



Advancing transit  
in Northern Virginia  
since 1964



# Executive Director Newsletter



October  
**2024**

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## A Message from Kate Mattice

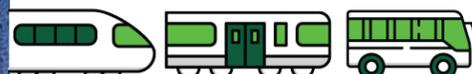
Enabling a safe, reliable public transportation network has been at the core of NVTC’s mission since our founding 60 years ago, but even in the earliest days of planning for the Metro system, how to pay for it was a key topic of discussion. Metro functions through a unique governance structure bringing Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and the federal government together. The regional partners pay to operate and maintain the system, with additional federal support for maintenance.

However, reports from as early as the 1970s highlighted the lack of a dedicated funding stream as a problem. Fast forward to today and the region’s largest transit agency still faces that same challenge. That’s one reason we are actively involved in two parallel efforts to implement dedicated funding for all public transit, including Metro, Virginia Railway Express and the local bus systems that serve Northern Virginia.

NVTC staff are providing extensive support for the Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint [Subcommittee](#) focused on efforts in Virginia, while engaging with [DMVMoves](#), a joint effort between Metro and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to reimagine public transit throughout the greater Washington region.

Both groups hope to finally solve the puzzle of how to fund our transit agencies without the boom-and-bust cycles that have defined the last half century. Our expertise also helps ensure that the two groups learn from each other and work together on this momentous endeavor and one that I hope will leave a lasting, positive impact on our region.

*Kate A. Mattice*  
Executive Director



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**October 17**  
Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee

**October 17**  
Joint WMATA/Legislative and Policy Committees

**October 18**  
VRE Operations Board

**October 22-23**  
Commonwealth Transportation Board

**November 7**  
Commission Meeting

**December 13**  
NVTC, PRTC & VRE Legislative Forum

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## Celebrates 60 years of transit excellence

Executive Director Kate Mattice expresses her deepest gratitude to the many current and past Commissioners who turned out for our 60th anniversary celebration and documentary premiere on September 5. They helped lead NVTC through 60 years of change and growth and their work has helped transform the region into a model for what communities can do when they work together to solve transportation problems. Problems that were widely known at the time the General Assembly created NVTC in 1964.



As Kate heard many times from attendees, the celebration became a reunion of sorts, bringing together not only Commissioners, but those who have worked in other elected or appointed positions, leadership or staff roles, as transportation consultants or as advocates for better public transit. NVTC was grateful to hear remarks from Sen. Tim Kaine, Rep. Don Beyer, Deputy Transportation Secretary Michael Sargent and Chair Matt de Ferranti. Kate also thanks Rep. Gerry Connolly for sending his good wishes and for honoring NVTC's milestone in the Congressional Record.

The celebration and documentary premiere, along with all of our special 60th anniversary year endeavors, were made possible through the generous contributions of our [sponsors](#). We thank them again for making these commemorations possible.

NVTC staff put in hours of hard work to produce the celebration, our [Transit Innovation Summit](#) in June and our Legislative Reception in February.



### Special Thanks to our Sponsors



## Let's talk about the documentary!

"Advancing Transit in Northern Virginia" tells NVTC's story, from the initial efforts to create NVTC and a rapid transit system for the Washington region, to the development of Metro, Virginia Railway Express and local bus systems, NVTC's role in bringing local jurisdictions together to make regional decisions, and the creation of the Commuter Choice program, to name a few highlights. You can watch the [documentary online](#) now.

