



# Commuter Choice

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

[NoVaTransit.org/CC](https://NoVaTransit.org/CC)



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# Annual Report Fiscal Year 2024



*July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024*

*Commuter Choice, a trailblazing, innovative and competitive grant program, reinvests Express Lanes toll revenues in public transit and other transportation improvements along the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors in Northern Virginia.*

A partnership between the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Commuter Choice improves commuters' travel in two of the most congested corridors in the nation. NVTC selects projects for funding through a competitive process that considers each project's ability to support the program's goals: moving more people, supporting diverse travel choices and enhancing mobility, transportation safety and travel reliability.

***Commuter Choice projects benefit Express Lanes toll payers in two main ways:***

1. By offering more options, toll road users and transit riders can choose the means of travel that gets them to the places that they want to go; and
2. By moving people more efficiently, Commuter Choice projects lessen congestion and support more consistent travel speeds for Express Lanes users.

## Letter from the Executive Director

*NVTC's Commuter Choice program continued its meaningful investments this year in I-66 and I-395/95 corridor projects that reduce congestion and save commuters time and money on two of the region's busiest travel corridors.*

We began the year fresh off the approval of a \$48 million I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects, which included our first awards in program history for a new bus rapid transit (BRT) line, an expanded and relocated rail station and electric buses. In the spring, we approved a \$22 million I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025-2026 Program of Projects that will continue and expand vital transit services and commuter incentives, while also providing funding to examine how future toll revenues can best support the growth of transit in the corridor, including potentially major, long-term rail transit expansions and BRT implementation.

Our active projects posted their best ridership to date this spring, with 7,500 weekday trips. To date, we've supported over seven million trips in the two corridors. In the I-66 corridor, our \$66 million investment to date has saved commuters \$38 million worth of fuel expenses and time saved from avoiding traffic delays, while in the I-395/95 corridor, our \$90 million investment has saved commuters \$27 million so far, with more savings to come as more of the capital projects that we've supported come online.



**Kate Mattice**  
Executive Director

Beyond these and other direct benefits, Commuter Choice's investments in better transit in the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors strengthen Northern Virginia's economy, provide more options for Northern Virginians to live where they want while still enjoying quick and reliable commutes, meet residents' interest in expanded travel options and reinvest funds generated in Northern Virginia back into projects that benefit the region. With federal pandemic relief funding largely expended, Commuter Choice funds help our state and local partners make important investments in our region's transit system. Our \$156 million total investment has helped match over \$1.1 billion in federal, Commonwealth, regional and local funds for capital improvements in both the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors.

As we look to the next I-395/95 call for projects that will open in the fall, the Commuter Choice team is engaging with applicants to identify candidate projects that will provide commuters with further time and monetary savings while providing the requisite benefits to corridor toll payers. We're expecting another cycle with robust demand for funding, demonstrating the desire among our local governments and members of the public for the frequent, reliable and convenient transit service that Commuter Choice funding helps provide.



# 7,500

passenger trips each weekday on Commuter Choice-funded projects



## \$66 million

invested since 2016

## \$38 million

worth of fuel expenses and travel time saved by commuters



## \$90 million

invested since 2019

## \$27 million

worth of fuel expenses and travel time saved by commuters

## I-66 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

# Rebounding Ridership and a Strategic Look Ahead



Transit ridership continued its upswing in the I-66 corridor during FY 2024. Two Commuter Choice-funded express bus routes, OmniRide's Route 612 between Gainesville and the Pentagon and Fairfax Connector's Route 698 between Vienna and the Pentagon, reached pre-pandemic ridership levels, as more commuters sought alternatives to growing congestion. Among capital projects, the City of Fairfax completed installation of real time signs, lighting, seating and shelters at high-ridership CUE bus stops; nine Capital Bikeshare stations within a short ride of Vienna/Fairfax-GMU and Dunn Loring-Merrifield stations opened; and Fairfax County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) constructed a second entrance at McLean Station that will open in 2025 once adjacent construction on Capital One's campus is complete.

