

The following items were handed out at
the March 5, 2020 NVTC Meeting.

BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Northern Virginia Transportation
Commission

March 5, 2020





Overview

1. The Need to Transform the Bus
2. Bus Transformation Strategy
3. Action Plan
4. Next Steps

Congestion, affordability, and mobility are major problems in the DC region that will only continue to grow

Bus's Value Proposition

Bus is a major part of the region's transportation system, carrying 600,000 daily trips

- Much of our region's population depends on bus as their only way to travel
- Rapid, effective bus service is fundamental to our region's prosperity
- Most cost-effective and efficient way to move the most people quickly, safely, and rapidly

Core challenges

- Meeting customer needs
- Keeping up with changing technology
- Coordinating across the region
- Maintaining a sustainable cost structure
- Deciding how service is paid for

Collaborative transformation: a broad and deep process

Quality bus service is a shared responsibility:

- Bus service providers
- Departments of transportation who own, operate, and enforce streets and curbs
- Funding partners

Working together is critical to ensuring the bus system meets customer needs



More than a year of public and stakeholder input, including:

- 140 participants in September 2018 Kickoff Summit
- 8,800+ public survey responses
- 13 Metrobus operator listening sessions
- 4 Focus Groups
- 23 Executive Steering Committee meetings*
- 16 Technical Team meetings*
- 8 Strategy Advisory Panel meetings*
- 45 External project briefings
- 3 Public Open House events
- 33 Pop-up events
- 14 WMATA Leadership Team meetings*
- 285 Social media posting
- 312,000 people reached via social media

*All project committee members can be found on the last page of the [Strategy Summary](#) and the Action Plan Summary, available on the project website.

Strategy Recommendations

The strategy to achieve the vision and goals is built around four recommendations



1

Frequent and Convenient Bus Service

Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth



2

Bus Priority on Roadways

Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably



3

Customer Experience

Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership



4

Task Force to Implement the Strategy

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system

What is Different in the Final Strategy

Changes Based on NVTC Feedback:

- **Removed recommendation to ‘transfer service’**, but included recommendation for the WMATA Board to revisit the definition of “regional” and “non-regional” service
- **Delayed the start of the Task Force to enable further discussion in the region.** The Action Plan identifies existing entities to advance recommendations while discussions seek to improve several aspects of bus governance:
 - Accountability
 - Visibility
 - High-Level Collaboration
 - Regional Solutions to Regional Problems

What is Different in the Final Strategy

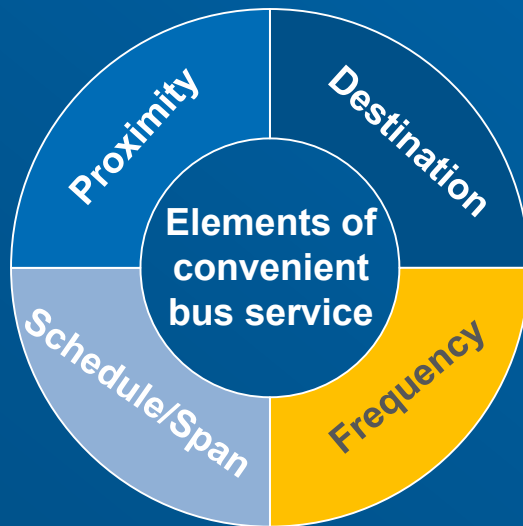
New Recommendations Based Public Feedback:

- **A regional rider feedback platform** as a response to public input that riders should be a part of shaping their system
- **On-board safety for drivers and passengers**
- **Bus cleanliness and comfort**
- **Customer service**

Other Changes:

- **Four key recommendations** from six in the draft strategy still incorporated the elements supported by NVTC including:
 - Creating an excellent customer experience
 - Providing frequent and convenient bus service
 - Prioritizing bus on the region's roadways
- **Removed consolidate back-office functions**

1 Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth



- (A) **Establish regional standards** across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day
- (B) Collect and **share standardized bus operations and performance data** across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service
- (C) **Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network** to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system*
- (D) Cooperatively **assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula** using the Metro Board's Authority
- (E) Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to **operate flexible on-demand services** to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted

* Through a Mass Transit Plan as required by the WMATA Compact



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **responsiveness** to customer demand for service
- Increased **access to transit** (frequency, schedule, span)
- Convenient service that is **direct and coordinated** among providers
- Increased bus **ridership**
- More **efficient use of resources**