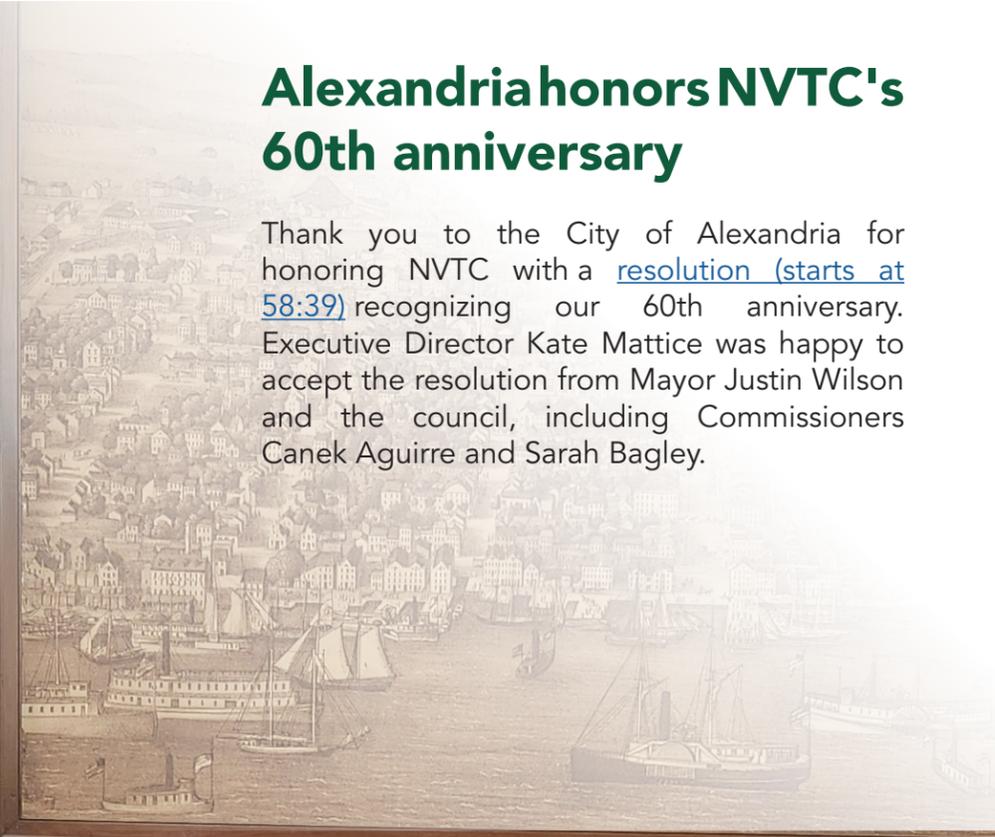


## Advancing Transit in Northern Virginia



## Alexandria honors NVTC's 60th anniversary

Thank you to the City of Alexandria for honoring NVTC with a [resolution \(starts at 58:39\)](#) recognizing our 60th anniversary. Executive Director Kate Mattice was happy to accept the resolution from Mayor Justin Wilson and the council, including Commissioners Canek Aguirre and Sarah Bagley.





## NVTC committees discuss dedicated funding, fare policy and technology

The NVTC WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees held a [joint meeting](#) on September 19 and received briefings on NVTC's work toward long-term, dedicated, sustainable funding for public transit, fare policy and technology in the region, as well as NVTC's 2025 Legislative Agenda.

The committees discussed DMVMoves, SJ 28: Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public

Transit Joint Subcommittee, including an overview of how Metro's peers use dedicated revenues to support their operating budgets, and the NVTC 2024 "Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA." Staff also briefed the committees with an update on the status of fare policy in the region and its role in a connected transit customer experience as well as NVTC's forthcoming Legislative Agenda. Key highlights include continuing to advocate for long-term, sustainable funding for public transit agencies in Northern Virginia and preserving additional state aid and Metro operating cap re-baselining contained in the Commonwealth's two-year budget.

## Regional leaders consider future Northern Virginia transit needs

The General Assembly's Joint Subcommittee established by SJ28 to study the growing needs of public transit in Northern Virginia held its [second of four 2024 meetings](#) at NVTC on September 26. The Joint Subcommittee [received briefings](#) from NVTC, Metro, Virginia Railway Express, OmniRide

and Deputy Secretary of Transportation Michael Sargent on a variety of topics including short- and long-term transit needs, cost containment strategies, financial and performance trends, the Virginia 3% cap and how peer regions across the country fund transit. Future meetings of the Joint Subcommittee will be held on Thursday, October 17 and Tuesday, November 12 at NVTC in the first-floor conference room. The meetings are open to the public and livestreamed on NVTC's [YouTube channel](#).





## Commuter Choice helps DASH reach another ridership record



Congratulations to DASH for another [record year](#) of ridership! Communications Specialist Colie Touzel was on hand as DASH celebrated 5.3 million riders with an event on September 19 in Alexandria. That eclipsed the previous year's record of 4.5 million. NVTC's Commuter Choice program has played a significant role in DASH's recent success. Commuter Choice has funded improvements on two key DASH lines,

connecting Alexandria's West End with the Pentagon and Potomac Yard-VT Station. That includes shortening wait times between buses, buying two new articulated buses, improving bus stops and installing new information displays. These routes have seen tremendous growth, with ridership on Line 35 nearly seven times higher than the route it replaced, making it the busiest in the DASH network.