In June, NVTC approved a sixth round of I-66 Commuter Choice funding awards. Included in the FY 2025-2026 Program of Projects is \$22 million for 12 projects that will continue and grow successful transit routes and commuter incentives. The projects include Fairfax Connector, Loudoun County Transit, OmniRide and Arlington Transit service improvements, continued half-fares on I-66 OmniRide commuter routes and the reinstatement of Virginia Railway Express's (VRE) Amtrak Step-Up program on the Manassas Line. I-66 Commuter Choice also provided the final \$8 million needed for VRE's construction of an expanded and relocated Crystal City station.

NVTC and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will soon begin an I-66 corridor needs assessment to identify local and regional projects that would be strong candidates for future I-66 Commuter Choice and DRPT I-66 Outside the Beltway funding. The assessment will also evaluate how I-66 toll revenues could best support transformative rail and BRT projects that will shape future travel in the corridor. The needs assessment will be completed in 2025, in time to help inform applications to the next I-66 call for projects.

# \$22 million

approved for 12 I-66 Commuter Choice projects in 2024



## I-395/95 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

# Continued Growth in an Increasingly Multimodal Corridor



FY 2024 was another banner year for I-395/95 Commuter Choice, with ridership on funded projects over 20% higher than in spring 2023 and the highest to date. DASH, Fairfax Connector and OmniRide transit service enhancements posted impressive ridership growth. OmniRide's Commuter Choice-funded express routes from northern Stafford County to the Pentagon and downtown Washington, D.C. registered growth even as OmniRide launched new routes from the area with the opening of the 95 Express Lanes Fredericksburg Extension. One of these new routes serves the new Commonwealth Drive commuter lot in Spotsylvania County, which opened in June 2023 with Commuter Choice funding support.

Capital projects that will power further ridership growth reached important milestones. Prince William County began construction to expand the Horner Road Commuter Lot, while Fairfax County's Richmond Highway BRT is moving towards full design and funding. DASH placed orders for the first Commuter Choice-funded electric buses that will expand capacity on Line 35, the busiest in their system. VRE's Crystal City station expansion and relocation project is now fully funded with an \$8 million award from I-66 Commuter Choice; this programming, which was originally expected to occur as part of the next I-395/95 Program of Projects and possible

because the new station will benefit commuters in both corridors, is helping free up funds for new I-395/95 projects.

The next I-395/95 call for projects will open in October with \$25-30 million expected to be available, after completing the Commuter Choice commitment to the Richmond Highway BRT with a final \$10 million award. The Commuter Choice team is beginning to discuss project ideas with eligible applicants and again expects high funding demand for impactful transit service and capital proposals.

A background image of a Metro Direct bus, partially obscured by a green overlay. The bus has 'METRO DIRECT' and 'PRINCE WILLIAM' visible on its side. The green overlay is a large, curved shape that frames the text and the bus image.