2 Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably

- F** Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to **adopt consistent guidelines**, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority
- G** Implement enforcement policies that **establish bus priority** and result in reliable and fast service
- H** Establish a capital program at Metro that **supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects** including BRT
- I** Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and **move more people more efficiently**



These recommendations will result in:

- Reduced **journey time** for bus riders
- Increased **on-time performance**
- Increased **ridership**
- Increased frequency and decreased **bus operating costs**
- Improved **corridor traffic conditions** for all vehicles
- Improved **regional productivity and competitiveness**

3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership

Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip

- J** Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place
- K** Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers
- L** Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits

Make paying bus fares easier

- M** Provide free transfers between bus and rail
- N** Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders
- O** Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place
- P** Develop new regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable
- Q** Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership

Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus

- R** Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled
- S** Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions
- T** Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service
- U** Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

Pursue innovation and bus improvement

- V** Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency
- W** Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

4

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system

- (X) Convene a Task Force to **oversee implementation** of the Strategy and **provide long-term leadership** for the region's bus system

Purpose is to provide:

- Accountability
- Visibility
- High-Level Collaboration
- Regional Solutions to Regional Problems

- (Y) Facilitate an independently published **annual progress report** on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a **bus performance scorecard** to track the level of service delivered to customers

- (Z) **Develop a platform for rider feedback**, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations



These recommendations will result in:

- The public will experience a **unified bus system** that is **customer-responsive**
- **Customer representation** for strong customer accountability
- **Integrated decision making** and efficient use of public resources
- **Better coordination** of operations and facilities, services and guidelines

