



# 2021 Commuter Choice Annual Report Technical Memorandum



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# 1. Introduction

This memorandum describes how the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) calculated the person throughput increases for projects funded to date by the Commuter Choice program as identified in the Project Performance portion of the [2021 Commuter Choice Annual Report](#). Table 1 summarizes the number of projects funded through Commuter Choice on the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors. Commuter Choice projects were evaluated primarily on their ability to support corridor improvement goals of maximizing person throughput and implementing multimodal improvements that improve mobility, support new and diverse travel choices, and enhance transportation safety and travel reliability.

**Table 1: Commuter Choice Funded Projects**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Projects</b>
<b>Total Commuter Choice Projects</b>	<b>50</b>
All Projects, I-66 Rounds 1-4 (since FY 2017)	33
All Projects, I-395/95 Rounds 1-2 (since FY 2019)	17
<b>Projects with Performance Included in the FY 2021 Annual Report</b>	
<b>Transit and Access to Transit Projects in Service in Spring 2021, I-66</b>	<b>10</b>
New Bus Service	5
Enhanced Bus Service	4
Access to Transit	1
<b>Transit and Access to Transit Projects in Service in Spring 2021, I-395/95</b>	<b>8</b>
New Bus Service	3
Enhanced Bus Service	5

NVTC chose to focus on the person throughput increases achieved by funded projects since maximizing person throughput is one of the overarching improvement goals and since it serves as a reasonable proxy for the attractiveness and effectiveness of the multimodal improvements created. However, the benefits of Commuter Choice projects extend beyond increased transit ridership by improving connections between 30 regional activity centers, making I-66 and I-395/95 commuters more aware of their alternatives to driving alone and enhancing linkages between driving, transit, bicycling and walking throughout the region.

The 2021 Annual Report presents project performance in terms of total weekday ridership for simplicity. As of spring 2021, the 10 operational transit and access to transit projects in the I-66 corridor moved 314 daily riders, while in the I-395/95 corridor, eight operational transit and access to transit projects moved 443 more people through the corridor daily, for a total of 757 more people each weekday across the two program corridors.

This year's project performance figures were measured in the midst of the COVID-19 public health emergency, which significantly affected commuting patterns around Northern Virginia and led to reduced or suspended service on many of the transit services that Commuter Choice was supporting. The Annual Report and this memorandum describe this year's challenging performance context further. More significantly, though, they address how NVTC is working with eligible program applicants to position Commuter Choice for future success amidst a different and evolving market for commuter travel - including by encouraging more capital projects with long-lived benefits and resolving measurability challenges with certain types of projects. Among several transit service projects funded to date, Commuter Choice has funded the purchase of dozens of buses and improvements to bus stops and park-and-ride lots along several routes that will continue to benefit I-66 and I-395/95 commuters after any transit operations support concludes.