# \$25-30 million

anticipated for the I-395 FY 2026-2027 call for projects, opening in fall 2024

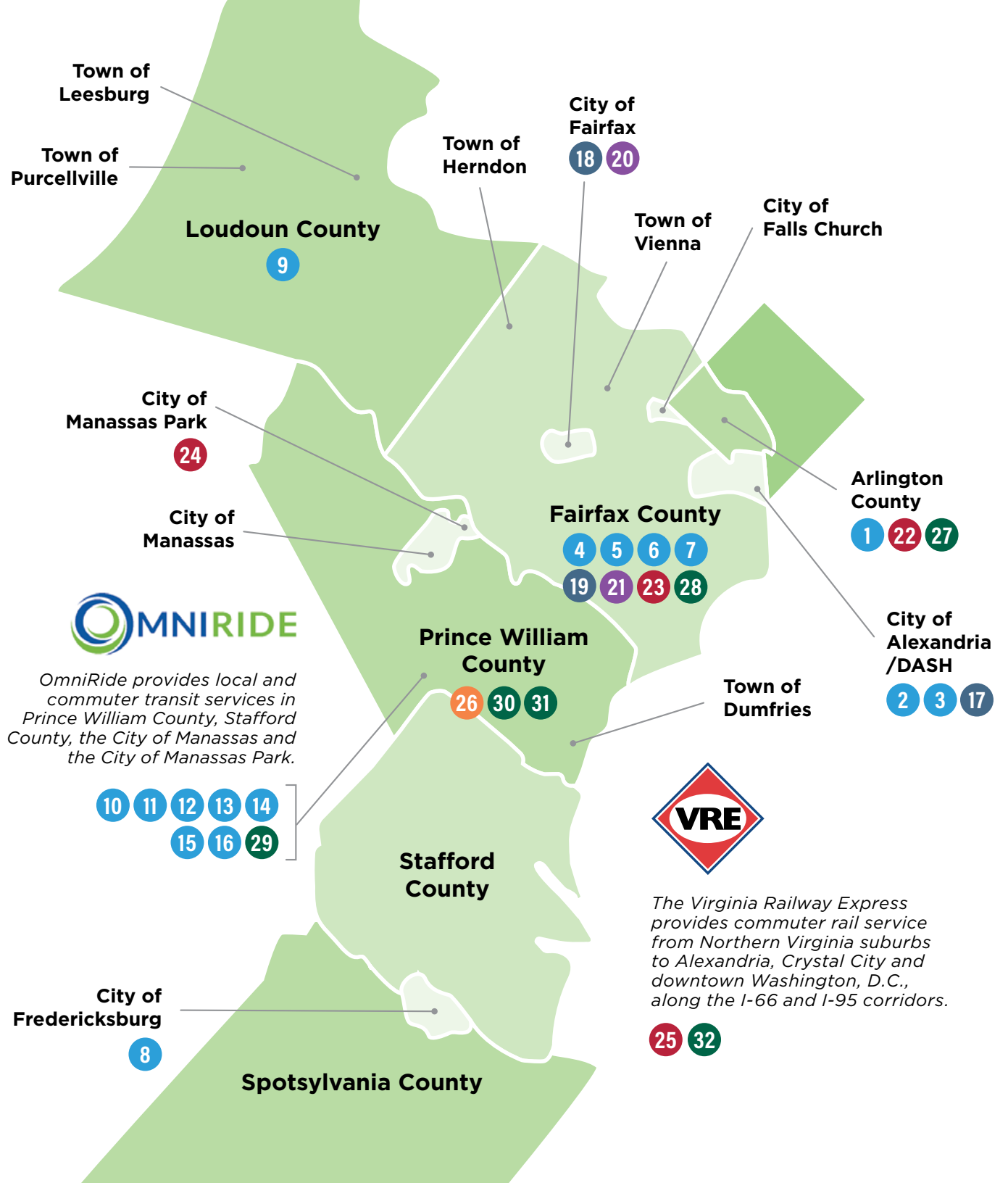
# Current Projects

as of June 30, 2024

## Project Type

- Bus Service
- Bus Capital
- Access to Transit
- Rail Capital
- Park-and-Ride
- TDM

 Visit [NoVaTransit.org/CCProjects](https://www.novatransit.org/CCProjects) for descriptions and the status of current and past Commuter Choice projects.



*OmniRide provides local and commuter transit services in Prince William County, Stafford County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park.*



*The Virginia Railway Express provides commuter rail service from Northern Virginia suburbs to Alexandria, Crystal City and downtown Washington, D.C., along the I-66 and I-95 corridors.*

## BUS SERVICE

- 1 **Arlington County - Metrobus 16M Service Enhancement: Skyline to Crystal City** I-395  
Funding: \$5,000,000
- 2 **DASH - Line 35 Service Enhancement: Van Dorn Street Station to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$13,024,000\*
- 3 **DASH - Line 36A/B Service Enhancement: Mark Center to Potomac Yard-VT Station** I-395  
Funding: \$7,424,000\*
- 4 **Fairfax County - Connector Route 598: Reston South to Crystal City** I-66  
Funding: \$5,110,800
- 5 **Fairfax County - Connector Route 698: Vienna/Fairfax-GMU Station to the Pentagon** I-66  
Funding: \$4,685,468\*
- 6 **Fairfax County - Connector Route 371 Service Enhancement: Lorton to Franconia-Springfield Station** I-395  
Funding: \$2,496,529
- 7 **Fairfax County - Connector Route 396: Backlick North Park and Ride to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$6,677,818\*
- 8 **City of Fredericksburg - FXBGO! Route VS3: Route 208 Commuter Lot to Fredericksburg Station** I-395  
Funding: \$1,218,800
- 9 **Loudoun County - Route 281/681 Service Enhancement: Stone Ridge Park-and-Ride to Downtown Washington, D.C.** I-66  
Funding: \$2,472,970\*
- 10 **OmniRide - Route 612: Gainesville to the Pentagon** I-66  
Funding: \$8,581,149\*
- 11 **OmniRide - Route 622: Haymarket to Rosslyn** I-66  
Funding: \$1,861,354\*
- 12 **OmniRide - Route 52 (Route 1 Local) Service Enhancement: Quantico to Woodbridge Station** I-395  
Funding: \$2,429,689\*
- 13 **OmniRide - Route 95 (Prince William Metro Express) Service Enhancement: Dale City to Franconia-Springfield Station** I-395  
Funding: \$1,668,854\*
- 14 **OmniRide - Route 942: Staffordboro to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$5,838,999\*
- 15 **OmniRide - Route 943: Staffordboro to Downtown Washington, D.C.** I-395  
Funding: \$5,562,949\*
- 16 **OmniRide - Route 972 Service Enhancement: Dale City to Ballston** I-395  
Funding: \$848,057\*