Examples of Activities Underway in the Region

Flexible service pilot in Montgomery County

BRT in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia

Joint storage/maintenance facilities between WMATA and Montgomery County

Electric buses in DC Circulator and RideOn Fleet

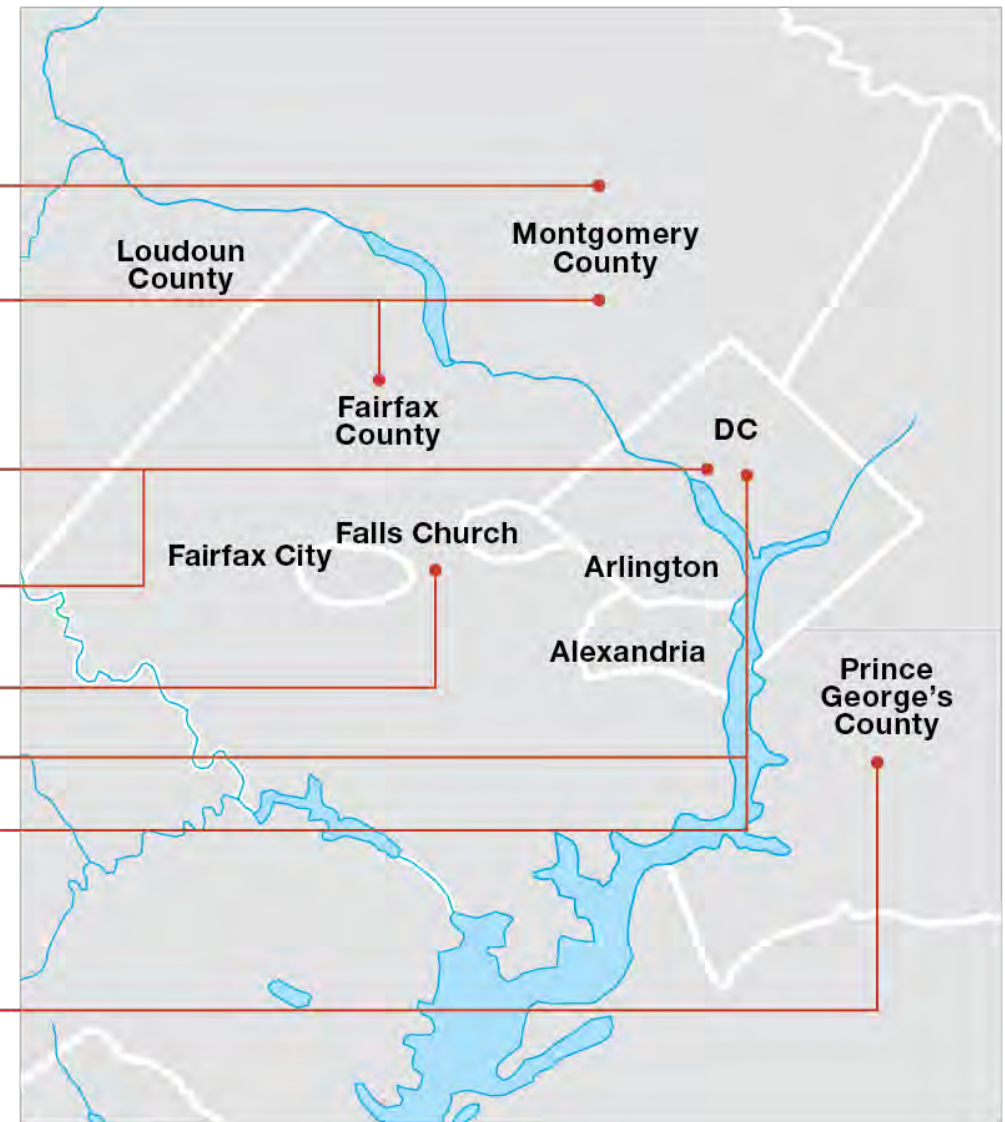
AV shuttle pilot in Fairfax County

Dedicated bus lanes in DC

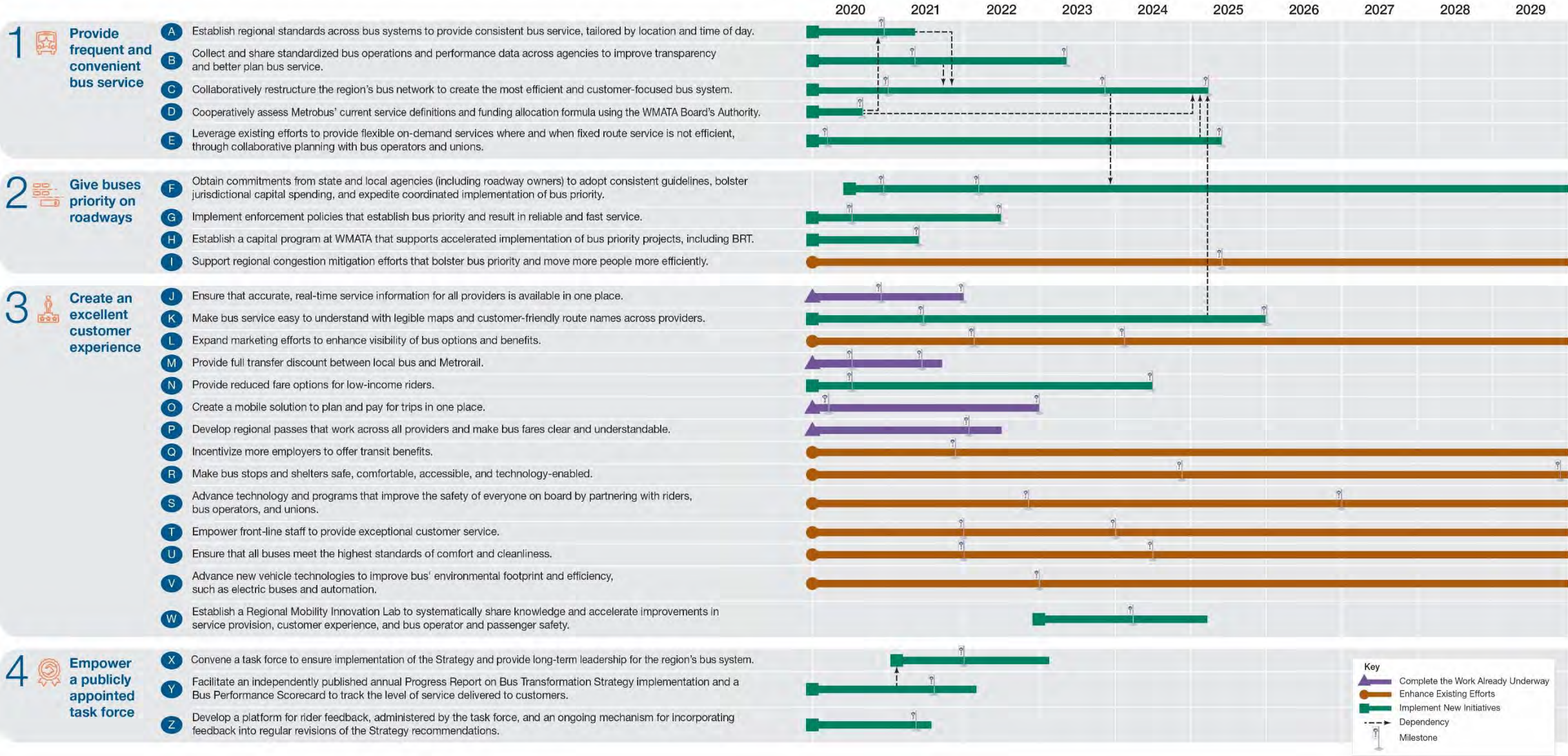
Microtransit service in DC

Exploring opportunities for joint storage/maintenance facilities and connected traffic signals in Prince George's County

Transit signal priority across the region



Plan Of Action



Action Plan – Key Outcomes of Implementing the Bus Transformation Strategy

Customers will have...