## 2. Background

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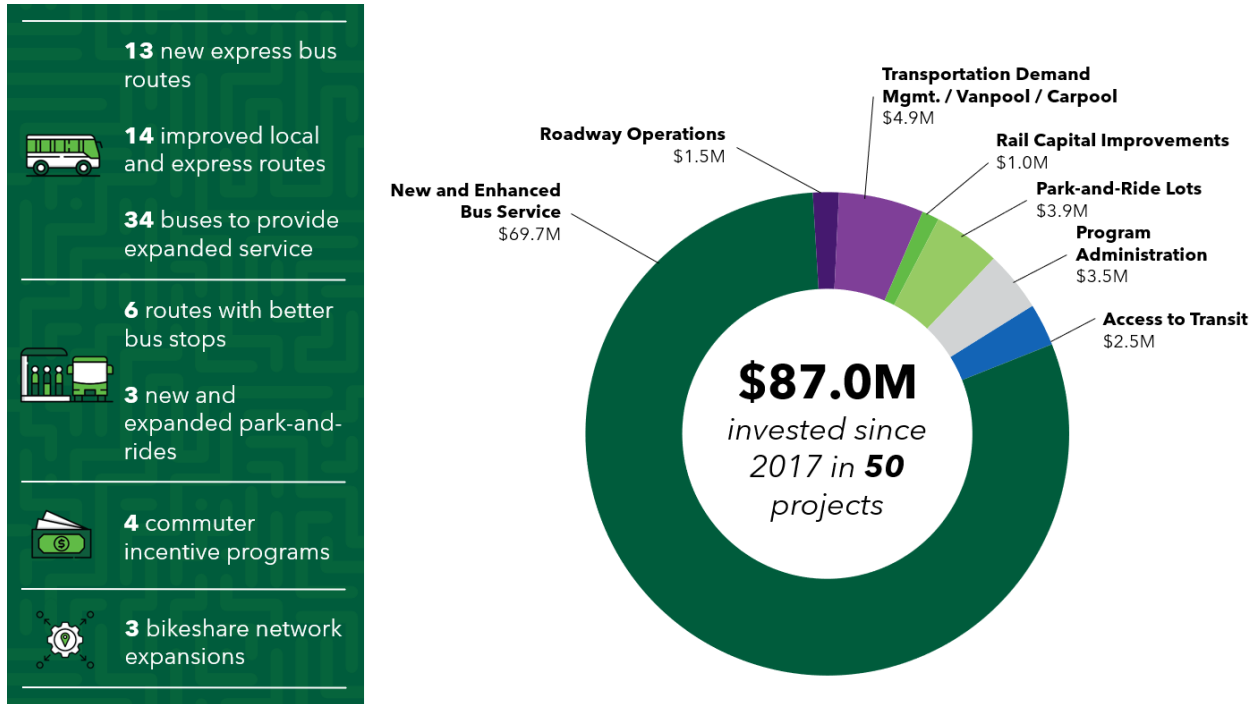
Commuter Choice invests toll revenues in public transit and other multimodal transportation projects along two expressway corridors, I-66 and I-395/95, that benefit the corridors' toll payers by moving more people and expanding transportation options. NVTC manages the Commuter Choice program in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia and, on the I-395/95 corridor, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC).

### Commuter Choice Awards to Date

The Commuter Choice program was established in 2017; as of June 2021, the program had funded 50 projects, some of which have received multiple installments of funding support, totaling over \$87 million of reinvestment of toll revenues into multimodal improvements. About \$34 million has been awarded for long-lived capital assets including bus purchases, park-and-ride lot construction and capital improvements to bus stops that will benefit commuters for years to come. Commuter Choice on the I-66 Corridor has funded 33 projects in four rounds of funding while Commuter Choice on the I-395/95 Corridor has funded 17 projects in two rounds of funding. A significant portion of the total award to date (\$26.2 million) reflects projects funded during FY 2021 that were not yet underway at the end of the fiscal year.



**Figure 1: Commuter Choice Awards Through FY 2021**



NVTC has classified each project funded under Commuter Choice to date under one of the following categories, even though many projects include elements of more than one category:

- **New or Enhanced Bus Service** - Up to 24 months of operating subsidies for new commuter, local and on-demand bus routes or improvements to existing routes, such as more frequent service or route extensions. New and enhanced bus service projects often include the purchase of buses needed to operate the expanded service, while some include improvements to bus stops or park-and-ride facilities served by the route.
- **Access to Transit** - Pedestrian and bicycle access improvements, such as bikeshare system expansions, from residential areas to nearby transit stations, hubs and stops.
- **Rail Capital** - Capital improvements to Metrorail and Virginia Railway Express facilities, such as construction or expansion of rail stations.
- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)** - Campaigns to reduce drive-alone commute trips. While earlier projects focused on education and outreach on alternative options, NVTC now requires standalone TDM projects to center on direct incentives to commuters to entice changes in their travel behavior.
- **Roadway Operations** - Operational and safety strategies and capital improvements to roadways that parallel or connect with I-66 inside the Beltway or I-395/95. Projects to implement dedicated bus lanes are included in the roadway operations category.