## BUS CAPITAL

- 17 **DASH - Line 35 Bus Fleet Capacity Expansion with Electric Buses: Van Dorn Street Station to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$3,452,000
- 18 **City of Fairfax - CUE Access and Technology Improvements** I-66  
Funding: \$965,000
- 19 **Fairfax County - Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Implementation: Fort Belvoir to Huntington Station** I-395  
Funding: \$10,000,000

## ACCESS TO TRANSIT

- 20 **City of Fairfax - Bike Share Implementation** I-66  
Funding: \$460,000
- 21 **Fairfax County - Trail Access to Vienna/Fairfax - GMU Station** I-66  
Funding: \$2,200,000

## RAIL CAPITAL

- 22 **Arlington County - Ballston-MU Metrorail West Entrance** I-66  
Funding: \$4,500,000
- 23 **Fairfax County - McLean Metrorail Station North Entrance** I-66  
Funding: \$1,000,000
- 24 **City of Manassas Park - Manassas Park VRE Station Parking Garage** I-66  
Funding: \$2,500,000
- 25 **Virginia Railway Express - Crystal City Station Expansion** I-395  
Funding: \$10,786,281
- 26 **Prince William County - Horner Road Park and Ride Lot Expansion** I-395  
Funding: \$2,800,000
- 27 **Arlington County - Expanded TDM Outreach to the I-66 Corridor** I-66  
Funding: \$2,050,000\*
- 28 **Fairfax County - TDM Strategy - Fare Buy-Down on Bus Service from Reston North to Crystal City** I-66  
Funding: \$154,500
- 29 **OmniRide - TDM Strategy - I-395/95 Corridor Vanpool Monthly Incentive** I-395  
Funding: \$604,800
- 30 **Prince William County - New TDM Outreach to the I-66 Corridor** I-66  
Funding: \$200,000
- 31 **Prince William County - I-66 OmniRide Fare Buy-Down** I-66  
Funding: \$650,000
- 32 **Virginia Railway Express - Amtrak Step-Up Reinstatement on VRE Fredericksburg Line** I-395  
Funding: \$1,477,065

## PARK-AND-RIDE

## TDM

\*denotes the total funded amount for projects funded in multiple rounds

# Commuter Choice by the Numbers

## *Bolstering Northern Virginia's Mobility with Record Ridership*

*Commuter Choice projects had another record year of ridership in FY 2024. Active projects in spring 2024 supported 7,500 passenger trips through the two corridors each weekday, a 20% increase over FY 2023. Program-wide ridership continues to grow as Northern Virginia transit ridership stays on a steady upward trajectory and new projects come online.*

Each weekday in FY 2024, Commuter Choice projects saved travelers a total of



**1,100**  
hours of travel time



**120,000**  
miles of vehicle travel



**\$15,000**  
in fuel costs



**24**  
projects in operation  
in spring 2024



*Since 2017, Commuter Choice's \$156 million investment in transit and other transportation projects has improved travel and overall quality of life for Northern Virginians.*

