



Advancing transit in Northern Virginia since 1964



May 2025

Executive Director Newsletter

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A Message From Kate Mattice

Later this month, we will honor "Celebrate Transportation Day," [created](#) by the Virginia General Assembly in 2018 to recognize all forms of transportation across the Commonwealth. We take it as an opportunity to highlight the amazing public transit and passenger rail agencies serving more than two million people in Northern Virginia each week.

Why limit us to one day? In fact, the month of May is full of opportunities to celebrate. I'm delighted to share that NVTC will have a strong presence at this year's Virginia Transit Association [Conference](#) in Richmond. Deputy Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos will lead a session on Transit Funding Challenges in which they will present NVTC's "[Transit Funding Guide](#)." I will have the honor of joining a panel of transit agency leaders to discuss "Funding Transit: Impacts and Opportunities."

I'll also be in attendance for the American Public Transit Association's [Legislative Conference](#), which brings together transit agencies and lawmakers in Washington. I sit on key APTA committees, including the Legislative Steering Committee and Planning and Program Development Committee. Both will meet during the conference.

Other happenings this month include the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials ([COMTO](#)) Celebrating Women Who Move the Nation Awards Breakfast, honoring, among others, Metro's Chief Financial Officer, Yetunde Olumide, and [Bike to Work Day](#) on May 15th. Don't forget to check out [our report](#) on how bikes and scooters improve access to transit.

There are many ways to applaud transportation this month. We hope you'll join us in celebrating.


Executive Director



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May 16
VRE Operations Board

May 20-21
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

May 22
Virginia Passenger
Rail Authority

May 28-29
Virginia Transit Association
Conference

May 29
Joint WMATA & Legislative
and Policy Committees

June 5
Commission Meeting

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Commuter Choice public hearing highlights proposed I-395/95 projects

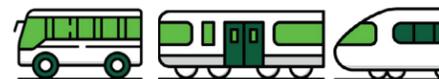
NVTC held a virtual [public hearing](#) on the draft I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2026-2027 [Program of Projects](#) April 24. The hearing included a presentation from Commuter Choice Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein on the 12 potential bus service enhancements for ART, DASH, Fairfax Connector, Metrobus and OmniRide; one new Metrobus route; and the improvement of VRE's Leeland Road Station. NVTC staff, along with jurisdictional and transit agency staff, heard feedback from members of the public.

Following the hearing, staff briefed the Joint Commission Working Group, which is comprised of Commissioners from NVTC and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, on the draft Program of Projects. Both Commissions will be briefed at their May meetings and they will be asked to take action approving the final Program of Projects for transmittal to the Commonwealth Transportation Board at their June meetings.

I-66 needs assessment to collect updated travel data

Members of NVTC's Program Advisory Committee (PAC) heard an [update](#) on the I-66 Needs Assessment when they met April 24. The joint study between NVTC and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will examine changing travel patterns along the I-66 corridor and identify both short- and long-term projects that could be funded by NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice or DRPT's I-66 Outside the Beltway programs.

In March and April, NVTC and DRPT staff met with 12 local jurisdictions and transit agencies to review initial findings and receive agency feedback on those findings and existing and future conditions data. The project team is working to update vehicle and transit travel data to reflect the most up to date trends, which have seen dramatic changes since February of this year. After collecting updated data and identifying additional travel demand needs, staff plan another round of stakeholder outreach for this summer.





SJ 28 subcommittee hears funding challenges facing transit agencies

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in the SJ 28 Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee [meeting](#) on April 22 at the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. Director of Programs and Policy Andrew D'huyvetter, who serves as the chair of the SJ 28 Technical Working Group, provided the Joint Subcommittee with a review of how transit funding works now and items to consider for any new, future transit funding.

We were also lucky to have a number of our agency colleagues, including Josh Baker of DASH, Bob Schneider of OmniRide and Mark Schofield of Virginia Railway Express, speak to current challenges faced by their agencies. Thank you to Sen. Adam Ebbin for chairing the Joint Subcommittee and leading us through this important effort to identify sustainable transit funding for Northern Virginia.



DRPT proposes reexamination of MERIT program

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) released its draft Fiscal Year 2026 [Six-Year Improvement Program](#) in April, outlining investment plans for rail and public transit over the next six fiscal years. Highlights include \$332 million in funding for local transit agencies across the state, \$442 million in assistance to Metro and \$17 million for Virginia Railway Express' (VRE) capital and operating budgets.

This draft SYIP anticipates growth in both year-over-year revenue and growth in allocations compared to previous years. DRPT and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will host public meetings regarding the draft SYIP. In Northern Virginia, there will be a meeting on Thursday, May 8 at 5 p.m. at VDOT's Northern Virginia District offices, located at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

You can submit comments and learn more about this meeting and other public meetings being held across Virginia [online](#).

About the FY2026 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP)

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is the Commonwealth's joint annual funding allocation program for the programs and initiatives that DRPT and VDOT administer. The SYIP acts as DRPT's annual budget for funding and supporting rail and public transit programs across the Commonwealth. Funding for the SYIP is driven by formulas established in the Code of Virginia, while individual projects funded in the SYIP are scored by DRPT's grant applications, and then approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

DRPT's SYIP provides a variety of support across the Commonwealth for transit providers, freight railroads, regional planning commissions, and commuter services. By providing a centralized SYIP dashboard, DRPT helps inform the public of the Commonwealth's efforts to support, sustain, and expand access to reliable transportation, to increase the movement of people and goods, and be transparent in its funding programs to be a good steward of public resources.

