



Advancing transit  
in Northern Virginia  
since 1964



# Executive Director Newsletter



September  
**2024**

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## A Message from Kate Mattice

On September 1, 1964, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission held its very first meeting, electing its first slate of officers and getting down to business to start the work of planning what eventually became the Metrorail system in Virginia. Sen. Charles Fenwick, who sponsored the bill that created NVTC earlier that year, told Commissioners, “the transportation problem is the most important problem facing Northern Virginia and the Washington Metropolitan Area.”

As we celebrate that milestone from 60 years ago, we can acknowledge that transportation in our region still creates challenges, but I also hope that the work we do, along with the efforts of the many who came before us, provides solutions that gives people many more options for traveling around Northern Virginia than what existed in the mid-1960s.

Since our founding, we’ve seen the establishment and growth of Metrorail, Metrobus, Virginia Railway Express (VRE), multiple local bus systems and our Commuter Choice program, funding projects that encourage people to avoid driving alone through our two most congested corridors. We’ve also produced important research and policy insights that have led to smarter decision making regarding the continued development of our public transit network

As we mark this historic moment, we also look toward the future with the continued planning for the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit system, which will connect to other BRT lines being created by our local jurisdictions, VRE’s first weekend service, and the promise of even more passenger rail trips once the new Long Bridge is complete, and a transition to bus fleets that produce zero tailpipe emissions.

Since our establishment six decades ago, NVTC has been a vital resource in solving that transportation problem I expect we will continue to do so for decades to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate A. Mattice".

Executive Director

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Save  
the  
Date

**September 17-18**  
Commonwealth  
Transportation Board

**September 19**  
Program Advisory  
Committee

**September 19**  
Joint WMATA/Legislative  
and Policy Committees

**September 20**  
VRE Operations Board

**September 26**  
Northern Virginia Growing  
Needs of Public Transit  
Joint Subcommittee

**October 3**  
Commission Meeting

**October 24**  
Joint WMATA Committee &  
Legislative and Policy  
Committees

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# Joint Subcommittee to identify long-term transit funding holds first meeting

I was pleased to join the first meeting of the joint subcommittee to study the growing needs of public transit in Northern Virginia on Monday afternoon in Richmond. Established by [Senate Joint Resolution 28](#) in the 2024 General Assembly Session, the joint subcommittee is comprised of Commissioners Walter Alcorn and Paul Smedberg, Secretary of Transportation Shep Miller, seven members of the General Assembly and myself. At our first meeting, we received briefings from Acting Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation Zach Trogdon and NVTC Director of Programs and Policy Allan Fye on how transit funding works in Northern Virginia and why existing revenue streams are not keeping up with the costs to operate transit, both in Virginia and nationwide.

The SJ 28 joint subcommittee adopted a work plan, including a technical working group of non-elected staff at several organizations, including NVTC, with an interest in public transit and funding to examine peer funding models and cost savings