**135M**  
fewer vehicle  
miles traveled



**71%**  
greenhouse gas  
emission reduction  
relative to  
single-occupancy  
vehicle trips



**200**  
automobile  
crashes avoided



**7M**  
Commuter Choice-  
supported trips  
on the I-66 and  
I-395/95 corridors



**\$46M**  
in regional economic  
benefit from reduced  
travel delay



**\$19M**  
in fuel cost savings  
for commuters

**1.3M**  
hours of travel  
time savings

# ... And Beyond the Numbers

*How funding for expanded I-66 and I-395/95 travel options supports a prosperous, livable Northern Virginia*

## Economic Growth and Resilience

Last year, NVTC published the “Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth” report, which found that Northern Virginia’s transit network generates \$1.5 billion in annual personal income and sales tax revenue for Virginia. Beyond the fiscal benefits to the Commonwealth, transit in Northern Virginia provides critical options to travelers who would otherwise travel on already congested roadways. Northern Virginia’s transit network supports 311,000 jobs and 128,000 households, making it a key factor in the region’s economic success and future growth.

Commuter Choice supports the growth of the region’s transit network, by funding both new services and improved infrastructure. Commuter Choice-funded infrastructure projects, such as the construction of second entrances at the Ballston-MU and McLean Metrorail stations, and of an expanded and relocated Crystal City Virginia Railway Express (and future Amtrak) station, enable new development that will cluster more jobs near high-quality transit service.

### Northern Virginia’s transit network...



## Faster, More Efficient Travel

New and expanded transit services operating in the I-66 and I-395/95 Express Lanes allow commuters to enjoy fast, reliable, comfortable commutes, from wherever they choose to live. The opening of the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes in late 2022 immediately provided Fairfax Connector and OmniRide express route riders up to 15 minutes of time savings per one-way trip, fueling ridership growth on the routes.

In the I-95 corridor, riders on OmniRide’s new express route from the new Commonwealth Drive commuter lot in Spotsylvania County (partially funded by Commuter Choice) to the Pentagon save up to an hour each way with a reliable 65 mph ride in the Express Lanes relative to highly variable travel speeds and times in the non-toll lanes. Time savings also mean more efficient transit operations - allowing the same timetable to be met at less cost and potentially with fewer buses and operators, saving money for the region’s taxpayers and toll payers.



OmniRide and Fairfax Connector riders now save up to **15 minutes per trip** on I-66 routes thanks to the Outside the Beltway Express Lanes

## More Public Interest for More Travel Options

NVTC holds a public comment period each spring on the proposed projects under consideration for Commuter Choice funding. In the last three years, nearly 900 Northern Virginia residents, workers and visitors offered their input on how individual projects would affect them, and expressed interest in expanded travel options that Commuter Choice can help fund. Many Northern Virginians rely on public transportation for at least some of their travel needs. Here is a sample of the feedback that NVTC received on the Commuter Choice program and the importance of transit.

*This program has been a success in improving the public transportation options. I used to drive to work frequently, but the decreased waiting times allows public transportation to be an option for me.*

*I would never make it if I had to drive to and from the office every day. OmniRide really helps!*

*We greatly value the public transportation access from our home to work and to other attractions in DC.*

*Anything to remove cars from the road and congestion from the 95 corridor is a good investment.*

*We are so grateful for use of this funding to benefit folks who choose (or don't have a choice) to rely on public transit infrastructure!*

## Reinvesting Revenue Where It's Earned

Commuter Choice reinvests Northern Virginia toll revenues right where they're earned -- into transportation projects that foster faster, more reliable travel through the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors by helping more people move along the expressways and nearby roads and transit lines more efficiently and creating new, attractive travel options. The benefits of many of Commuter Choice's projects also extend to other, non-commute trip purposes.

Within Commuter Choice's \$156 million total investment to date is over \$30 million to complete the funding commitments for major capital improvements along the two corridors -- including rail station enhancements, park-and-ride expansions and a bus rapid transit line -- matching over \$1.1 billion in federal, Commonwealth, regional and local funds for these projects. The Commuter Choice awards are providing vital construction funds for impactful improvements that will benefit I-66 and I-395/95 commuters for many years to come while also saving other Commonwealth financial resources for investment.






