new Commissioners this year, more than a third of the Commission. Some will come from remade Boards of Supervisors in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. Others will join us from

the General Assembly where control of both the Senate and House of Delegates changed parties for the first time in a generation. That means new leaders, new committee chairs and new political priorities. We've already seen that shift in Gov. Ralph Northam's proposed budget for 2020 to 2022. Among his proposals, the governor calls for the first increase in the gas tax in years and more money for the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. In this time of transition, NVTC will work to inform newly elected officials at the state and local level about our 2020 Legislative and Policy Agenda. We have reasons to be optimistic about support for our goals to advance transit and reduce congestion on our roads, but we can't take anyone's backing for granted. We know that government at all levels faces financial restraints and competing priorities.

The summer will bring the second planned shutdown of Metrorail stations in Virginia. We're already working on coordination efforts to mitigate the impacts of the shutdown on commuters and we're using the lessons learned during the last year's summer shutdown to improve the response this year. We also have the benefit of relationships that were strengthened with WMATA, other transit agencies and local jurisdictions.

By the end of the year, we could see the opening of the Silver Line Phase 2, which would bring Metrorail service to Dulles International Airport and Loudoun County for the first time. We're already seeing dramatic changes in Transit Oriented Development around Phase 1 stations and we can expect more growth as the six new stations come online.

2020 promises to be a busy and exciting year for NVTC as we continue to meet the challenge of keeping our growing region moving.

Executive Director

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NoVaTransit.org

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Key Dates

- Jan. 15 - 16 - CTB
- Jan. 16 - NVTC Commission Meeting
- Jan. 17 - VRE Operations Board
- Jan. 27 - Virginia Transit Assn. Day in Richmond
- Feb. 6 - Va. Assn. of Counties/Va. Municipal League Legislative Day
- Feb. 19 - CTB
- Feb. 21 - VRE Operations Board

New Long Bridge, major Virginia rail improvements announced

Gov. Ralph Northam announced a \$3.7 billion agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and CSX that will enable significant reliability and service enhancements for VRE and Amtrak. The agreement includes a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River with tracks dedicated exclusively to passenger and commuter rail; acquisition of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way and 225 miles of track; and 37 miles of new track improvements, including a Franconia-Springfield bypass. Currently Long Bridge, built in 1904 and owned by CSX, carries every passenger, commuter, and freight train that crosses the Potomac River. With only two tracks, it's at 98% capacity at peak times. The Commonwealth wants to phase in service over the next decade that will include: increasing VRE service by 75% along the I-95 corridor, with 15-minute intervals at peak periods and the addition of weekend service; doubling the number of Amtrak trains in Virginia; and hourly Amtrak service between Washington and Richmond.



Plans shaping up for 2020 Orange Line station shutdown

WMATA hosted a regional stakeholder meeting at Metro headquarters to kick off planning and coordination for the Orange Line Platform Improvement Project. During this Phase 2 of the Platform Improvement project, WMATA will reconstruct four Virginia Metrorail stations: Vienna, Dunn Loring, West Falls Church and East Falls Church. The project will run from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2020. West Falls Church will remain open to rail service during the project construction. As part of the station shutdown, January 2020

WMATA will work with regional partners to provide alternative travel options to Metrorail customers affected by the shutdown and also work to mitigate the impact to other parallel construction projects. This meeting is the first of multiple coordination and planning efforts WMATA and NVTC will facilitate leading up to and throughout the station closings.

Groundbreaking for Potomac Yard Metro station

The City of Alexandria held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the future Potomac Yard Metro station. Gov. Ralph Northam was on hand to mark the start of construction for the \$320 million dollar project. Paul Smedberg, chair of the WMATA Board and NVTC Commissioner said, "Metro is the heart of our transportation network, and the addition of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station will benefit the region for generations to come." NVTC is managing \$20 million in federal money for the station. Construction costs will be paid for with new tax revenue from development in Potomac Yard over the next 40 years, funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation



Authority, a special tax district in North Potomac Yard, a low-interest loan from the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and significant developer contributions. The station, which will serve the Blue and Yellow Lines, is scheduled to open in early 2022. It will be WMATA's first "infill" station, one that is built between existing stations, since NoMa-Gallaudet University opened in 2004.