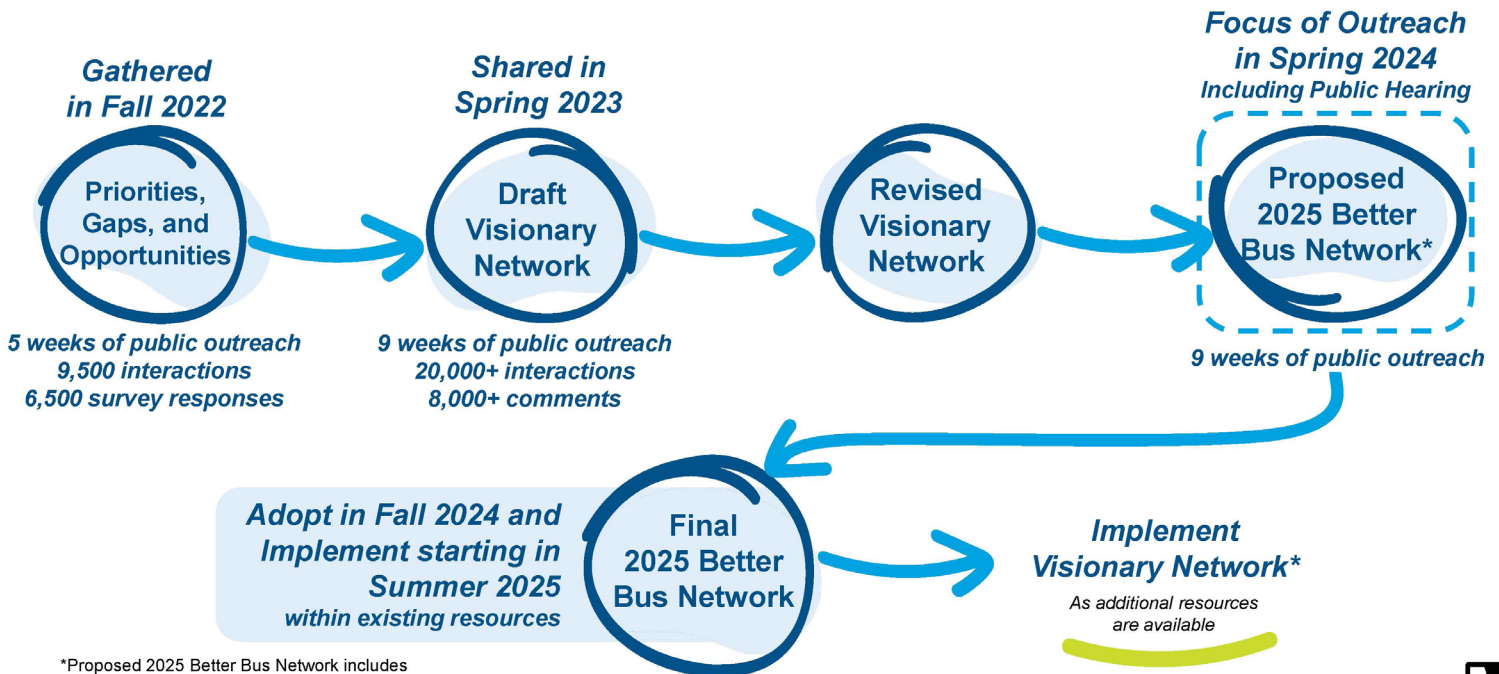
strategies, among other items. The joint subcommittee will soon schedule its next meeting where it will hear from transit agencies on their respective operating and capital needs of the year.

The next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for Thursday, September 26 at 1 p.m. at NVTC's offices. Future meetings of the Joint Subcommittee will be held on Thursday, October 17 and Tuesday, November 12.



Allan Fye speaks during the SJ 28 inaugural meeting.

# The Region's Input Builds a Better Bus Network



\*Proposed 2025 Better Bus Network includes Metrobus and TheBus and was developed in coordination with other local operators. The Visionary Network is operator agnostic

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY



## NVTC Committees tackle Better Bus, Metro funding matters

The NVTC WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees held a [joint meeting](#) on July 11, which included a briefing from Metro staff on the Better Bus Network Redesign and two briefings from NVTC staff: one on NVTC's work toward long-term, dedicated, sustainable funding and a second on the Metro subsidy allocation formulas as requested by the Commission at its June meeting.

The [Better Bus](#) initiative is a complete redesign of the Metrobus system featuring new route names, consolidated bus stops and improved reliability levels. Compared to the current Metrobus network, the proposed 2025 Network better connects the region, increases access to better bus service and

makes bus service more convenient—all within current resource levels. Since the 2025 Network is resource neutral, Metro will need to make a series of tradeoffs until more funding is available in the future.

The joint committee discussed DMVMoves, [SJ 28](#): "Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee" and the NVTC 2024 "Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA." Staff also briefed the joint committee on the forthcoming NVTC Transit Funding Working Group, a staff-level effort comprised of leadership at jurisdictions and transit agencies in Northern Virginia focused on the various initiatives underway geared toward long-term, dedicated transit funding in the region.