### Project Selection Process

NVTC’s Commuter Choice project selection process strongly emphasizes the outcomes of a multiple-measure technical evaluation approach. The current<sup>1</sup> technical evaluation process

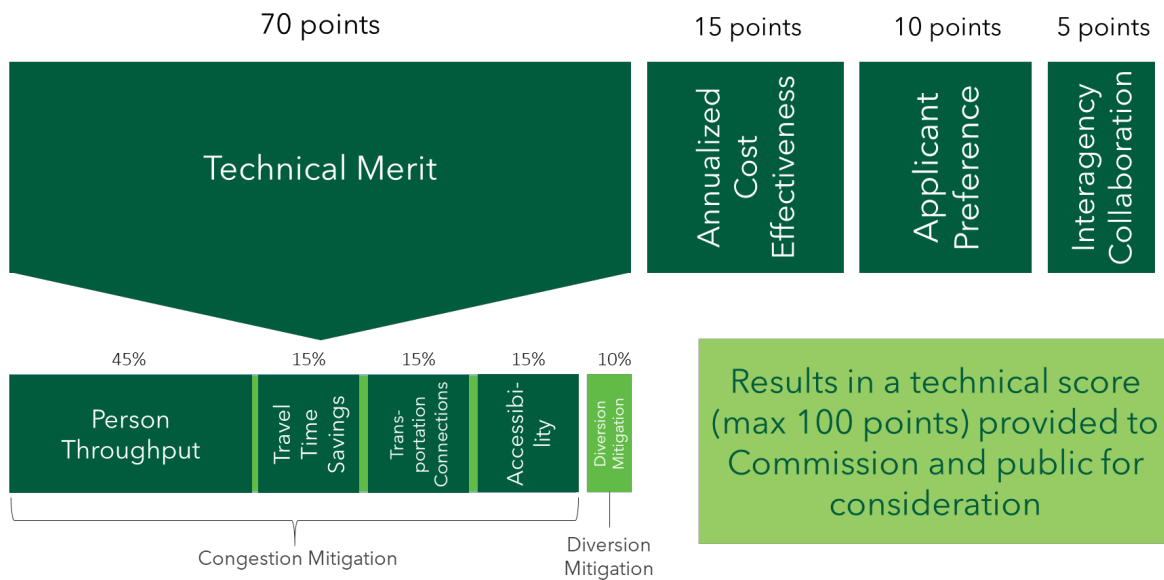
<sup>1</sup> Adopted in 2019. However, prior processes also allotted the most emphasis to the Technical Merit factors that derive from the corridor improvement goals [identified in the two corridor programs’ governing memoranda of agreement](#).

(Figure 2 below) allots 70 of the 100 possible points to factors related to how well proposed projects meet corridor improvement goals. The factors capture:

- The efficiency by which the project would move more people,
- The travel time savings that commuters would realize from using the project relative to a non-tolled driving trip,
- The extent to which the project would improve connections between modes of transportation,
- The extent to which the project would improve access to regional activity centers, and
- The ability of the project to absorb car trips that might be diverted onto parallel streets due to tolling or high-occupancy vehicle restrictions.

Other criteria in the process capture the project’s cost effectiveness (in terms of the technical merit score relative to the funding request, taking the useful life of project elements into account), whether the proposed project is the applicant’s top priority out of those that they submitted for funding consideration and whether the project has been coordinated or discussed with other jurisdictions or public transportation providers in the region.

**Figure 2: Current Commuter Choice Technical Evaluation Process**



### NVTC’s Strategies to Maximize Program Benefits

NVTC has implemented program-wide strategies to maximize the benefits of Commuter Choice funds to I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 toll payers and mitigate the risks of underperforming projects. For one, NVTC limits operations projects of any type - not just transit services, but also bikeshare operations and TDM campaigns - to a maximum of 24 months of support at a time. Projects must successfully re-compete under a subsequent call for projects to receive a further installment of operating support. The 24-month limit provides grant recipients a reasonable amount of time to develop a viable service but limits the program’s commitments where services cannot meet performance expectations despite good-faith efforts by grant recipients.

For TDM projects, NVTC found that generalized outreach and education campaigns did not allow for ready quantification of the number of commuters that began using transit or alternatives to driving alone as a result of the campaign. NVTC therefore now requires standalone TDM strategies to focus on direct incentives to commuters, as these can be targeted specifically to toll payers and have directly measurable usage outcomes that do not require surveying. Besides applying to all new TDM projects, current recipients of funding for TDM projects are revising their strategies to better align with this updated definition. NVTC expects to be able to include performance data for TDM projects in future fiscal years' annual reports.