NVTC-PRTC Legislative Briefing highlights transit and transportation issues

We joined with PRTC to hold our annual Legislative Briefing in Springfield. The event helps inform newly-elected General Assembly members and county and local officials about important transit and transportation issues and needs in Virginia. Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine talked about shrinking fuel tax revenues and how that makes funding projects more difficult. Fairfax County Supervisor Jeff McKay



opened the event and welcomed people to his district. PRTC Executive Director Robert Schneider, WMATA Manager of Government Relations Regina Sullivan and VRE Acting CEO Rich Dalton joined Kate Mattice on a panel to discuss the roles of our organizations and answer questions from attendees.



Governor's budget increases WMATA funding, grows gas tax

Gov. Ralph Northam released his proposed budget in December. He called for increasing WMATA dedicated capital funding to \$160 Million a year in FY2021 and FY2022. That represents a hike of \$6 million from FY2019. In remarks prior to the budget's release, he said the statewide gas tax would rise four cents per gallon per year over the next three years then tie it to inflation. "With these

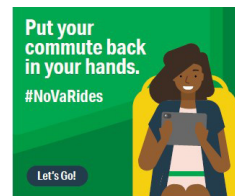
changes, we can maximize our rail investments, substantially increase transit funding, and increase money spent on road maintenance from city streets to interstate highways," said Gov. Northam. Revenues from the regional sales on fuel in NVTC district are unchanged at \$54.9 million from FY2019. The budget also directs \$1 million per year to the Virginia Transit Association to administer a transit pass program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants. DRPT would see an 18% increase in operating assistance and 16% in capital spending from FY2020 to FY2022.

DASH mobile app growth continues with NVTC support



NVTC's Regional Fare Collection Program group has been providing technical support and coordination to DASH for the DASH Bus Mobile Ticketing App deployment. Since its launch, six months ago, the DASH Bus mobile ticketing app continues to experience significant growth. App-based ridership has grown dramatically over the first six months, from roughly 1,000 total boardings in the month of June to roughly 5,000 boardings in both October and November. DASH is offering a discounted fare on the mobile app through the end of the year. In the fall, DASH launched a Fare Share feature to allow partner organizations, including schools, to distribute free DASH bus passes via email. DASH will also be surveying users this winter for feedback on how to improve the app.

#NoVaRides presentation at MWCOG



Communications and Outreach Manager Matt Friedman provided a debrief on our post-summer Metrorail shutdown marketing campaign to the TDM Marketing Group of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Matt explained the history of the campaign from conception to design to execution and evaluation of analytics. The group's members span a wide swath of Virginia, D.C. and Maryland jurisdictions.

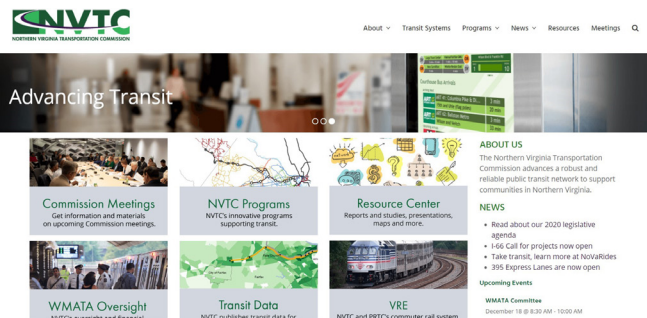
Big check has an even bigger impact

At the Governor's Transportation Conference in Crystal City, Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine accepted a giant symbolic check for \$15 million from Transurban President Jennifer Aument to demonstrate the private-public partnership that created the 395 Express Lanes project that launched in November. The check represented the first of the many annual payments that provide grant funding for the Commuter Choice program on the I-395 corridor. Secretary Valentine discussed the Commonwealth's commitment to continually invest in transit and travel time reliability to benefit our thriving Northern Virginia economy. After joining the other state stakeholders during the check presentation, Kate Mattice also spoke about the seven projects currently in operation and helping commuters avoid the tolls and take advantage of the express lanes for free.



