



NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Executive Director Newsletter



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NoVaTransit.org
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Northern Virginia
Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 230
Arlington, VA 22201

January 2023



A Message from Kate Mattice

The coming of a new year gives us a chance to think about all the possibilities that lie ahead and the next 12 months look especially promising for the ongoing work of NVTC. A number of our key initiatives will celebrate milestones in 2023. We were delighted by Congress' passing of an omnibus spending bill just before the holidays that includes \$2 million that will enable us to complete the planning for the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system connecting Tysons and Alexandria, by way of Falls Church and Seven Corners, and we owe a debt of gratitude to Reps. Don Beyer and Gerry Connolly for shepherding this earmark.

We also look forward to the opening of the newest Metro station in Northern Virginia as Potomac Yard Station is expected to come online in May. We're already seeing the area around the station transform as this fast-growing neighborhood of Alexandria gains a vital transit connection.

Additionally, NVTC will lead several studies this year, including the Value of Northern Virginia's Transit Network to the Commonwealth, an update to our 2017 study showing the economic benefits of Metro, Virginia Railway Express and other transit systems to the Commonwealth; The Northern Virginia Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan to assist Northern Virginia transit providers in implementing zero-emission buses (ZEBs), associated technology and infrastructure; and the Role of Metrobus white paper to explore and evaluate the policy, funding, capital facility, governance, labor and other considerations of Northern Virginia local transit agencies assuming the operation of Metrobus services.

Lastly, NVTC's WMATA Operating Funding and Reform Working Group will kick off its effort to consider a new funding model for Metro that will work for Northern Virginia. We recognize the ongoing changes in commuting patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and this working group will explore funding options to align Metro's expenses and revenues in a way that is financially sustainable for NVTC jurisdictions and in a way that holds Metro accountable to its funding partners.

This year holds a lot of promise for NVTC and our regional transit partners as we work to support and grow our transit network.

Kate A. Mattice
Executive Director

In This Issue

- 4 Legislative Forum examines state of transit in NoVa, previews what's coming in 2023
- 6 NVTC report calls on Metro to restore customer confidence
- 7 NVTC launches innovative transit data dashboard
- 8 Metro Briefs NVTC WMATA Committee on Strategic Transformation Plan
- 9 Proposed FY Metro budget closes gap, simplifies fares
- 10 Regional forum examines Equitable Transit-Oriented Development
- 10 NVTC staff swap cookies, presents at holiday celebration
- 11 Thank You Commissioner David Meyer



January 17-18
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

January 20
VRE Operations Board

January 24
Virginia Passenger Rail
Authority

January 25
WMATA Committee

February 2
Commission Meeting

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(L-R) Sen. George Barker, OmniRide Executive Director Bob Schneider, PRTC Chair Victor Angry, NVTC Chair Canek Aguirre, NVTC Executive Director Kate Martice, DRAFT Director Jen DeBruhl, VRE CEO Rich Dalton, Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke



Legislative Forum examines state of transit in NoVa, previews what's coming in 2023

We held our annual [Legislative Forum](#) in Springfield December 6 with our co-hosts from the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). The gathering allows both Commissions and the VRE Operations Board to share their state and federal legislative priorities for the coming year. The event also provides an opportunity for elected officials and their staff members to hear about the issues facing the transit agencies operating in Northern Virginia. This year's forum included a welcome to the Congressional district from Rep. Don Beyer, a keynote address from Director Jen DeBruhl of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public

Transportation and a panel of transit leaders featuring Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke, Virginia Railway Express CEO Rich Dalton and OmniRide Executive Director Bob Schneider.

Rhonda Gilchrest, NVTC's Meetings and Events Manager & Commission Secretary, organized the forum, with help from Executive Assistant Genoveva Cutrell, Marketing & Engagement Manager Monique Blyther, Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman, IT Manager Melissa Walker and Legislative and Administrative Assistant Tenley O'Hara and vital day-of assistance from the rest of our staff.



Rep. Don Beyer

Canek Aguirre

Jen DeBruhl

Victor Angry





NVTC report calls on Metro to restore customer confidence

NVTC delivered the 2022 [Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA](#) to Gov. Glenn Youngkin and members of the Virginia General Assembly and a host of other key officials December 13. The report reflects the priorities of NVTC jurisdictions for the operations and maintenance of the Metro system. It includes five strategies directed to Metro:

- Rebuild customer confidence
- Enforce fare payment uniformly across the system
- Implement a simple and convenient fare structure
- Increase non-fare revenues from real estate and advertising
- Manage labor cost

The report also details recommendations directed to NVTC:

- Explore the implications of local transit agencies assuming the operation of Metrobus services in Northern Virginia
- Examine and develop options for a new financial operating model for Metro

The report reflects months of work from NVTC's WMATA Committee, chaired by Commissioner Walter Alcorn, and staff, led by WMATA Senior Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter and assisted by Program Analyst Ronnetta Zack-Williams. In addition, Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther worked with Chair Canek Aguirre to produce a [video](#) to accompany the report.