# NVTC staff brief PRTC on I-395/95 Commuter Choice

Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager Ben Owen and Senior Program Analyst Daniel Knickelbein provided the [Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission \(PRTC\)](#) with an overview of [I-395/95 Commuter Choice](#) and the upcoming FY 2026-2027 call for projects at PRTC's [monthly meeting](#) on July 11. NVTC and PRTC have co-approval roles on all matters concerning I-395/95 Commuter Choice since the program funds improvements proposed and carried out by the two commissions' member jurisdictions and transit operators, though NVTC staff handle day-to-day administration of the program.

Ben and Daniel highlighted past awards to PRTC jurisdictions and summarized the

program's rules and regulations, technical evaluation criteria and upcoming application schedule. To date, I-395/95 Commuter Choice has awarded approximately \$34 million to PRTC jurisdictions and transit operators, including OmniRide, which is operated by PRTC, Virginia Railway Express, Spotsylvania County, Prince William County, and FXBGO!

The Commuter Choice team thanks PRTC for the opportunity to present at the July Commission meeting and looks forward to working with eligible applicants in the upcoming call for projects. A total of \$25 to \$30 million is expected to be available, and the team has begun preliminary conversations with eligible applicants about projects for which they may want to pursue funding.

**\$90.1M**  
awarded to date

**\$34.3M**  
for PRTC member jurisdictions and transit operators

MNIRIDE VRE SPOTSYLVANIA VIRGINIA FXBGO!  
Fredericksburg Regional Transit

## 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.
- 35M** fewer vehicle miles traveled
- 69%** greenhouse gas emission reduction relative to single-occupancy vehicle trips
- \$10M** in regional economic benefit from reduced travel delay
- \$5M** in fuel cost savings for commuters
- 43** automobile crashes avoided
- 2.6M** Commuter Choice-supported trips on the I-395/95 corridor
- 370K** hours of travel time savings



### **Parking garage that will benefit VRE riders reaches milestone**

The Commuter Choice team of Senior Program Manager Ben Owen and Senior Program Analyst Daniel Knickelbein attended a topping out ceremony for the City of Manassas Park's "Park Central Garage" on August 6. [Commuter Choice](#) funding totaling \$2.5 million supports the construction of a new parking garage at

Manassas Park's Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station, providing an enhanced option for commuters in the area to access the station. Expected to open next year, the new garage will provide 540 parking spaces for VRE commuters and visitors accessing the city's growing downtown. NVTC congratulates Manassas Park and VRE on achieving this construction milestone and looks forward to the full opening of the garage next year.



