



Advancing transit in  
Northern Virginia  
since 1964



# October 2025

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## Executive Director Newsletter





## A Message From Kate Mattice

Each fall we take time to reflect on our outstanding Commuter Choice program and the benefits it provides for the Northern Virginia region. Commuter Choice started with a simple idea—use some of the money collected from highway tolls and reinvest it in public transit and other transportation alternatives. Along the way we have funded dozens of new bus purchases, new and expanded bus routes, Metro and Virginia Railway Express station improvements, Capital Bikeshare infrastructure and additional projects designed to give commuters choices beyond driving a car.

We have a lot to celebrate this fall as ridership on Commuter Choice funded routes hit all-time highs in FY 2025. We are now providing more than 65,000 trips each week to people traveling along the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors. That's an increase of 34% over last year in the I-66 corridor and 24% year-over-year growth in the I-395/95 corridor. These results are a testament to the work our staff put into making sure we fund projects with high potential for success.

These and other program successes are a part of our [Annual Report on Commuter Choice](#) that we recently delivered to Virginia's Commonwealth Transportation Board. In it, we highlight the many projects that since our launch in 2017 have saved people over 1.9 million hours of travel time and nearly \$26 million in fuel costs. But beyond the metrics, we share stories of people whose lives and livelihoods have been enhanced by the Commuter Choice projects.

While it's great to celebrate the past, we're also looking to the future. The call for projects for the next round of I-66 Commuter Choice projects is live, with an anticipated funding pot as large as \$100 million for the two-year program. Looking beyond this year, NVTC and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation are actively studying what's next for moving people along the I-66 corridor as the Express Lanes mature and commuter patterns have evolved.

I am excited to see this innovative program reap rewards for our region for years to come.

  
Executive Director



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**October 15**

Envision Route 7  
Open House

**October 16**

Executive Committee  
and  
Joint WMATA & Legislative  
and Policy Committees

**October 21**

SJ 28 Northern Virginia  
Growing Needs of Public  
Transit Joint Subcommittee

**November 5**

SJ 28 Northern Virginia  
Growing Needs of Public  
Transit Joint Subcommittee

**November 6**

Commission Meeting

**November 20**

Joint WMATA & Legislative  
and Policy Committees

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# Commuter Choice Annual Report highlights record ridership

NVTC published the 2025 Commuter Choice [Annual Report](#) in September, outlining significant wins for our program that reinvests toll revenues into transit and other transportation projects. The highest reported ridership numbers for Commuter Choice funded projects in the history of the program are included.

Commuter Choice funded projects support 65,000 trips each workweek in the I-66 and I-395 corridors, a 73% increase from a year ago. We recorded double-digit ridership gains in FY 2025 compared to FY 2024.

NVTC's communications team produced a short video to promote the report, which can be seen on our social media channels. We also shared it with key stakeholders and others interested in the work of NVTC.

Thank you to Commuter Choice and Policy Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein and Program Analyst Jason Adle for their work putting together this comprehensive report.

**Commuter Choice by the Numbers**  
*Bolstering Northern Virginia's Mobility with Record Ridership*

Commuter Choice funded projects set a record for ridership in FY 2025. Active projects in spring 2025 supported over 65,000 passenger trips in the two corridors each work week, a 73% increase in trips compared to the same period in FY 2024.

Each weekday in FY 2025, Commuter Choice projects saved travelers a total of

- 2,400 hours** of travel time
- 231,000 miles** of vehicle travel
- \$28,000** in fuel expenditures

**25 projects**  
in operation in spring 2025

*Since 2017, Commuter Choice's \$178 million investment in transit and other transportation projects has improved travel and overall quality of life for Northern Virginians.*

- 197M** fewer vehicle miles traveled
- 75%** greenhouse gas emission reduction relative to single-occupancy vehicle trips
- 293** automobile crashes avoided
- 1.9M** hours of travel time savings
- 10.5M** Commuter Choice-supported trips on the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors
- \$67.7M** in regional economic benefit from reduced travel delay
- \$25.9M** in fuel cost savings for commuters

Read the Annual Report - click the images above or scan the QR code.