While mandated by the General Assembly, the production of this report also provides an opportunity for the Northern Virginia jurisdictions to come together to speak with one voice about how Metro should serve the region.

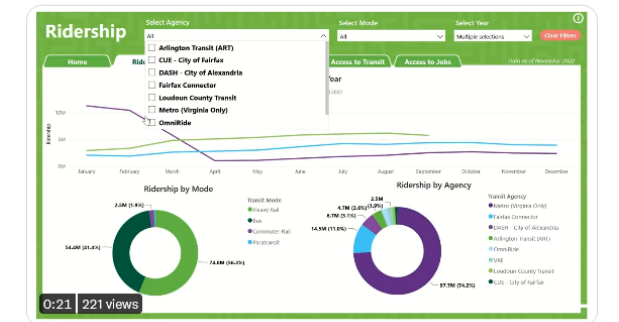
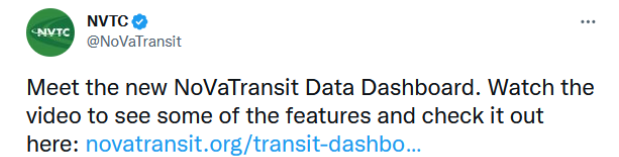


NVTC launches innovative transit data dashboard

NVTC's Transit Resource Center team launched the [NoVaTransit Data Dashboard](#) to provide on-demand access to detailed information on the eight transit systems serving the region December 15. The NoVaTransit Data Dashboard features regularly updating data on ridership, service, access to transit and other key metrics for Metrorail, Metrobus, Virginia Railway Express, DASH, Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax-CUE, Loudoun County Transit and OmniRide.

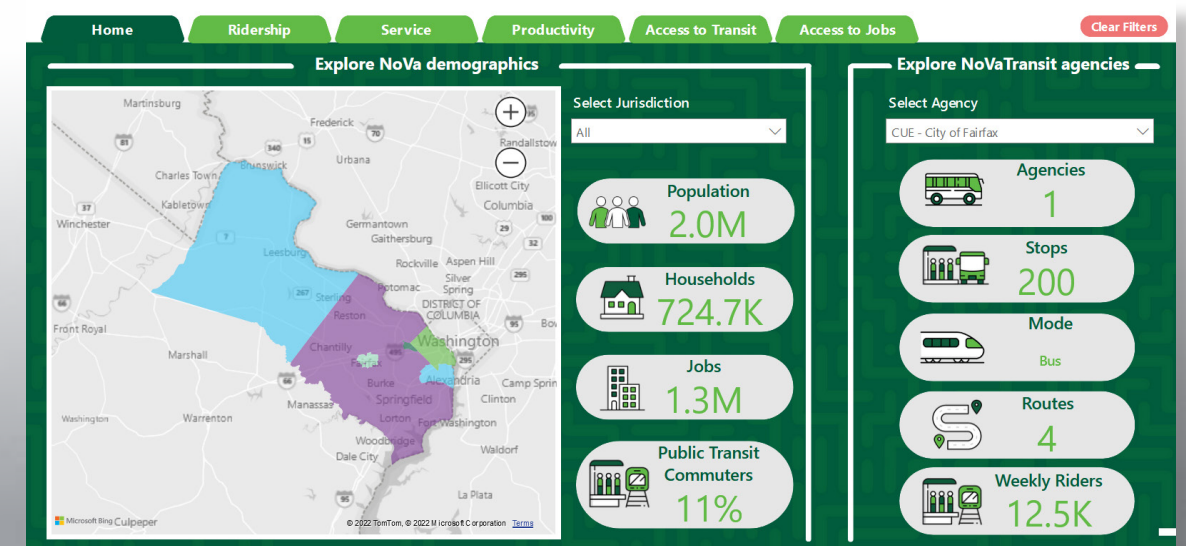
The NoVaTransit Data Dashboard, part of [novatransit.org](#), includes six main pages:

- **Home:** An overview of NVTC's jurisdictions as well as the transit agencies that operate within these jurisdictions
- **Ridership:** Transit monthly ridership by operator, mode and year
- **Service:** The activity of buses, trains and other transit vehicles when a vehicle is available to the public and there is an expectation of carrying passengers
- **Productivity:** The relationship between transit output (ridership) and transit input (service)
- **Access to Transit:** The number/percent of the jurisdiction's population with access to either a transit stop or station
- **Access to Jobs:** The number/percent of jobs in a jurisdiction with access to either a transit stop or station



This dashboard will be a living source of the region's transit data and replaces static reports NVTC previously published. It will be updated based on data provided by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, transit agency General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) files and annual census updates. NVTC also intends to add new features to the dashboard as the tool matures.

Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony and Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos engineered the dashboard and worked with Web and IT Manager Melissa Walker to integrate it into NVTC's website.





Proposed FY Metro budget closes gap, simplifies fares

The Metro Board of Directors [reviewed](#) GM/CEO Randy Clarke's proposed [operating and capital budget](#) at their meeting December 8. Importantly, it closes a predicted budget gap and simplifies fares. Both are strategies outlined in the 2022 Report on the Condition and Performance of WMATA. Further, the proposal funds the opening of the Potomac Yard Metrorail station in Alexandria and realigns and improves service on the 16M Metrobus route connecting Columbia Pike and Crystal City.