About 80% of Commuter Choice's total funding awarded to date has been for bus service improvements, largely peak-period focused, inclusive of bus purchases and other related capital elements. With many of the region's office workers likely to continue working remotely much more often than they did prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency, NVTC is strongly encouraging eligible applicants to propose capital projects for funding. Such projects can benefit toll payers over decades of useful life and the overall project benefits are thus less susceptible to short-term fluctuations in travel demand. Eligible types of capital project include construction or expansion of park and ride lots, bus stop enhancements, transit priority improvements and improvements to Metrorail and/or Virginia Railway Express facilities.

## Annual Performance Requirement

The Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) that govern the Commuter Choice program (dated [2021](#) for the I-66 corridor program and dated [2017](#) and [2019](#) for the I-395/95 corridor) require NVTC and, for the I-395/95 corridor program, PRTC, to submit an annual report on Commuter Choice to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The MOAs for both corridors require the report to address the following:

1. *A description of projects selected for funding in the past fiscal year and the benefits that were the basis for evaluation and selection of each such project;*
2. *A review of projects funded in past fiscal years describing the degree to which the expected benefits were realized or are being realized<sup>2</sup>;*
3. *For any project that is not providing substantially similar benefits to those that were the basis for its evaluation and selection, an evaluation of the viability of a plan to modify the project or redeploy the assets to other eligible projects that are expected to provide greater benefits; and*
4. *Proposed uses of residual, unobligated balances of program funds carried over from prior years and interest earned on such funds.*

The summary figures in the Project Performance portion of NVTC's 2021 Commuter Choice Annual Report reflect the average number of additional people moved each weekday (person throughput<sup>3</sup>) by the 18 transit and access to transit projects that were in service in spring 2021. NVTC focused on the weekday person throughput increase as the best single metric of project

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<sup>2</sup> Required beginning in 2020 for the I-66 corridor program and 2022 for the I-395/95 corridor program. NVTC now reports performance data for both corridors.

<sup>3</sup> Defined as the number of additional people moving through the corridor - including by expressway, parallel commuter routes and/or parallel rail transit lines - as a result of the project.

performance out of the range of benefits that Commuter Choice projects offer. This year's report presents the all-day throughput improvement – as opposed to that for just morning peak-period travel inbound toward Washington, D.C., as in the 2020 report – because it is a more straightforward measure for a broader audience. This companion memorandum, however, presents both computations for each active project. NVTC chose to focus on person throughput increases for the following reasons:

- Maximizing the number of people moving through the corridor is one of the two overarching improvement goals for each corridor's program.
- For the other goal – implementing multimodal transportation improvements that improve mobility, expand transportation options and enhance transportation safety and travel reliability – the increase in person throughput serves as a reasonable proxy for effectiveness in the absence of a single catch-all measure.
- Each project's estimated morning peak-period inbound person throughput increase is a significant part of the eligibility review (in terms of assuring that the project will benefit toll payers) and technical evaluation<sup>4</sup>. For funded projects, this throughput increase is specified in the project agreement as the project's key performance target.
- Person-throughput improvements have been the key performance figures provided to the Commissions and Commonwealth Transportation Board as part of the approval of programs of projects for funding.

## Typical Project Performance Reporting Requirement

Grant recipients are required to provide performance data to NVTC annually to determine the actual increase in person throughput for each funded project.<sup>5</sup> Each project agreement identifies specific performance measures that will allow NVTC to compute the throughput increase, as well as days for which to report data to provide a representative picture of usage of the project. Where possible, the performance reporting parameters are consistent among similar projects. An example of typical performance reporting parameters for an enhanced bus service is as follows:

- Performance Measures: Report average morning peak-period inbound ridership for the expansion trips. Report average total daily ridership for the expansion trips.
- Collection Period: Data should be collected over a two-week period in March or April. Chosen period should not include any holiday periods and the weekday average should be calculated from Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during the period.
- Reporting: Report data to NVTC in a technical memorandum outlining the following:
  1. Data collection methodology
  2. Data collection dates
  3. Results – data

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<sup>4</sup> NVTC works closely with applicants to ensure that the throughput estimates carried into the eligibility review and technical evaluation are reasonable, using transit ridership forecasting tools, past project performance and professional judgment.