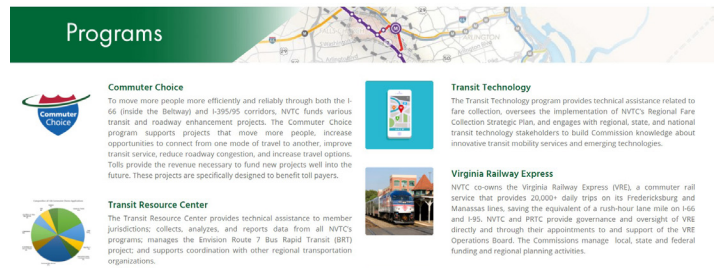
Refreshed NTVC website debuts

The new novatransit.org went live in December, following several months of behind the scenes work. IT and Web Services Manager Melissa Walker built the new website, in close consultation



with Kate Mattice and other key staff members. We wanted to give the site a more modern look

and make it more user-friendly. The refresh better organizes information about the growing number of programs managed by NVTC. It also enhances readability and site navigation.



First farebox upgrade orders placed

NVTC continues to coordinate the Regional Fare Collection Group on upgrading aging bus fareboxes. The Farebox Driver Control (DCU) upgrades are currently in final testing and will be finalized in January. NVTC is working with WMATA and the upgrade vendor to ensure that the hardware and software meet the requirements of NVTC partners. NVTC is also assisting regional partners in placing orders and ensuring that grant funding is in place. The first order has been placed with expected delivery in the spring, with other partners expected to place orders in the coming months.



Sharing the lessons of Commuter Choice

Allan Fye participated in a National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Peer Exchange work session in Atlanta to discuss how performance data is used to make transportation funding decisions. He used NVTC's Commuter Choice program to highlight the importance of high quality data during the application, project scoring, and program development processes and to lead a discussion on the importance of an ongoing feedback loop to improve the program. The NCHRP report will be published in 2020.

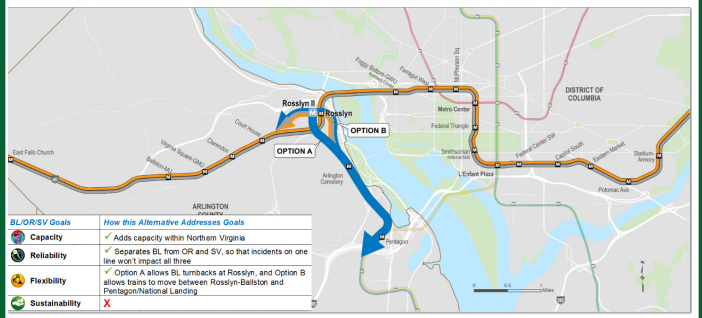
Virginia Breeze

The Virginia Department of Rail and Transportation (DRPT) will begin service on two new bus routes in 2020. One line will connect Union Station in Washington, D.C. to Danville, with potential stops at Dulles International Airport, Charlottesville and Lynchburg. The second route will connect Richmond and Martinsville, with potential stops in Danville, South Boston, Hampden Sydney and Farmville. Virginia Breeze currently operates a Union Station to Blacksburg route, with multiple stops, including Arlington and Dulles. (Image: Virginia Breeze)



WMATA

WMATA recently released five concept designs designed to mitigate Metrorail congestion in the Rosslyn tunnel. The concepts are part of the ongoing Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity and Reliability study. In December, WMATA held public hearings, including one each in Arlington and Tysons. The agency expects to complete the evaluation of alternatives by spring 2020 and to select the preferred alternative by fall of next year. (Image: WMATA)



ART

Arlington Transit's latest "Art on the Art Bus" exhibit features the work of Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. Kennedy created seven letter-pressed placards to mark the 60th anniversary of seven lunch counter sit-ins. The peaceful protests challenged widespread segregation policies. The project is a collaboration with the county's Historic Preservation Program, Arlington Public Art, and the Arlington Art Truck. (Photo: Arlington Transit)



WMATA

WMATA recently announced the expansion of wireless service in all Green Line tunnels and most of the Yellow Line. That follows the activation of tunnel segments between Gallery Place and Branch Avenue. The Green, Orange and Blue Lines now have complete wireless service. The Red Line from Dupont Circle north to White Flint, the Yellow Line from L'Enfant Plaza to the Potomac River portal, along with the one-mile Silver Line tunnel in Tysons, are expected to be completed by June 2020.