Funding Provided by the FY2026 SYIP:

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	\$332m
WMATA WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY	\$442m
VRE VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS	\$17m
RAIL (DRPT)	\$20m
TRANSFORMING RAIL IN VIRGINIA (VPRA)	\$232m

FY2026 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Development Schedule



Metro adopts Fiscal Year 2026 budget, discusses Automated Train Operations

The Metro Board of Directors [adopted](#) the FY 2026 [budget](#) and FY 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on April 10. Totalling just under \$5 billion, the FY 2026 budget and CIP feature several optimization and efficiency concepts that drive ridership and revenue growth. Metro will provide more rail service in the peak periods, open the rail system earlier on weekends and close later on weekend nights, introduce Tap-Ride-Go contactless payment and

implement the 2025 [Better Bus](#) Network, which includes 11 more routes in the Frequent Service Network and increases midday, evening and weekend service.

In the capital budget, Metro continues its focus on investments to maintain the system for safe, reliable service. The final budget proposal adopted by the Board includes approximately \$200 million in delayed or deferred expenses - from customer information displays to fare

collection modernization - that were originally planned for FY 2026-2027. Fiscal Year 2026 begins on July 1, 2025.

The Board also received an update on Automated Train Operations, or ATO. Metro began ATO on the Red Line in December and has seen decreasing numbers of station overruns in the four months since. Subject to concurrence with the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, Metro will begin rolling out ATO on other lines between April and June.

Metro pitches world class transit initiatives

Metro's Finance and Capital Committee [met April 24](#) and received a briefing on Metro's vision to create a [world class transit](#) system. The presentation focused on providing frequent, reliable and safe service with enough capacity to support core ridership and growing communities in the region. Metro identified three primary initiatives as part of the world class transit investments: rail automation, bus priority and Blue/Orange/Silver corridor improvements.

Metro continues to set benchmarks for Automated Train Operations (ATO) across the Metrorail network, as ATO becomes the global standard for its reliability and cost savings. Additionally, bus priority treatments, such as dedicated bus lanes and bus signal priority, are a key aspect of Metro's goals to provide frequent and fast Metrobus service throughout the region.

Metro continues to investigate strategies to address capacity constraints on the Blue, Orange and Silver (B/O/S) Metrorail lines between Rosslyn in Virginia and Stadium-Armory in the District of Columbia, where all three lines share one track set. Metro is developing a new proposal that relies on automation, cross-region bus priority and enhanced station access at critical locations to improve service.

Metro intends to develop a Rail Automation Program and Business Plan by December 2025, continuing to engage with peer systems and identify best practices for automation, advance a regional bus priority network through DMV Moves and deliver an updated proposal for the B/O/S corridor by December 2025.



A rendering from Metro showing platform screen doors

FY2026 Operating Budget Drives Ridership, Modernization and Efficiencies

FY2026 Budget Summary and Six-Year Capital Improvement Program

Rail Optimization	Better Bus Network	Fares and Fees	Modernization Investments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add peak capacity to address ridership growth Extend half of Yellow Line trains to Greenbelt (Begins December 2025) Open earlier on weekend mornings and close late on weekend late nights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Year One Better Bus Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 more routes in the Frequent Service Network Increased midday, evening, and weekend service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fare changes Introduce open payment (Tap. Ride. Go.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tap to ride with contactless credit/debit mobile devices and cards with no fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted cost reductions and efficiencies from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Modernization Cash Collection Modernization Inventory and Supply Chain Modernization
<p>Savings from automatic train operations help fund service; ~\$2.5 million in savings from deferring YL extension and reducing staffing at 5 stations with multiple entrances during low ridership times</p>	<p>Total of \$6 million of savings from new scheduling software as well as reduction of peak bus and deadhead time</p>	<p>Savings included under modernization investments</p>	<p>\$10 million of savings from modernization</p>

The Federal Transit Administration's required Title VI analysis of the proposed rail service and fee changes is attached to the resolution. The analysis describes one disparate impact finding and Metro's substantial legitimate justification for moving forward.

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APTA Mobility conference brings buses into focus

Vikram Sinha and Daniel Knickelbein joined Executive Director Kate Mattice at the 2025 [APTA Mobility](#) Conference in Austin, Texas in April. We connected with professionals from across the industry, attended sessions on a variety of topics including funding, safety and AI, and toured some of the recent transit investments Austin has made. One of the highlights was a half-day focused on bus rapid transit (BRT), featuring professionals from seven agencies discussing their lessons learned from operating BRT. Kate also participated in APTA committee meetings with other industry leaders from across the country.



Kate Mattice and Dottie Watkins, CapMetro CEO

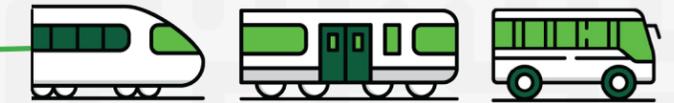


Welcome Meg Johnston!

We welcomed a new grants and procurement manager in April. Born and raised in Northern Virginia, Margaret "Meg" Johnston brings her knowledge of the public sector grants procurement process to NVTC, reporting to Director of Finance and Administration Scott Kalkwarf. Meg graduated from George Mason University with a degree in Business and Tourism and joins NVTC from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the United States Department of Agriculture.



Welcome aboard!



Learn More About Grants Management...

At NVTC, grants and procurement ensure that every dollar invested moves Northern Virginia's transportation network forward. By securing critical funding and managing resources responsibly, NVTC helps deliver safer, greener and more connected travel options across the region.



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