## NVTC, PRTC members briefed on upcoming I-395/95 Commuter Choice call for projects

The Program Advisory Committee (PAC) held a [joint meeting](#) September 19 with the NVTC-PRTC Joint Commission Working Group (JCWG) to brief members on the upcoming I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2026-2027 call

for projects. The JCWG, led by PAC Chair Dalia Palchik, oversees and provides direction on the I-395/95 Commuter Choice Program and is comprised of three NVTC and three PRTC Commissioners. NVTC and PRTC will be asked to open the call for projects at their October meetings. The JCWG will meet again in spring 2025 to review the draft I-395/95 FY 2026-2027 Program of Projects, once all eligible applications have been scored and a staff-recommended program has been developed. The PAC also received an update on the Northern Virginia Regional Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) [Program](#).

**\$90.1M** awarded to date, for:

- 18 buses to support expanded service
- 13 bus service improvements
- 2 park-and-ride expansions
- 1 rail station expansion
- 1 bus rapid transit line
- ... and more

## Program Benefits To Date



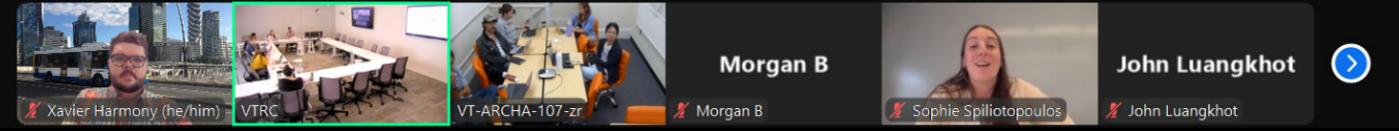
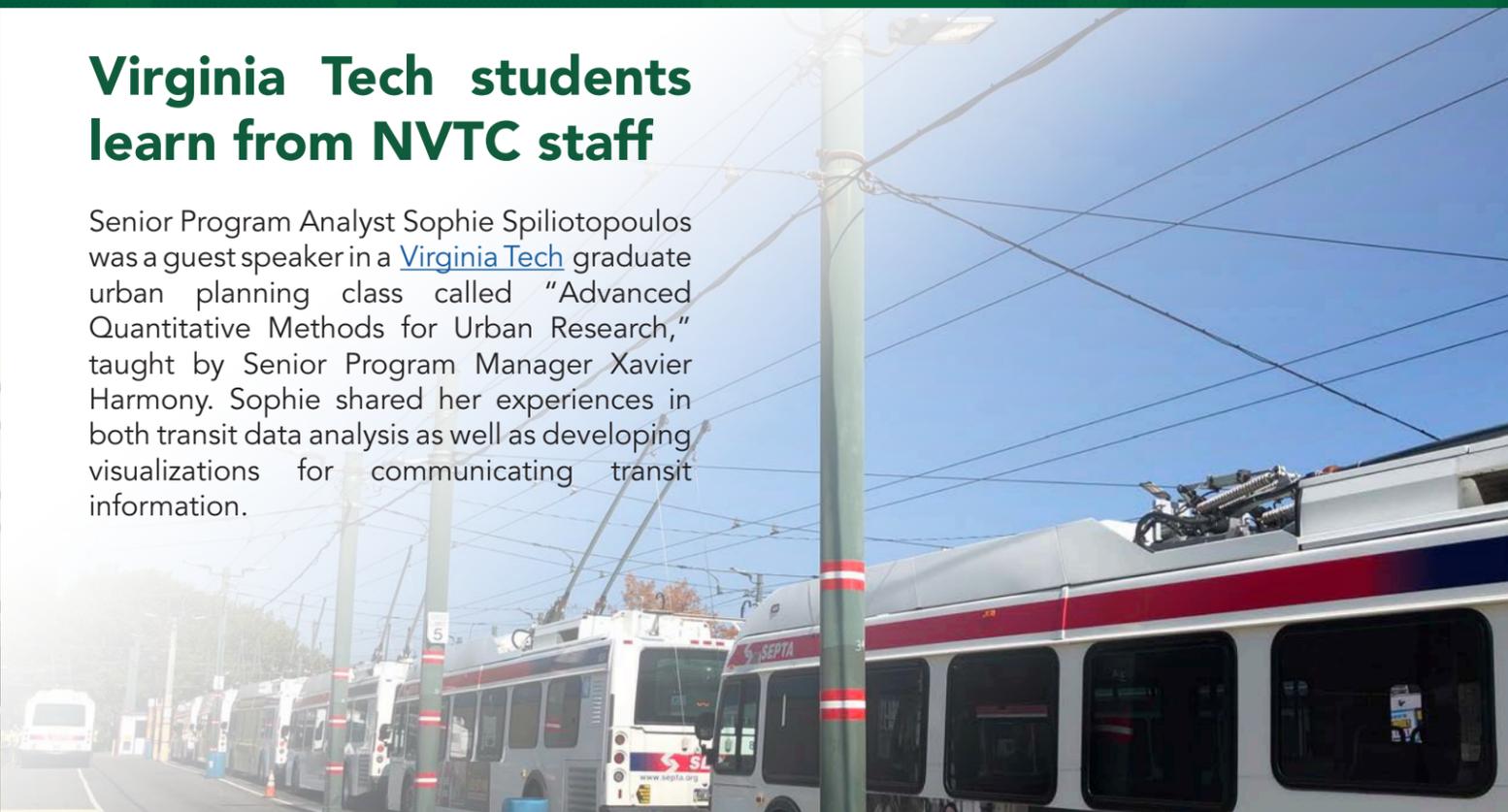
- I-395/95 Commuter Choice's investments since 2019 in expanded transit and other travel options have improved travel for the corridor's commuters and overall quality of life for area residents.
- 55M** fewer vehicle miles traveled
- 71%** greenhouse gas emission reduction relative to single-occupancy vehicle trips
- \$19M** in regional economic benefit from reduced travel delay
- \$7.6M** in fuel cost savings for commuters
- 85** automobile crashes avoided
- 4.2M** Commuter Choice-supported trips on the I-395/95 corridor
- 535K** hours of travel time savings