<sup>5</sup> For transit service projects, the reporting requirement applies to active service improvements. Capital and certain other project types require reporting for five years from opening or implementation of the project.



#### 4. Notes (if necessary)

Most projects, regardless of category, specify a similar data collection period. Mid-week (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) days in March and April typically represent commute travel at its peak, given schools in session and no major holidays.

### Performance Reporting Considerations and Limitations for FY 2021

The most significant project performance consideration in FY 2021 was the continued repercussions of the COVID-19 public health emergency, which impacted travel and commuting patterns in Northern Virginia significantly for the entirety of the fiscal year. While FY 2021 regional transit ridership data depicts a gradual but steady rebound, particularly since January 2021, demand for transit in general and most peak-period commuter-focused services in particular remains well below pre-pandemic levels. That noted, 14 of the 21 Commuter Choice-funded transit service improvements that would have operated at full service levels in FY 2021 absent the public health emergency saw reduced or suspended service for at least a portion of the year. Figure 3 summarizes these service level adjustments. NVTC offered grant recipients significant flexibility to reduce or suspend<sup>6</sup> service expansions as they believed necessary to balance continued travel for essential purposes and preparation for the potential return of more commuters to their worksites with significantly lower demand for service.

**Figure 3: Transit Project Service Levels in FY 2021**



To provide a straightforward, conservative estimate of Commuter Choice program benefits, NVTC assessed data for only the most recent year that each project was operational. NVTC did not include throughput figures for transit service improvements that had concluded prior to the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, however, as the most recent performance data that NVTC has for these services likely does not reasonably represent their current performance (if still operating).

As in last year’s report and noted above, the FY 2021 Annual Report does not include performance data for TDM projects given lack of a suitable, straightforward measurement

<sup>6</sup> Commuter Choice reimbursed only costs incurred in carrying out each project. In other words, less service provided meant less cost to the program. Also, NVTC continued to expect that grant recipients that continued their transit services would operate each for at least as long as the duration that NVTC agreed to fund (generally 24 months) - so on routes with lower ridership and thus less fare revenue, a grant recipient would generally need to reduce service and/or augment Commuter Choice funds with other funding to meet the minimum service duration.

approach for the generalized education and outreach campaigns that have been the focus of program funding in prior rounds. While many of the two corridors’ commuters shifted to teleworking in early 2020 due to the public health emergency – a means of ‘commuting’ that the campaigns have sought to encourage to help reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and thus were able to help facilitate – the public health emergency was the primary reason for the shift. NVTC expects to be able to include performance figures for TDM projects in future years’ annual reports as these efforts shift toward direct incentives to commuters.

### Summary Findings

Table 2 summarizes the morning peak period and daily person throughput increases for the transit and access to transit projects that were in service in spring 2021 by corridor. The daily totals correspond to those in the [FY 2021 Annual Report](#)’s Project Performance section.

**Table 2: Person Throughput Improvements for Transit and Access to Transit Projects in Service in FY 2021**

Metric, Operational and Completed Projects	Both Corridors (I-66 and I-395/95)	I-66 Corridor Projects Only	I-395/95 Corridor Projects Only
Total Goal Throughput Improvement, AM Inbound	1,940	1,375	565
Total Actual Throughput Improvement, AM Inbound	427	188	239
Percent of Goal Throughput Achieved	22%	14%	42%
Total Weekday Ridership Increase	757	314	443

## 3. Throughput Computation Methodology and Results

NVTC computed the person throughput increase for each transit and access to transit project that was in service in spring 2021 based on the performance target/reporting requirements specific to the project and data provided by each grant recipient.

### New Bus Service Projects

All the new bus service projects currently supported by Commuter Choice provide only peak-period, peak-direction service (i.e., inbound toward D.C. during the morning rush hours and outbound in the reverse direction in the afternoon rush hours). NVTC obtained ridership data from grant recipients at the trip level or aggregated by morning or afternoon service. The calculation methodology, actual throughput, and goal throughput (based on full service) for the eight new bus service projects that were active in spring 2021 are shown in Table 3.