# Eligible Applicants

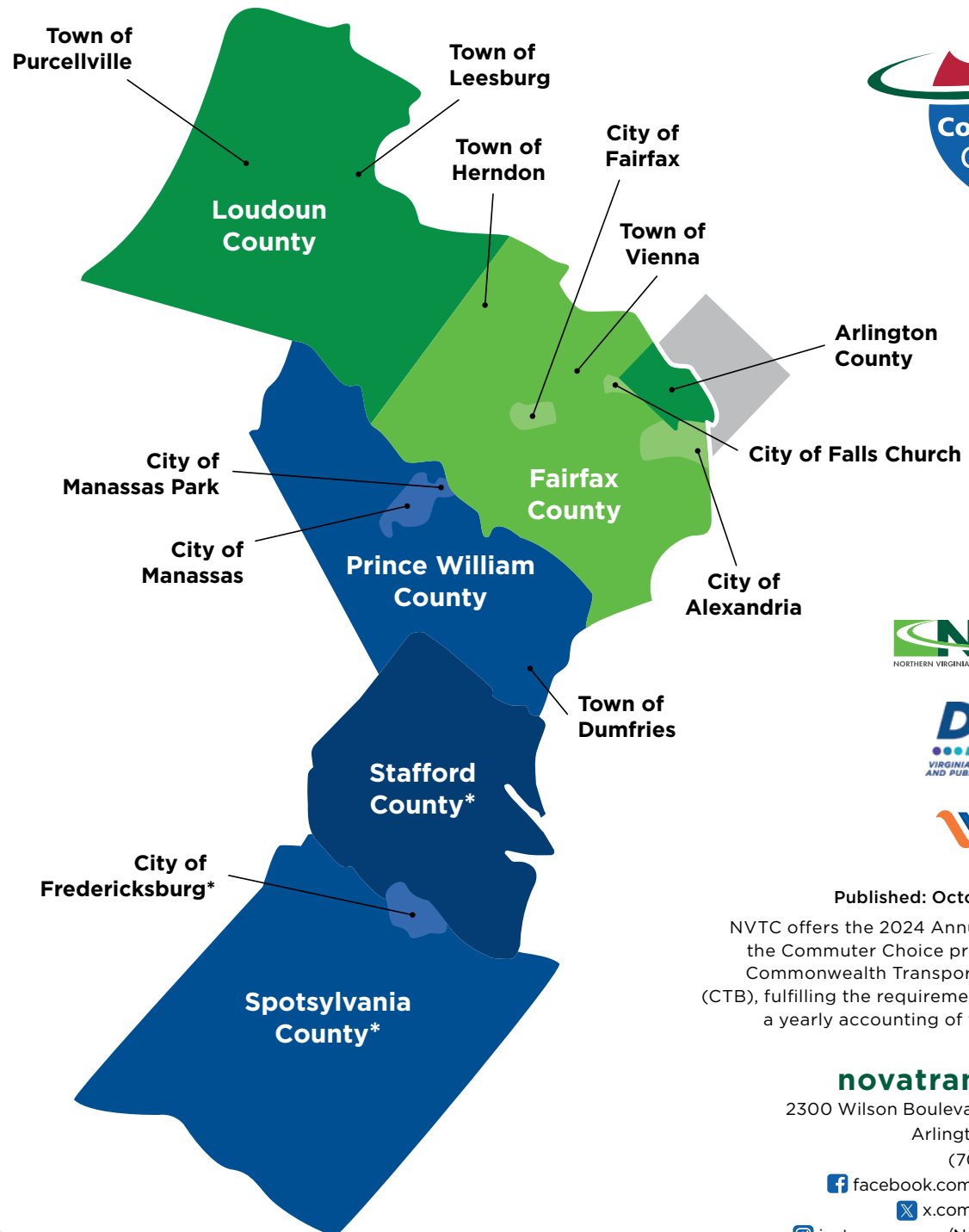
## Localities

- NVTC Jurisdiction
- PRTC Jurisdiction

*\*Only eligible for I-395/95 Commuter Choice*

## Transit Agencies

-  OmniRide
-  Virginia Railway Express
-  Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



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NVTC offers the 2024 Annual Report of the Commuter Choice program to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), fulfilling the requirement to provide a yearly accounting of the program.

[novatransit.org](https://novatransit.org)

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