- ...a more seamless experience using the region's transit system
- ...bus service that better matches their needs and demands
- ...faster and more reliable trips
- ...less expensive trips, especially low-income passengers
- ...accurate, easy-to-use, accessible information that makes it easy to use the region's transit system
- ...safer and more comfortable experience when riding and waiting for the bus
- ...a voice in shaping the Bus Transformation Strategy as it evolves



The region's transit system will see...

- ...increased ridership
- ...higher operating cost efficiency
- ...improved customer satisfaction
- ...less congestion on the region's roads
- ...reduced environmental impact of transportation
- ...better coordination in regional decision making

Next Steps to Transform the Bus

WMATA Safety and Operations Committee	12/12/2019
TPB Tech Committee	12/6/2019
TPB	12/18/2019
City of Alexandria Transportation Commission	1/15/2020
WMATA Board	1/16/2020
NVTC MAC	1/21/2020
City of Falls Church City Council	1/27/2020
City of Fairfax City Council	2/4/2020
Prince George's County Council	2/6/2020
Montgomery County Transportation and Environment Committee	2/6/2020
Arlington County Transportation Commission	2/6/2020
Fairfax County Transportation Committee Supervisor	2/14/2020
District of Columbia Committee on Transportation and the Environment/Committee on Facilities and Procurement	2/20/2020 3/2/2020
NVTC	3/5/2020
VDOT and DRPT	3/5/2020
Loudoun County Board	TBD
WSTC Board	TBD

- **Present Strategy and seek endorsements** from local and regional councils/boards on Strategy
- **Empower Metro, bus providers, jurisdictions** to:
 - Lead on actions within their control
 - Partner to implement regional actions
- Recognize current financial realities, while showing progress of a bus system that is a **fast, frequent, reliable, affordable system that feels unified**

The Strategy and Action Plan are available at bustransformationproject.com

Resolution: Leadership in Transforming the Bus

Actions for NVTC and Jurisdictions to **Lead**:

- Implement bus priority projects and enforcement
- Implement free transfers between Metrorail and local bus systems
- Implement low income fare products for residents
- Test and evaluate zero emissions buses for integration into local bus fleets
- Ensure that accurate, real-time information is available for all local bus services
- Continue to improve bus stops and shelters

Actions where NVTC can **Partner with others in the Region**:

- Support restructuring of the Metrobus network to create an efficient and customer-focused network
- Support application of bus service standards
- Collect and share operations and performance data
- **Endorse** the Bus Transformation Strategy



Appendix - Bus Provider and Agency Progress to Date on Recommendations

1

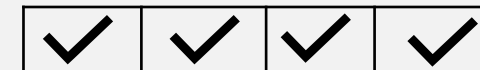
Provide frequent and convenient bus service

Survey Findings: Progress to Date



- (A) Establish regional standards**
- (B) Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data**
- (C) Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network**
- (D) Cooperatively assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation**
- (E) Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to operate flexible on-demand services**

WMATA developed service guidelines (2015) with the region, but not Board adopted. Other agencies have standards and/or performance metrics



AVL and APCs on most buses in region; Level and sophistication of data cleaning and analysis varies



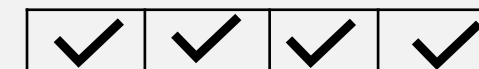
Nothing has been done at a full regional level. VA agencies have and will continue to review entire network (by jurisdiction) through required TDP and TSP process. DC local bus study completed in 2014; Circulator TDP updated in 2017. Prince George's Transit Vision Plan



Progress made through first part of Bus Transformation Project

No survey question

Montgomery County and DDOT have pilot programs. Other jurisdictions have studied it or are currently studying it. Prince George's has limited call-a-ride services open to all



Note: Checkmarks indicate some level of progress, not necessarily completion. Progress-to-date information is current as of October 2019. Refer to the full Action Plan for more details.