All the new bus services were express or commuter routes that provide nonstop point-to-point service between park and ride lots and employment concentrations via Express Lanes facilities that offer reliable and quick travel times. In FY 2021, the strongest performers were:

- Services to the Pentagon. The Department of Defense called personnel back to work on at least a part-time basis<sup>7</sup> relatively early in the public health emergency; and
- OmniRide’s two Stafford County routes. These services, which use the full length of the 95 and 395 Express Lanes facility, performed well because of increased congestion in the I-395/95 general purpose lanes and in lieu of casual carpooling (slugging), a popular means of travel in this corridor prior to the public health emergency, by returning commuters.

**Table 3: FY 2021 Person Throughput Improvements for New Bus Service Projects**

Project	Grantee	Corridor	Calculation Method	Person Throughput		
				AM Inbound		Daily Actual
				Goal	Actual	
Fairfax Connector Express Bus Service between Vienna/Fairfax-GMU and Pentagon Metrorail	Fairfax County	I-66	Averages of reported total AM and daily ridership, April 6-8 and 13-15, 2021	170	47	65
Enhanced Bus Service from Government Center to DC	Fairfax County	I-66	Averages of reported total AM and daily ridership, April 6-8 and 13-15, 2021	276	24	40
New Bus Service from Haymarket to Rosslyn	OmniRide	I-66	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	202	10	19
Loudoun County Transit Metro Connection from New Purcellville Park and Ride	Loudoun County	I-66	Total AM and daily ridership averages from all Tue., Wed. and Thu. in April-June 2021	30	6	12
New Bus Service to the Pentagon with Gambrill and Backlick North Park and Ride Improvements	Fairfax County	I-395/95	Averages of reported total AM and daily ridership, April 6-8 and 13-15, 2021	125	35	73

<sup>7</sup> For instance, according to a [Department of Defense](#) press release, significant levels of on-site work resumed at the Pentagon in June 2020.

Project	Grantee	Corridor	Calculation Method	Person Throughput		
				AM Inbound		Daily Actual
				Goal	Actual	
New Bus Service from Staffordboro to Downtown D.C.	OmniRide	I-395/95	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	76	52	102
New Bus Service from Staffordboro to the Pentagon	OmniRide	I-395/95	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	60	84	148
New Bus Service from Stringfellow to L'Enfant Plaza	Fairfax County	I-66	Averages of reported total AM and daily ridership, April 6-8 and 13-15, 2021	200	18	23

### Enhanced Bus Service Projects

Generally, all enhanced bus service projects were required to report average weekday ridership. However, Commuter Choice supports a range of bus service enhancements, including:

- Route extensions to existing bus routes
- Discrete additional trips on existing commuter bus routes (e.g., two additional morning peak-period trips and two additional afternoon peak-period trips)
- Shorter headways on existing bus routes (e.g., buses arrive every 10 minutes during rush hours rather than every 15 minutes)

The throughput computation approach therefore varied depending on the nature of the enhancements and the data that grantees provided (**see Appendix for nature of the service enhancements**). The nature of the service enhancement, calculation methodology, actual throughput, and goal throughput (based on full service) for the nine enhanced bus service projects operating in Spring 2021 are summarized in Table 4.

As with new bus service projects, enhancements to express and commuter routes bound for the Pentagon registered reasonably strong performance during FY 2021. Not fully captured in the FY 2021 throughput results is the extent to which more frequent service helped transit operators to retain riders on the improved routes, including on the portion of the service that was already in place. For instance, while the two DASH service enhancements did not show a net ridership gain from 2019, prior to service improvements taking effect, to 2021, the two routes retained almost all of their pre-improvement ridership: 90% for the AT-1 Plus route and 98% for the AT-9 route. Across the DASH system as a whole, meanwhile, FY 2021 ridership was

40% of FY 2019 ridership. Commuter Choice support for frequent service and expanded hours on these two routes enabled them to outperform still, when viewed in relation to the overall DASH system.