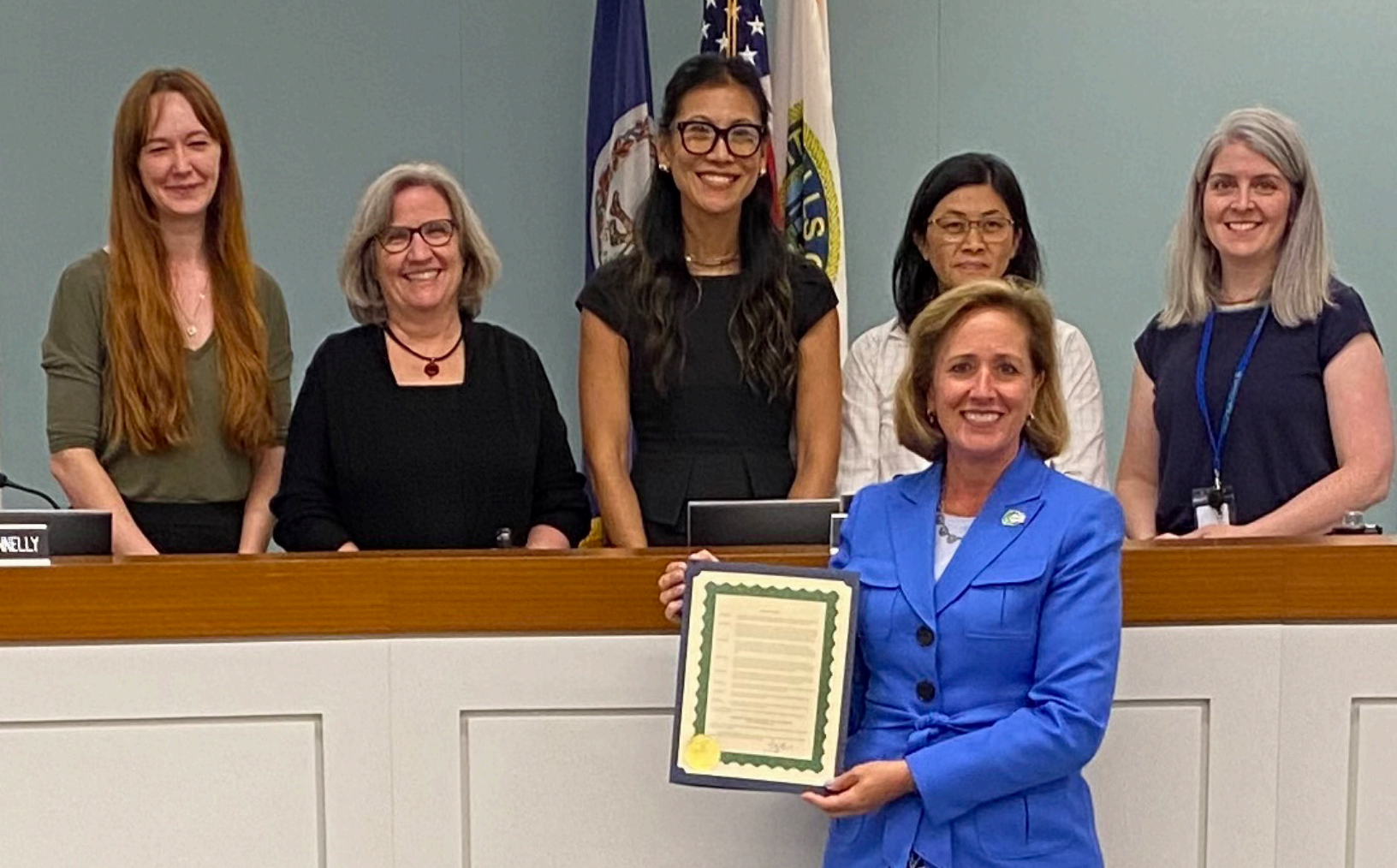
## Cities and counties mark NVTC's 60th anniversary

Executive Director Kate Mattice accepted five resolutions celebrating NVTC's 60th anniversary during the month of July. [The City of Falls Church](#), [Arlington County](#), [Fairfax County](#) and [Loudoun County](#) each adopted resolutions commending NVTC's six decades of fostering regional cooperation on important issues related to public transit.

Kate thanks Chair Matt de Ferranti and current and former Commissioners Libby Garvey, Takis Karantonis, Jeff McKay, Dalia Palchik, Walter Alcorn, James Walkinshaw, Jimmy Bierman, Dan Storck, Matt Letourneau, Juli Briskman, Mike Turner, Jeff Greenfield, Catherine Read and David Snyder for their strong support of our work and mission.