2 Give buses priority on roadways

- F** Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to expedite bus priority
- G** Implement enforcement policies that establish bus priority
- H** Establish a capital program at WMATA that supports accelerated implementation
- I** Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority

Survey Findings: Progress to Date



No commitments exist to expedite bus priority measures. Implementation decisions implemented on a case by case basis. 2015 Metrobus service standards included priority. DDOT has made H&I Street bus lanes permanent, Arlington/Alexandria have Metroway, Fairfax Co and Montgomery working on several corridors

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Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Taskforce (TIME) as part of TPB/COG. MCDOT, DDOT, VDOT, all expressed support for this. Plus "general agreement that it's good to pursue." TPB Bus Lane Enforcement Study from 2017. Varying implementations of automated enforcement allowed in different jurisdictions

✓	✓	✓	
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No progress to date

No survey question

Some work being done, e.g. DDOT study in FY20 budget. VDOT has congestion pricing on Express Lanes. MD is considering managed lanes

✓	✓	✓	
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3 Create an excellent customer experience

Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information

J: Real-time service information for all providers available in one place

K: Legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers

L: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus

Make paying bus fares easier.

M: Provide full transfer discount between bus and rail

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O: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place

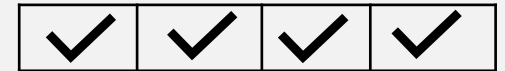
P: Develop regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable

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Survey Findings: Progress to Date



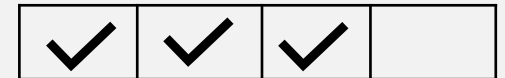
All agencies report progress but not completely implemented at this time.



Other than the WMATA-published map, there are no system-wide maps. Have not started route renumbering

No survey question

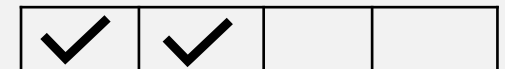
Bus marketing is thus far piecemeal on individual services - MD 355 Ride On 101, DC Circulator, etc.



WMATA proposed as part of FY21 operating budget



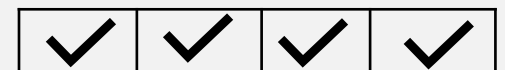
Various subsidy programs in multiple jurisdictions, and some free fares (e.g., CUE). DC/WMATA planning pilot



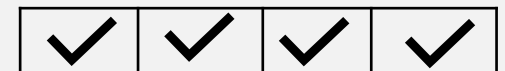
WMATA is working on a mobile payment solution



WMATA has added Metrobus to its monthly unlimited rail pass. Most bus operators in the region already accept the WMATA Weekly Unlimited Bus Pass



Many jurisdictions already have programs: Arlington, Fairfax, Alexandria, DC, and parts of Montgomery



Note: Checkmarks indicate some level of progress, not necessarily completion. Progress-to-date information is current as of October 2019. Refer to the full Action Plan for more details. [BusTransformationProject.com](https://www.bustransformationproject.com)

3 Create an excellent customer experience

Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

R: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled

S: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone, partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions

T: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service

U: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

Pursue innovation and bus improvement.

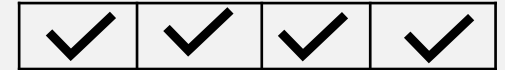
V: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency

W: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements

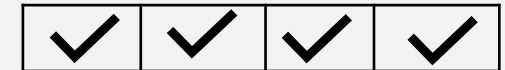
Survey Findings: Progress to Date



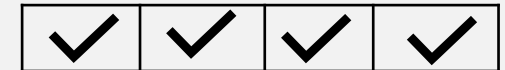
VDOT, WMATA, Fairfax County already have guidelines. City of Fairfax is in the process of developing. Alexandria and Prince George's use WMATA's standards



All agencies have passenger and driver safety features, and are planning for improvements



All providers include customer service in operator training efforts, although some are provided by the contractor. Alexandria and FCDOT have incentive programs



Operators have individual standards

No survey question

Five agencies currently doing or moving toward electric bus procurement (WMATA, Circulator, Ride On, DASH, The Bus) with expected implementation around 2021. VDOT and DRPT are also moving forward with EV buses. AV shuttles being tested in VA



TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee and WMATA JCC are two existing forums for ad-hoc information sharing

No survey question

Note: Checkmarks indicate some level of progress, not necessarily completion. Progress-to-date information is current as of October 2019. Refer to the full Action Plan for more details.