**Table 4: FY 2021 Person Throughput Improvements for Enhanced Bus Service Projects**

Project	Grantee	Corridor	Calculation Method	Person Throughput Increase		
				AM Inbound		Daily Actual
				Goal	Actual	
Bus Stop Consolidation	Arlington County	I-66	Increase in ridership on ART and Metrobus routes serving the corridors, March 2018 to May 2021	20 <sup>8</sup>	0	0
OmniRide Linton Hall Metro Direct Bus Service Enhancement	OmniRide	I-66	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	15	2	2
Enhanced Bus Service from Gainesville to DC	OmniRide	I-66	Average ridership from the PM expansion trip remaining in operation, April 1, 6-8 and 13-14, 2021	94	0	3
Enhanced Bus Service from Gainesville to Pentagon	OmniRide	I-66	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	332	77	145
Enhanced Bus Service from Dale City to Ballston	OmniRide	I-395/95	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	50	31	46
Enhanced Bus Service on Prince William Metro Express	OmniRide	I-395/95	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	80	15	58
Enhanced Bus Service on Route 1 Local	OmniRide	I-395/95	AM and daily ridership averages from trip-level ridership data, April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	75	2	16

<sup>8</sup> Project agreement identified a 15% target ridership increase for the set of improved bus stops.



Project	Grantee	Corridor	Calculation Method	Person Throughput Increase		
				AM Inbound		Daily Actual
				Goal	Actual	
Enhanced Bus Service on AT-1 Plus: West End to Van Dorn Metro	City of Alexandria / DASH	I-395/95	Increase in average weekday ridership, March 2019 to March 2021	71	0	0
Enhanced Bus Service on AT-9: Mark Center to Potomac Yard	City of Alexandria / DASH	I-395/95	Increase in average weekday ridership, March 2019 to March 2021	28	0	0

### Access to Transit

One operational access to transit project, a bikeshare expansion in the City of Falls Church, reported performance information for FY 2021, as shown in Table 5.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 5: FY 2021 Person Throughput Improvements for Access to Transit Projects**

Project	Grantee	Corridor	Calculation Method	Person Throughput Increase		
				AM Inbound		Daily Actual
				Goal	Actual	
Expanded Transit Access, Bike Share	City of Falls Church	I-66	Average peak-period, peak-direction trips between City stations and Metrorail, Arlington or D.C., April 20-22 and 27-29, 2021	36	3	5

### Commuter Choice Amidst Changing Regional Travel Patterns

In early March 2020, Commuter Choice was predominantly supporting successful peak period-focused commuter bus services that had shown steady ridership growth since their implementation and were meeting or exceeding performance targets. The 2021 Annual Report's Project Performance section highlights key elements of Northern Virginia's different commuter travel landscape since then - including much higher rates of telecommuting that are likely to remain, slowly but steadily rebounding transit ridership and less toll-paying traffic in the I-66 corridor especially - but also areas in which commuter transit services and other alternatives to driving alone continue to attract users. NVTC is working closely with eligible

<sup>9</sup> A second access to transit project, Bicycle Parking Improvements at Manassas VRE Station, did not report performance data this year due to little usage of the installed bicycle parking facilities (the project had a throughput goal of 5 trips, so not a significant bearing on the overall outcome). The City of Manassas will conduct updated counts for next year's report.

program applicants to foster project proposals that respond as best as possible to a new and evolving baseline for commuter-focused transportation, with an emphasis on capital projects that can benefit both peak- and off-peak commuters over years to come. In the I-395/95 corridor, Commuter Choice can also support transit service improvements that extend to off-peak times and/or weekends, when ridership has been relatively resilient, given that Express Lanes tolls are collected at all times.

For projects already underway, NVTC has encouraged recipients to find ways to provide the most benefit possible to toll payers within the scopes approved by the Commission(s) and Commonwealth Transportation Board. NVTC has opted to provide flexibility for grant recipients where possible - as discussed in this memorandum and in the 2021 Annual Report - as opposed to, for instance, curtailing projects that are not meeting performance targets. The course of the COVID-19 public health emergency thus far has defied easy predictions about when, in what volume and by what means more commuters would begin returning to worksites. NVTC believes that Commuter Choice grant recipients have made reasonable efforts overall to balance service levels with demand, given the time needed to prepare for service increases (involving potentially recruiting additional bus operators, which has proven challenging in Northern Virginia and around the country since the pandemic began), possibility of greater ridership on limited notice, and needs and desires for greater spacing aboard vehicles. While regional transit ridership by the end of FY 2021 was not nearly as high as pre-pandemic levels, there were promising signs of commuters beginning to return to work and choosing to use transit over single occupancy vehicles in particular markets. And many transit service projects include purchases of buses and improvements to bus stops that will continue to benefit corridor commuters even after any Commuter Choice operations support concludes.