## Commuter Choice successes shared at major conference

Executive Director Kate Mattice attended the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) [TRANSform](#) conference in Boston in September. It's the flagship event for public transportation professionals. Kate participated on a panel called "Toll Roads and Transit," where she touted NVTC's Commuter Choice program, which reinvests toll revenues into transit service and other transportation enhancements designed to reduce overall traffic congestion. Commuter Choice has invested \$212 million in 72 unique projects in the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors since inception. \$140 million of that has gone to new or enhanced local or commuter bus service. Those investments produce quality of life and economic benefits for Northern Virginia.

Kate was also on hand to see Metro take home the Outstanding Public Transit Agency of the year [award](#), the public transit industry's most prestigious prize. Metro was selected for record customer satisfaction and ridership growth, the redesign of the entire Metrobus network, a dramatic increase in rail service, the opening of seven new stations and improved customer amenities, such as better wayfinding signage and more digital screens in stations.

Kudos to GM/CEO Randy Clarke for his vision for Metro and passion for improving our region's largest transit provider.



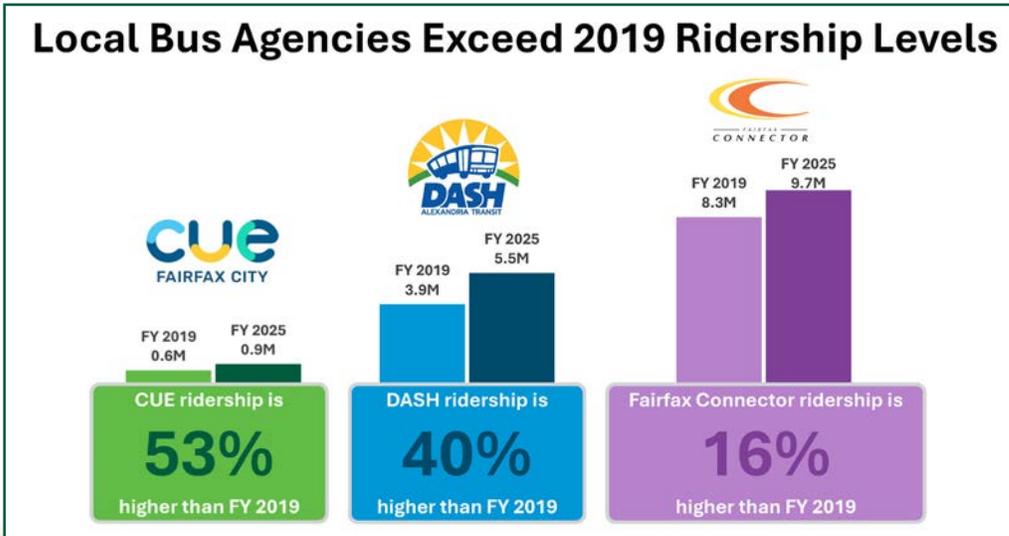
Congrats, Metro!



# Program Advisory Committee highlights ridership gains

NVTC's Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos presented on the impressive ridership gains Northern Virginia has seen over the past year at September's Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. With a 15% year-over-year ridership increase, we're now seeing more than two million riders on transit

in Northern Virginia each week. CUE, DASH and Fairfax Connector have also exceeded their 2019 ridership levels, demonstrating the importance of transit to our region. Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha then provided an update on Envision Route 7's fall outreach plan.



**Help shape bus service along Route 7**

**Join us for an open house and share your ideas.**

**Where:** Culmore Community Library  
6101 Knollwood Drive  
Falls Church, VA 22041

**When:** Wednesday, Oct. 15  
Drop in anytime  
between 4 and 7 p.m.!

[novatransit.org/programs/route7](http://novatransit.org/programs/route7)



Image courtesy of CUE

# WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees

NVTC's WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees met jointly September 18 to discuss ongoing and upcoming initiatives. Department of Rail and Public Transportation staff briefed the committees on changes to the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) Grant Program. Additionally, the committees discussed NVTC's work toward securing long-term sustainable transit funding,

including the General Assembly's [SJ 28](#) Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee and [DMVMoves](#) efforts. Finally, the committees discussed NVTC's preliminary 2026 Legislative and Policy Agenda, adopted each year to guide NVTC's legislative work in Richmond and in Washington. The committees will meet again in October and November in advance of the 2026 General Assembly Session.