4

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus

- X Convene a Task Force to oversee implementation of the Strategy and provide long-term leadership for the regional bus system with membership
- Y Annual progress report on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a bus performance scorecard
- Z Develop a platform for rider feedback, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback

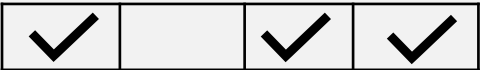
Survey Findings: Progress to Date



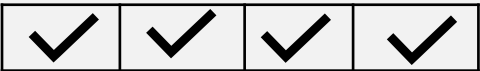
No agencies have committed to date; revisit the structure and timing of this recommendation

No survey question

Bus performance scorecard - some start from CSG report (just Metrobus in DC). Performance metrics are published by DASH, Metrobus, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, MCDOT. DRPT and NVTC collect and publish performance metrics for all agencies



RACs exists at WMATA and Prince George's County. DASH is forming advisory committees. Other agencies have ways for riders to provide feedback on service





March 2, 2020

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Hon. Katie Cristol

Vice Chair
Hon. Canek Aguirre

Secretary-Treasurer
Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay

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Hon. Canek Aguirre
Hon. Elizabeth B. Bennett-Parker

Arlington County
Hon. Katie Cristol
Hon. Libby Garvey
vacant

Fairfax County
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Hon. James R. Walkinshaw

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Commonwealth of Virginia
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

Virginia General Assembly

Senate
Hon. Adam Ebbin
vacant

House of Delegates
vacant
vacant
vacant
vacant

Executive Director
Katherine A. Mattice

Ms. Jennifer Ellison
Board Corporate Secretary
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Additional Comments on Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 WMATA Budget (Docket B20-01 and B20-02)

Dear Ms. Ellison:

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's (NVTC) Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Committee wishes to convey additional comments on new fare changes authorized for advertisement by the WMATA Board in January. This letter supplements the comments submitted by NVTC to WMATA on February 12, 2020 that noted concerns on the Proposed FY2021 WMATA Operating and Capital Budget, changes to fares and fare policy, Metrobus service cuts, late-night Metrorail hours and the transfer discount. The Committee continues to support a balanced budget—inclusive of new initiatives, fare policy changes, and service changes—that is in compliance with the legislatively mandated 3% subsidy growth cap.

Advertised Rail Fare Changes

WMATA's advertised budget includes a range of options that could raise the Metrorail peak base fare from \$2.25 up to \$2.50 and raise the Metrorail peak maximum fare from \$6.00 up to \$7.00. As previously indicated by the Commission, we believe that a proposed \$7.00 peak maximum fare places a disproportionate burden on long-distance riders—especially when the broader proposed budget package provides these riders with little benefit. We also see that such a drastic increase in the peak base rail fare would cause a dramatic loss in rail ridership, further decreasing farebox revenues. NVTC's WMATA Committee urges WMATA to follow its existing adopted fare policy principles whereby increases to the Metrorail peak base and maximum fare are tied to the Consumer Price Index.

NVTC's WMATA Committee strongly opposes the advertised \$1.00 surcharge at Dulles Airport Station. The Committee does not believe any station should be singled out for a surcharge as this violates WMATA's adopted fare policy principle of establishing equitable fares. Furthermore, we anticipate the completion of Silver Line Phase 2 will 1) benefit Metrorail riders systemwide by providing a one-seat ride from Ashburn to downtown Washington, D.C. and into Maryland via Dulles International Airport; and 2) provide service consistent with other Metrorail lines.

In addition, WMATA proposes to restore some late-night Metrorail hours. NVTC and its WMATA Committee believe that late-night Metrorail hours should not compromise the safety and maintenance of the system. As such, we look to the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) for its position on this proposal, as the WMSC should thoroughly review this proposal's impact on the safety of the Metrorail system before additional late-night rail hours are restored. If it is determined that increases to late night hours will not compromise the safety and maintenance of the system, we support a return to WMATA's historic policy of charging peak fares for Metrorail service after midnight, as it did prior to FY2017.

Advertised Weekend Fares

NVTC's WMATA Committee supports incentives to increase weekend ridership. However, we do not support the proposed weekend flat fare options as all three flat-fare proposals analyzed by WMATA will lead to a loss in revenue. Furthermore, two of the three weekend flat fare proposals would lead to a loss in both revenue and ridership. While creating incentives for weekend ridership is applauded by the Committee, we believe that maintaining revenues to support the continuation of existing bus routes is a higher priority for this budget.