In the I-66 Round Five (FY 2023-FY 2024) application process and under future funding rounds in both corridors, NVTC has asked and will continue to ask prospective applicants to take a sober approach to estimating the throughput improvements of proposed projects and, for transit services, the appropriate levels of service to meet this demand. NVTC will review these assumptions carefully in its eligibility reviews and technical evaluations to ensure that projects that advance for funding represent impactful uses of toll revenues.

## 4. Conclusion

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This technical memorandum documents NVTC's methodology to monitor, report, and evaluate person throughput performance for Commuter Choice projects to support the figures included in the Project Performance portion of the [2021 Commuter Choice Annual Report](#). NVTC focused on projects' person throughput performance for the sake of a single, straightforward measure that aligns with the corridor improvement goals that any Commuter Choice project must support - specifically, maximizing person throughput and implementing multimodal improvements that improve mobility, support new and diverse travel choices, and enhance transportation safety and travel reliability. Commuter Choice projects provide a range of benefits beyond increased person throughput, however, including travel time savings for commuters and improved connections between transportation modes and 30 regional activity centers. NVTC's multiple-measure Commuter Choice technical evaluation process captures this range of benefits.

NVTC found that the 18 transit and access to transit projects in service in Spring 2021 moved 757 more people each weekday through the I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 corridors. Many of these projects also include capital elements - including bus purchases, park-and-ride lot construction and bus stop improvements - that will benefit I-66 and I-395/95 corridors well beyond the projects' current two-year installments of Commuter Choice operating support. NVTC expects to be able to include performance data for TDM campaigns in future years' annual reports as projects in this category transition toward directly measurable direct incentives targeted to I-66 and I-395/95 toll payers.

As regional commuting patterns continued to evolve over the course of FY 2021, NVTC emphasized providing grant recipients flexibility within their approved projects to provide the most benefit possible to toll payers despite challenging performance circumstances, which in many cases meant temporarily providing less service (and thus conserving funds) as a means of balancing supply and reduced demand in light of public health uncertainty. NVTC is supporting Commuter Choice program applicants in monitoring commuting trends, remaining attentive to the new and changing needs of commuters and fostering project proposals that deliver significant and sustained throughput and travel benefits to each corridor.

## Appendix

**Table 7: Descriptions of Enhanced Bus Service Projects with FY 2021 Performance Data**

Project	Grantee	Corridor	Nature of Service Enhancement
Bus Stop Consolidation	Arlington County	I-66	Consolidated and improved underutilized and closely spaced bus stops along Lee Hwy. and Washington Blvd. to improve travel time and accessibility.
OmniRide Linton Hall Metro Direct Bus Service Enhancement	OmniRide	I-66	Added an additional morning and evening trip between Linton Hall and the Tysons Corner Metrorail station.
Enhanced Bus Service from Gainesville to DC	OmniRide	I-66	Added two morning and two evening peak-direction trips.
Enhanced Bus Service from Gainesville to Pentagon	OmniRide	I-66	Total of nine morning inbound trips and nine afternoon outbound trips.
Enhanced Bus Service from Dale City to Ballston	OmniRide	I-395/95	Added two morning and two evening trips.
Enhanced Bus Service on Prince William Metro Express	OmniRide	I-395/95	Increased rush-hour service frequency.
Enhanced Bus Service on Route 1 Local	OmniRide	I-395/95	Increased rush-hour service frequency.
Enhanced Bus Service on AT-1 Plus: West End to Van Dorn Metro	City of Alexandria / DASH	I-395/95	Improved service frequency and extended hours of service throughout the week.
Enhanced Bus Service on AT-9: Mark Center to Potomac Yard	City of Alexandria / DASH	I-395/95	Improved service frequency and extended hours of service throughout the week.