## Annual Legislative Forum: December 15



**NVTC, PRTC AND VRE PRESENT:**

# ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Join NVTC, PRTC and VRE at our annual event that brings together experts to share key policy issues impacting transit in Northern Virginia.

**SAVE THE DATE**

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
Monday, December 15, 2025

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

[novatransit.org/  
2025-legislative-forum/](https://novatransit.org/2025-legislative-forum/)



# Loudoun Chamber hosts State of Transportation event

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in the Loudoun Chamber's State of Transportation event in September. She joined Northern Virginia Transportation Authority CEO Monica Backmon, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Executive Director Clark Mercer and Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance President Jason Stanford for a dynamic panel on the future of transit in Northern Virginia.



The panel discussed regional funding, covering the [DMVMoves](#) initiative and the work of the General Assembly's [SJ 28](#) Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee, both of which are working toward sustainable transit funding solutions for Northern Virginia. The conversation also highlighted exciting transit improvements and innovations happening in Loudoun County and throughout the region.

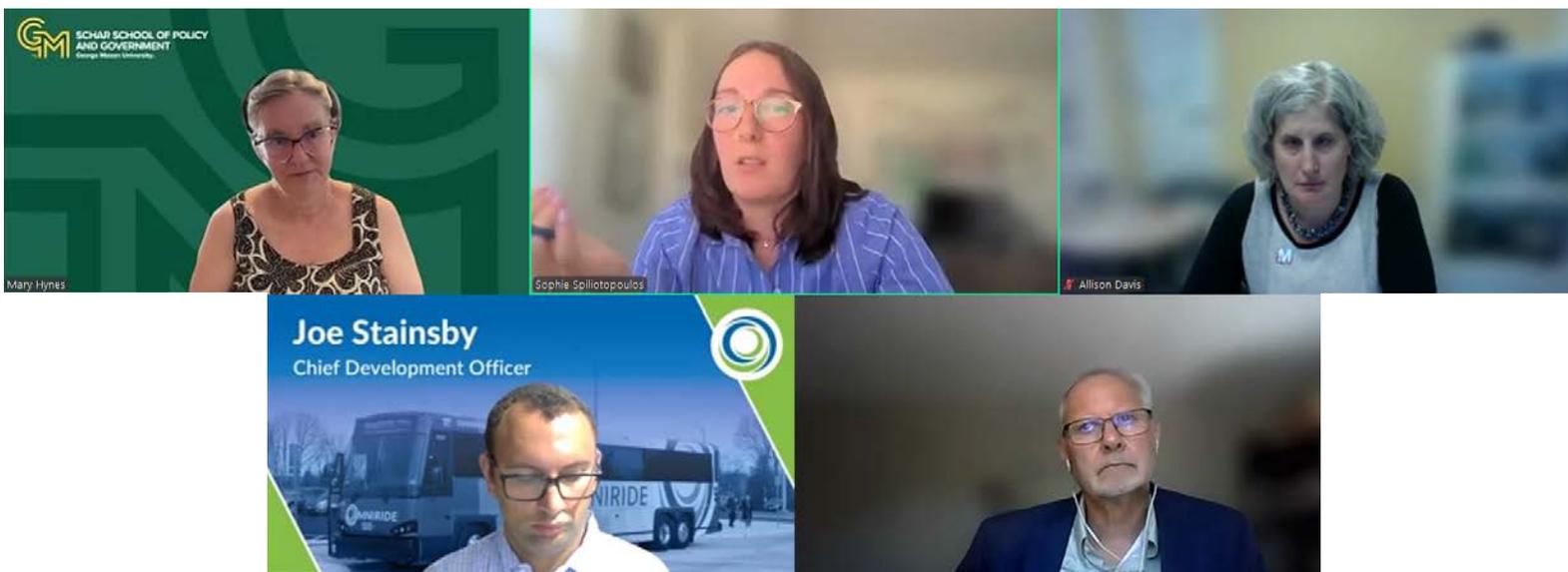


Images courtesy of Blue Lion Multimedia

# Staff discuss reliable transit at GMU event

Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos served as a panelist alongside staff from Metro, OmniRide and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority at the first webinar of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University

Regional Elected Leaders Initiative ([RELI](#)) fall policy series. Discussing reliable transit and accessible bus stops, panelists highlighted many of the important projects being done across the region, from the Better Bus Network to OmniRide's microtransit pilot program.