The Committee does support the proposed 1 and 3-day short-trip rail passes aimed at visitors and weekend riders. These passes 1) would complete WMATA's suite of 1, 3, and 7-day unlimited and short-trip pass products; and 2) would be an appropriate approach to weekend passes that would create incentives for weekend ridership, maintain equity between short and long-distance riders and avoid sacrificing revenue. The Committee encourages WMATA to evaluate the ridership and revenue implications of these passes and seriously explore the communications, marketing and renaming of these passes as part of a larger integrated fare pass strategy.

Bus Fare Changes

NVTC's WMATA Committee opposes the advertised increase in fare for MetroExtra bus routes. MetroExtra bus routes are limited-stop Metrobus services that currently have the same fare (\$2.00) as regular Metrobus routes. Any fare increases to MetroExtra routes apart from regular Metrobus fares could push price-sensitive riders to slower bus services. We believe that WMATA should not create a disincentive to use the MetroExtra bus service and that these routes should be the same price as regular Metrobus routes.

The Committee encourages WMATA to implement a phased approach to increases in the transfer discount. As mentioned in NVTC's letter of February 12, 2020, our local transit systems value parity with WMATA policies. Increasing the transfer discount from \$0.50 to \$2.00 in FY2021 would place an unanticipated and significant cost on local transit operating budgets. NVTC's WMATA Committee urges WMATA to seek incremental changes to the transfer discount so that it can minimize the fiscal impact to our jurisdictions while still benefitting riders.

Addressing Fare Policy through the Annual Budget Process

WMATA's fare structure is complex because of the competing demands for service between short and long-distance riders. WMATA's recent progress with pass products and the pending low-income fare pass pilot with the District of Columbia provide an encouraging direction for the agency. NVTC's WMATA Committee urges WMATA to take a strategic approach to developing fare policy rather than tackling fare policy incrementally through the budget. We encourage the General Manager to revisit WMATA's fare policy principles and engage the WMATA Board and jurisdictions on a comprehensive and strategic fare policy that is equitable, generates adequate revenue while maximizing ridership, and balances the often-competing needs of short and long-distance riders and WMATA's individual funding jurisdictions.

On behalf of our jurisdictions, NVTC's WMATA Committee appreciates the opportunity to provide additional comments during this budget's public comment period. Please do not hesitate to contact NVTC's Executive Director, Kate Mattice, at 571-483-3224 or katemattice@novatransit.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Matthew F. Letourneau
NVTC WMATA Committee Chairman

Report from WMATA Alternate Director Matt Letourneau
March 5, 2020

Colleagues,

I'm sorry I can't be with you tonight due to a Loudoun County Board of Supervisors FY21 budget work session. While I'm sure Chair Smedberg will give you a full briefing, I wanted to provide you some written comments from my perspective.

I have been participating in WMATA meetings in my capacity as an Alternate Director in January and February (and on limited occasions as needed last year). Both NVTC and WMATA staff hold briefing calls prior to each meeting, which I have participated in since my appointment as an Alternate Director in January of last year, so I am fairly well up to speed at this point regarding Board issues.

There are a few items I'd like to highlight:

FY21 WMATA Budget: The WMATA Committee met in February and a letter was drafted providing our NVTC input on the budget. Mr. Smedberg and I were part of a Finance Committee work session on the budget as well. As has been discussed, there are a number of troubling proposals related to a higher max fare for riders and a surcharge for Dulles Airport riders which we will oppose. The biggest issue by far is the elimination of certain bus routes in DC, Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Smedberg and I asked for and received input from each of the Virginia jurisdictions regarding their specific priorities among the routes that were proposed for elimination. Much of the need to eliminate routes is driven by a reduction of the transfer fee, so we will be advocating for a less aggressive reduction which would allow routes to be saved. This will ultimately be the subject of a negotiation between Board members. I will certainly do all I can to preserve those routes that our NVTC members believe are most important to effectively serve our citizens.

Silver Line Phase 2: Successful completion of Silver Line Phase 2 is a top priority for me and I'm hoping that I can be a positive force for problem solving due to my familiarity with MWAA. The project is reaching a critical time period with several outstanding issues. For the most part, there is agreement between WMATA and MWAA on those issues. In my view, the most significant outstanding issues that aren't currently on a path toward a solution are related to verification of software programming of Automatic Train Control software and concrete panels. It is unclear how significant the concrete panel issue is, but the WMATA Office of Inspector General has been tasked with investigating and their findings present an unknown. The Board should be receiving an update at the end of this month on these issues and the OIG will be providing their report in the near future as well.