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission 4



## Virginia Tech students learn from NVTC staff

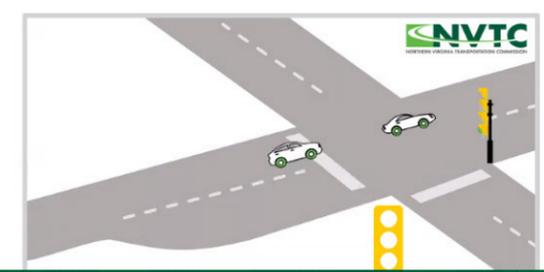
Senior Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos was a guest speaker in a [Virginia Tech](#) graduate urban planning class called “Advanced Quantitative Methods for Urban Research,” taught by Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony. Sophie shared her experiences in both transit data analysis as well as developing visualizations for communicating transit information.



## Conference provides lessons on zero-emission bus transition

Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane attended the Zero Emission Bus Conference ([ZEB Con](#)) in Philadelphia at the end of August. Along with staff from ART, DASH and Loudoun County, Ann attended a variety of sessions that were targeted toward agencies at different phases in the ZEB transition process: early adoption, scaling up and advanced solutions. She toured SEPTA’s hydrogen fueling facility for fuel cell electric

buses, visited their trackless trolleybus yard and learned more about their upcoming battery electric bus projects. Northern Virginia was represented in a couple sessions, with former NVTC staff member Patricia Happ providing an update on Federal Transit Administration research for ZEBs and DASH’s Director of Fleet Maintenance Natalie Harris discussing her work building DASH’s ZEB workforce. In keeping with NVTC’s role as a forum for zero-emission bus discussions, Ann will take the information she learned during the conference and share it with staff during NVTC’s ZEB Working Group.



## About Sophie

- ✿ **Clark University** BA Geography, French & Francophone Studies, MS in GIS
- ✿ Background in geospatial analysis, environmental science, public transit, and data visualization
- ✿ Senior Program Analyst at **NVTC** since 2021, support programs and projects with data analysis and visualization





## NVTC's climate benefits of transit work shared with Fairfax County Transportation Committee

Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors [Transportation Committee](#) on September 17 about NVTC's work on the [climate benefits of transit](#). Xavier discussed how much transit reduces regional carbon emissions while emphasizing the importance of increasing transit ridership as a climate strategy.



NVTC, PRTC AND VRE PRESENT:

# ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Join transit leaders and special guests for an in-person overview of federal and state issues affecting transit in Northern Virginia.

## SAVE THE DATE

8:30 - 11 a.m.  
Friday, December 13, 2024

George Mason University  
Schar School Multipurpose Room  
3351 Fairfax Drive, Van Metre Hall  
Arlington, VA 22201



### Mirna Armanious

We are excited to welcome Mirna Armanious as our new Transit Fellow this fall. Mirna recently earned a Master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech, adding to her undergraduate degrees in architecture and landscape architecture. She will work primarily with NVTC's Metro program and focus on

supporting NVTC's work toward long-term, sustainable funding for public transit. Mirna is happy to join NVTC as a Transit Fellow this fall to use her education and experience in a variety of exciting projects. We also thank the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for their ongoing support of this vital program.





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