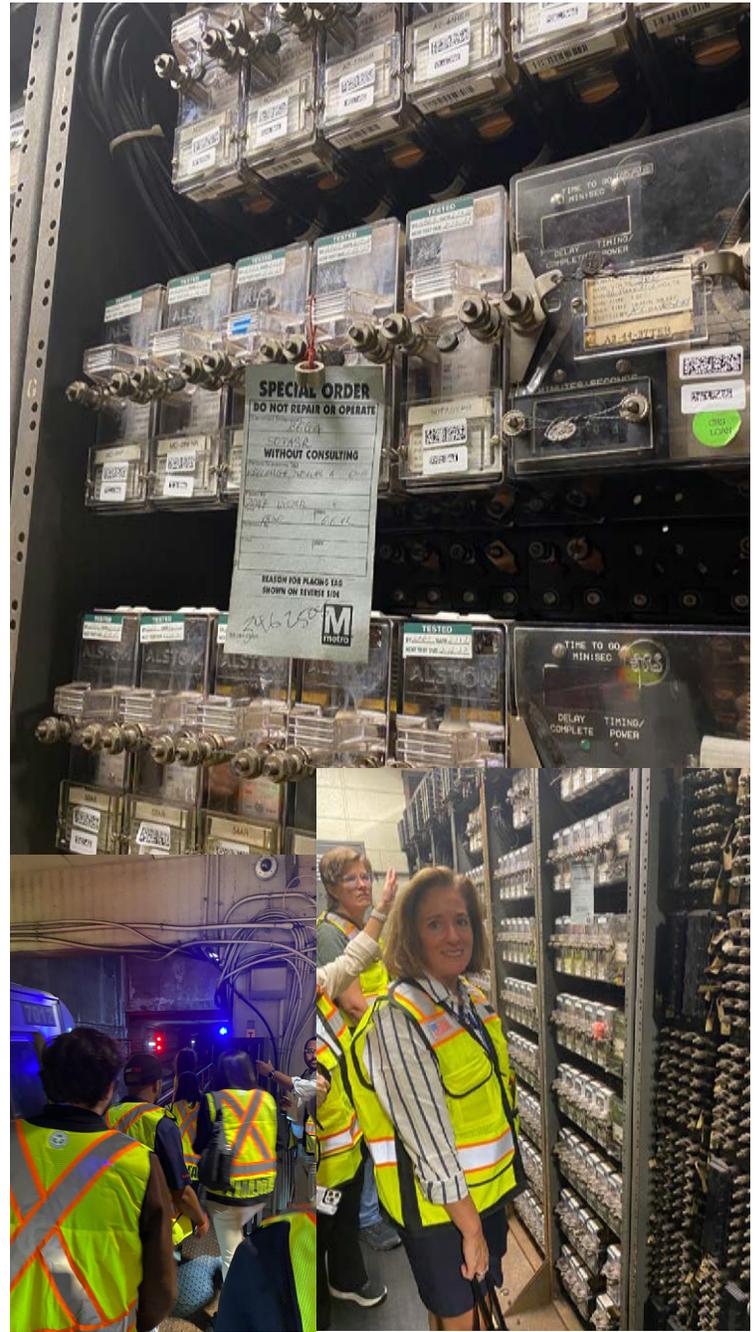


# Tour goes behind the scenes of Metro operations

Executive Director Kate Mattice joined regional elected officials and jurisdictional staff for a behind-the-scenes tour of Metro in September. The tour started at Metro's Integrated Command and Communications Center (MICCC) inside the agency's 14-story building near the Eisenhower Ave Station. Participants saw how Metro manages rail and bus operations in real time.