# Happy Workiversary

**5** Years of Service

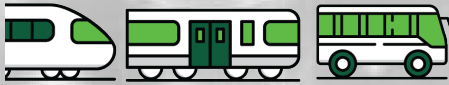
**5** Years of Service



**Matt Friedman**  
Communications and  
Public Affairs Manager

**Tenley O'Hara**  
Legislative and  
Administrative Assistant





**5** Years of  
Service

**25** Years of  
Service



**Ben Owen**

Commuter Choice Senior  
Program Manager

**Colethia Quarles**

Comptroller

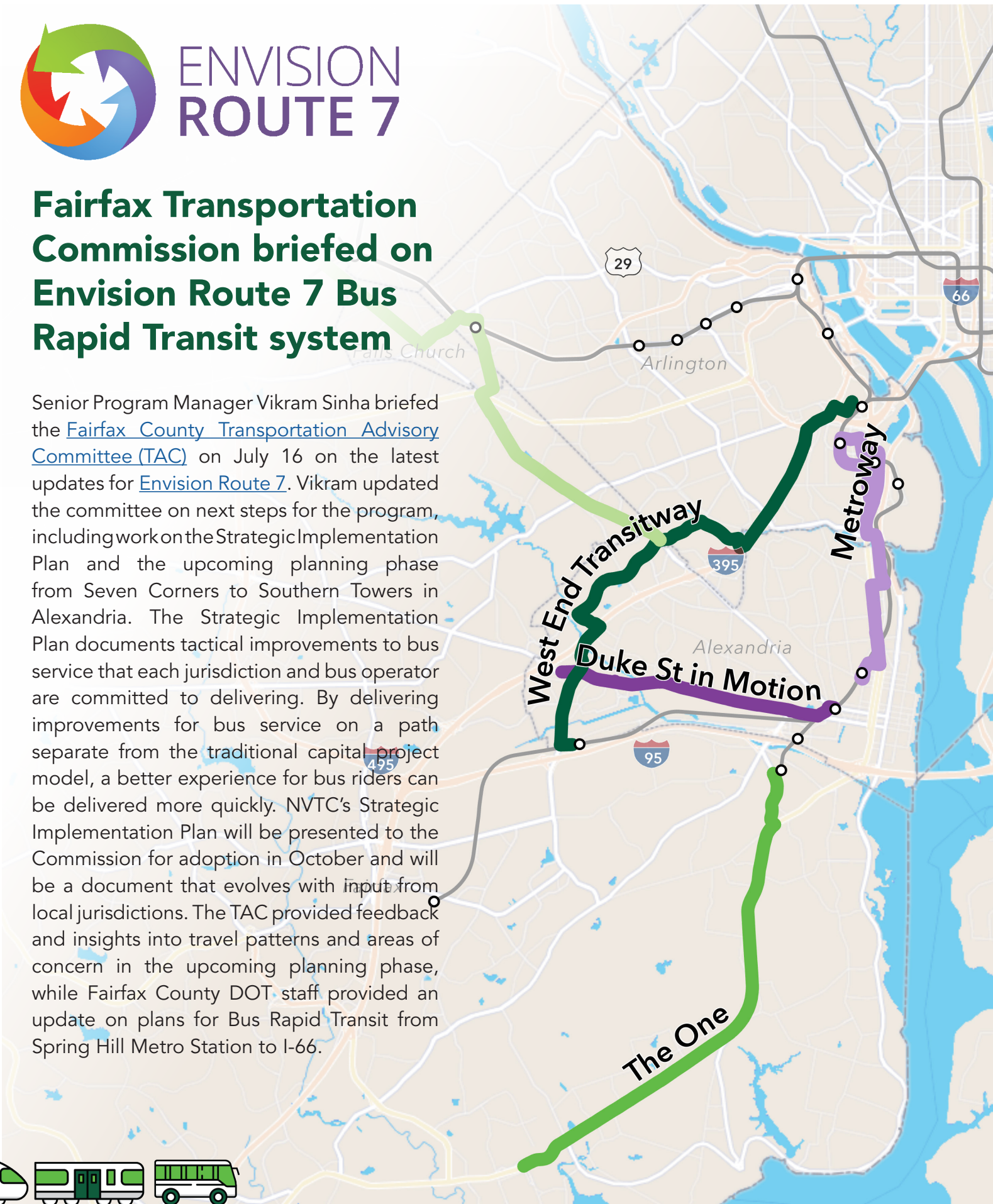
*Thank you for riding with NVTC!*



# ENVISION ROUTE 7

## Fairfax Transportation Commission briefed on Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit system

Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha briefed the [Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Committee \(TAC\)](#) on July 16 on the latest updates for [Envision Route 7](#). Vikram updated the committee on next steps for the program, including work on the Strategic Implementation Plan and the upcoming planning phase from Seven Corners to Southern Towers in Alexandria. The Strategic Implementation Plan documents tactical improvements to bus service that each jurisdiction and bus operator are committed to delivering. By delivering improvements for bus service on a path separate from the traditional capital project model, a better experience for bus riders can be delivered more quickly. NVTC's Strategic Implementation Plan will be presented to the Commission for adoption in October and will be a document that evolves with input from local jurisdictions. The TAC provided feedback and insights into travel patterns and areas of concern in the upcoming planning phase, while Fairfax County DOT staff provided an update on plans for Bus Rapid Transit from Spring Hill Metro Station to I-66.