Metro lists the following budget highlights:

- Increases bus and rail service, simplifies fares, launches the Better Bus Network Redesign, funds crisis intervention specialists and fully-funds Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) positions
- Funds zero-emission buses and electrification of the Northern and Bladensburg bus garages, opens the new Potomac Yard Station, modernizes customer wayfinding and funds the creation of the Metro Integrated Comms Center (MICC)

- FY 2024 Proposed Operating Budget includes revenue of \$509 million, expenses of \$2,322 million, total subsidy of \$1,252 million and \$561 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief funding used
- The FY 2024 operating budget gap of \$185 million will be closed by a combination of revenue increases, expense reductions and federal funding assistance, including both ARPA funding and increased Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Federal Formula Funding for Maintenance

NVTC staff and our jurisdictional partners will review the proposed FY 24 budget and will discuss it at the January WMATA Committee meeting as the Metro Board prepares a final vote in April. Finance and Capital Committee Chair [Matt Letourneau](#) also urged the Board and staff to start work on an FY 25 budget as soon as the FY 24 budget is adopted to allow more time to address future budget gaps created by lower ridership since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Metro Briefs NVTC WMATA Committee on Strategic Transformation Plan

Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke and staff briefed our WMATA Committee virtually December 9 on their new Strategic Transformation Plan, #YourMetro, The Way Forward. The plan will provide a long-term strategy and direct Metro's day-to-day decision making over the next five plus years. The proposed plan establishes five core values: safe, customer centric, equity focused, ethical and innovative. Metro has been gathering data and input from its staff, customers and various stakeholders to lead to the development of the following goals:

- Service Excellence
- Regional Opportunity and Partnership
- Sustainability
- Talented Teams

Each goal is supported by objectives and metrics which are set to achieve Metro's vision of the future. The next steps include ongoing public outreach as the plan continues to be modified by Metro staff with the final plan expected to be ready for Metro Board adoption in February.



Fare Optimization Photo courtesy of Metro

Fare Simplification Proposal

Standardize peak and off-peak fares, align rail and bus base fares, and discount fares for low-income customers

	Base Fare	Max Fare	Reduced Fare ¹
Current Fare Structure			
Bus	\$2.00	\$6.00	\$1.00
Peak	\$2.25	\$6.00	50% off the peak fare
Off-Peak Weekday	\$2.00	\$3.85	
Late Night² and Weekend	\$2.00	\$1.00	
Proposed Fare Structure			
Bus	\$2.00	\$6.50	\$1.00
Regular	\$2.00	\$6.50	\$1.00 to \$3.25
Late Night² and Weekend	\$2.00	\$1.00	

MetroAccess fares are twice the fastest comparable fixed-route fare with a maximum of \$6.50 per trip.
¹ 50% discount for senior, disabled, and low-income customers
² Late Night fares apply after 9:30pm

Regional forum examines Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

Executive Director Kate Mattice attended the Advancing Equitable Transit-Oriented Development summit December 7, which examined growth in the Washington region and ways to ensure that everyone has a chance to benefit from its prosperity. The event, sponsored by the Amazon Housing Equity Fund, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, Greater Greater Washington, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and Smart Growth America included more than a dozens speakers. The organizers say Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) is an approach to building compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented communities around new or existing public transit stations with a commitment to equity goals that ensure low-income residents and residents of color benefit.

Chelsea Allinger | @allinsea@mstdn.social
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.@SmartGrowthCEO charges us to confront honestly the reality that transit-oriented development will only advance equity if we are intentional about prioritizing it at every stage of development. It's about affordability — AND also contracting, retail/commercial space sizes, etc.



1:50 PM · Dec 7, 2022



NVTC staff swap cookies, presents at holiday celebration

On December 15 NVTC staff and Chair Canek Aguirre gathered to celebrate the holidays. The event featured a cookie swap and the always-fun white elephant gift exchange. It was nice to take a few minutes to celebrate our successes and look forward to a brighter new year.

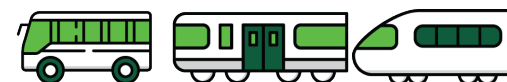


Thank You!

Thank You Commissioner David Meyer

The Commission thanked Commissioner David Meyer for his service and approved a resolution in his honor at last week's Commission [meeting](#). The City of Fairfax Mayor decided not to run again this year so he will be stepping away from public life. Mr. Meyer has represented the city on NVTC since 2014 and more recently served as chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee and as well as a member of all the other NVTC committees.

Throughout his tenure on NVTC, Mr. Meyer has been an advocate for a strong safety culture at Metro, a voice for transit equity by spearheading efforts to make the CUE bus system fare-free and a champion for the environmental benefits of transit. I also had the opportunity to give Mr. Meyer a personal thank you at our Legislative Forum Monday.





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