From there, the group boarded buses and traveled along the Metroway, the dedicated busway that runs from Alexandria to Arlington, on its way to Farragut North Station. The group went into the station tunnels to see equipment cabinets and control cables, most dating back to the opening of the Metro system in the 1970s. It was an enlightening tour, emphasizing the massive scale of Metro and the technological challenges the agency faces as it continues to operate safely and reliably.

Metro and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments organized the tour as they near the finish line on their [DMVMoves](#) Task Force, with recommendations for future transit funding expected this fall.



# DMVMOVES

Moving our region forward, together.



# Metro Board previews FY 2027 operating budget, reviews Better Bus launch

The Metro Finance and Capital Committee received [an overview](#) of the framework for the FY 2027 [Operating Budget](#) as well as budget revenue and expense drivers September 25. The FY 2027 operating budget framework is based on continuing to drive efficiencies and grow revenue, with savings to be reinvested in service optimization, preventative maintenance and other initiatives (Figure). Metro staff is also preparing a two-year forecast for FY 2028 and FY 2029. While the forecast will not require any approval process, it is an industry best practice for system planning. Based on improved ridership outlooks through FY 2029, Metro is currently planning to keep fares at current levels in FY 2027 and increase fares for all modes in FY 2028.

## Better Bus Network

The Metro Safety and Operations Committee received an update on the [Better Bus Network](#) rollout, now nearly three months after its launch. The new network operates 125 routes and provides 7% more service than the previous network with the same funding levels. Leading up to the launch of the new network, Metro conducted hundreds of outreach events and supplied signs, pamphlets and bus stop flags to inform riders of the upcoming changes. The work conducted by staff helped 74% of bus customers become aware of the new network by launch day. Metro also increased dedicated outreach to families and students in the District of Columbia leading up to the beginning of classes in August. Metrobus has enjoyed similar ridership to this time last year and Metro continues biannual adjustments to routes, as needed.

### Efficiencies and Revenue

#### Automatic Train Operations

Additional scheduling efficiencies from return to ATO

#### Bus Efficiencies

Savings from optimizing bus schedules

#### Vacancy Management

Reduce positions to align staff with operational priorities

#### Improved Ridership

Stronger than anticipated growth driving higher revenue



### Reinvestments

#### Service Optimization

Address crowding and enhance all-day Metrorail service, improve Metrobus frequency, span, and coverage

#### Initiatives

Enhance organizational development and digital modernization

#### Preventive Maintenance

Reduce reliance on capital resources to fund operating expenses



## Safety and Strategic Plans

The Metro Board also approved the 2026 [Agency Safety Plan](#), authorized a public hearing for updates to the [Strategic Transformation Plan](#) and authorized the addition of new and enhanced Metrobus service on Routes [A25 and A29](#) funded through NVTC's I-395/95 Commuter Choice program. This new service is anticipated to start in December.

# Metro Board reviews key benchmarks

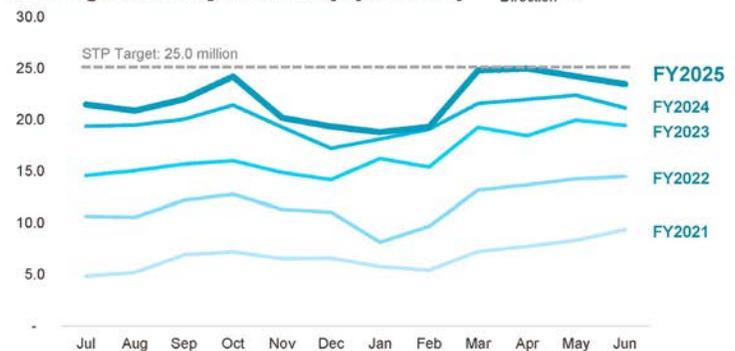
Metro’s FY 2025 [Service Excellence Report](#), reviewed at the September 11 Metro Board [meeting](#), highlighted consistent gains in ridership, increasing customer satisfaction across the system, and decreasing crime rates. June 2025 marked 51 consecutive months of year-over-year ridership growth; ridership across all modes grew 9% year-over-year. Metrorail had the most growth in FY 2025 with a 12% gain, with the biggest jump taking place after the federal return to office mandate went into effect. Metrobus ridership grew 6% over FY 2024, even surpassing FY 2019 levels.