## Commuter Choice presented to national managed lanes conference

Executive Director Kate Mattice shared the benefits of our Commuter Choice program at a national research conference in Irvine, California in August. The [TRB Symposium on Managed Lanes](#) focused on how dynamically-tolled lanes are integrating into the overall transportation system. I explained the role of NVTC and the unusual nature of the Commuter Choice program, highlighting how public transit investments can be integrated into agreements to establish toll roads. To this crowd of mostly highway engineers,

Kate shared examples of projects that we've funded, like how six years of expanded service and bus stop improvements for DASH has resulted in huge ridership gains. Since its inception in 2017, Commuter Choice has funded \$178.4 million in projects in both the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors. Currently, our team is working with potential applicants for funding in the I-395/95 corridor and getting ready to launch a needs assessment to better understand the types of projects that would be most helpful to travelers of the I-66 corridor.



Will Heltzel, Vikram Sinha, Sophie Spiliotopoulos, Xavier Harmony (left to right)



## Staff ride region's transit systems, discussing transit funding and policy

Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony led Transit Fellow Will Heltzel, Senior Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos and Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha on a tour of Northern Virginia transit this summer to experience and learn more about different types of transit in the region. The group used transit provided by three local transit operators on three different bus routes as well as Metrorail. Along the way, Xavier talked about transit's connection to land use and regional economic development, transportation funding and policy as well as the development of in-progress and recently completed transit projects.



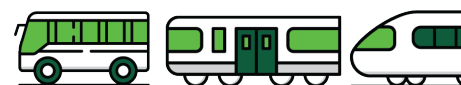
## Andrew D'huyvetter completes Eno training

NVTC's WMATA Senior Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter attended the Eno Center for Transportation's [Transportation Mid Manager Training Program](#) (TMM) in San Diego, California in July. The Eno TMM program is a training program for mid-level managers working in transit, federal, and public and private sectors. Andrew joined attendees from transit agencies and organizations across the country to network with peers and develop and grow leadership and management skills.



## Adam Hager joins next Virginia Transit Leadership Institute class

Congratulations to Senior Program Analyst Adam Hager on his appointment to the Virginia Transit Leadership Institute ([VTLI](#)) class of 2025! Adam and 14 other fellows will embark on a transformative nine-month experience, meeting with public transportation leaders around Virginia and visiting transit agencies across the Commonwealth. They will learn various facets of the transit industry, culminating in a graduation ceremony during the Virginia Transit Association's 2025 Annual Conference. Grants Manager and DBE Officer Brittany Sumpter took part in VTLI's inaugural class.





## Staff attend FTA's Transit Academy

NVTC Senior Program Analysts Sophie Spiliotopoulos and Daniel Knickelbein attended the National Transit Institute's [Transit Academy](#) in Minneapolis in August. Transit Academy is a comprehensive, behind-the-scenes study of the nation's most innovative transit systems, with this academy being hosted for the first time by [Metro Transit](#), the transit operator for the Twin Cities

region. Sophie and Daniel joined attendees from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and transit providers from across the nation in learning from Metro Transit staff and touring bus and rail operations and maintenance facilities as well as having discussions with Metro Transit leadership on challenges and opportunities facing the agency.







## Good luck to Will Heltzel!

We want to wish good luck to our ZEB Transit Fellow Will Heltzel. Will has supported the Transit Technology Program since May, identifying promising grant opportunities for zero-emission buses (ZEB), and developing materials to describe the challenges and opportunities of ZEBs. Will also assisted with data collection

for an upcoming report on transit, cycling and micromobility. Will is now returning to Blacksburg to complete his master's degree in urban and regional planning at Virginia Tech, where he will also work at Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement.



*Advancing transit in  
Northern Virginia since 1964*

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