Customer satisfaction has also grown significantly. Metro staff pointed to improved service enabled by capital and operating investments in recent years, as well as maintenance of railcars and infrastructure. The crime rate on all modes has also trended in the right direction, falling from 7.2 crimes per million rides in FY 2023 to 3.7 crimes per million rides in FY 2025.

## Ridership Has Steadily Increased: June 2025 Marked 51 Months of Consecutive Year-Over-Year Growth

- Ridership grew throughout the system with especially strong recent growth on rail
- Return to Office order contributed to strong peak growth on rail (+28% in Q4) but off-peak weekdays were also up at +19%
  - Weekends +15% on rail
  - Tap.Ride.Go. grew quickly and is now about 7% of weekday trips and 13% of weekend trips.
- Bus ridership up 1% for the quarter. While growth has slowed, bus ridership was already over 2019 levels in 2024.
- Keys to future growth: continued focus on improving speed, frequency, and reliability

**Average Monthly Ridership (Millions)** Desired Direction ↑



<b>263.7 million total trips in FY25</b> 9% higher vs. FY24 834,000 average weekday trips	<b>138.6 million rail trips in FY25</b> 12% higher vs. FY24 438,000 average weekday trips	<b>123.8 million bus trips in FY25</b> 6% higher vs. FY24 392,000 average weekday trips	<b>2.6 million access trips in FY25</b> 14% higher vs. FY24 8,900 average weekday trips
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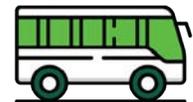
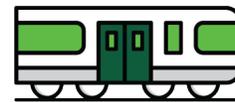
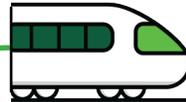
# Acting VRE CEO named as Rich Dalton nears retirement

The Commission honored the outgoing Virginia Railway Express (VRE) CEO during its monthly meeting September 4. Dalton joined VRE as chief operating officer in 2009 and rose to CEO in 2020. Through his prior work with a locomotive manufacturing company, Dalton has been involved in VRE operations since the start of service in 1992. In its role as co-owner of VRE, the Commission also voted to name Deputy CEO/Chief Engineer Dallas Richards as acting CEO starting in early October. The appointment was also approved by the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission.



Acting VRE CEO Dallas Richards looks on as former CEO Rich Dalton speaks to the Commission.

***Congratulations!***



# Zero-emission bus group visits ART's facility



NVTC's Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Working Group toured Arlington's [ART](#) Operations and Maintenance Facility in September. Pierre Holloman, Chief of Arlington Transit, led the tour and focused on the battery electric bus charging infrastructure incorporated throughout the facility. With staff from local jurisdictions, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation and various regional planning agencies in attendance, the tour provided an excellent opportunity to share lessons learned and connect with other staff focused on implementing battery electric buses across Virginia. Ann McGrane, NVTC's Deputy Director of Programs and Policy, arranged the tour.



# Commissioner Walkinshaw elected to Congress

Congratulations to Commissioner James Walkinshaw on his election to Congress. Rep. Walkinshaw follows in the footsteps of the late Rep. Gerry Connolly, who previously served on NVTC while chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Rep. Walkinshaw is the eighth Commissioner elected to Congress since NVTC's founding in 1964.



## Meet NVTC's 2025 Commissioners



*(Left side, front to back); Sarah Bagley, David Snyder, Saddam Azlan Salim, Adam Ebbin, Tiffany Robinson, Paul Smedberg, Matt de Ferranti, Paul Krizek, Canek Aguirre.*

*(Right side, front to back); Takis Karantonis, Catherine S. Read, Juli F. Briskman, Walter Alcorn, Mark Sickles, Maureen Coffey, James "Jimmy" N. Bierman, Jr., Daniel Storck.*

*Not pictured: Matthew F. Letourneau, Alfonso Lopez, Dalia Palchik, David Reid, James R. Walkinshaw.*

**Read the biographies of NVTC's Commissioners at [novatransit.org](https://www.novatransit.org)**



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