WMATA Debt Management Policy: To comply with Maryland law, WMATA has enacted a new Debt Management Policy. I would like to thank the jurisdictional and NVTC staff for their thorough review of proposed language. Ultimately, we were successful in removing several problematic provisions. One such provision would have allowed WMATA to use debt service to fund unfunded pension liabilities, which is not a good fiscal practice. While WMATA may not have used this authority, in my view even the presence of such a policy in the document would be a red flag for credit ratings agencies. Another would allow for the use of 50 year debt, rather than the more typical 20 or 30 year debt that our jurisdictions used, which I also believe would not be a good practice. At our request, both of these provisions were eliminated from the final document and the new policy passed the WMATA Board on February 27.

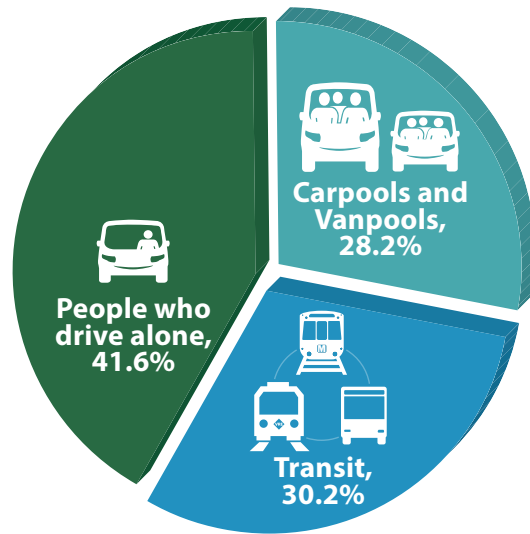
Policing: Several recent incidents have made the news regarding Metro Transit Police. The WMATA Board has met several times with Chief Pavlik to discuss these incidents and obtain all of the facts surrounding them. Viral and media reports presented an incomplete picture. The D.C. Council has requested that a Citizens Review Board be formed to review the actions of Metro Transit Police. The WMATA Board is engaging with the Chief and WMATA leadership on ways to address that request and build confidence in MTPD. While I am new, my observation is that the Board believes that MTPD has made significant strides in their operation over the past year and more should be done to improve community relationships through better communication. This is an area still under discussion.

East Falls Church Bike Rack: A media report in January highlighted ongoing problems with a project to build a bike rack at the East Falls Church Metro Station. The report stated that the project had been ongoing for 5 years and ballooned in cost from \$600,000 to \$3.6 million. I requested a briefing on the project. Clearly, there were major deficiencies in project management on this project. However, media reports were (again) incomplete on many of the details. The project is actually a building with 92 bike racks. WMATA significantly underestimated the cost and complexity of the project and thus attempted to complete it with a task order contractor who did not have the expertise required. The project has since been reassigned and should be completed this summer. In response to issues like this, the GM created a Capital Project Delivery department with new personnel to ensure better a better process and decision making. WMATA will be evaluating this project once it is open before deciding to move forward with similar structures in other locations.

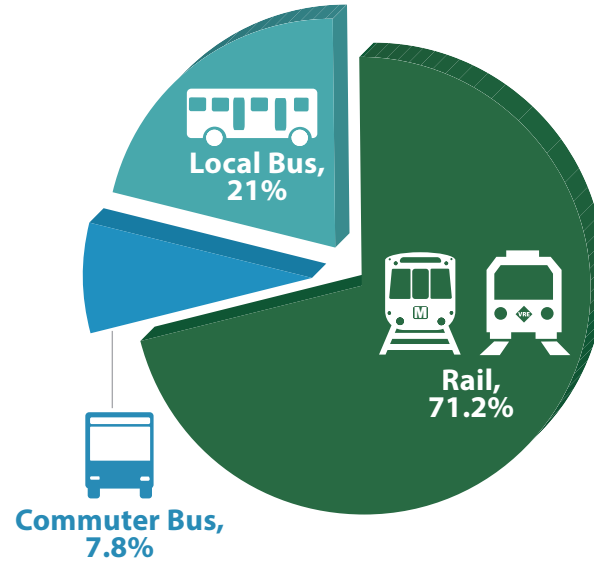
I am happy to answer any questions—feel free to email me at matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov I'll see everyone next month.

Establishing a Baseline on the I-395 Corridor

The 2019 data estimates that 93,000 people and 44,000 vehicles move inbound through the I-395 corridor each weekday during the morning peak period. This data establishes a baseline for future corridor performance reports. The next data collection will occur in 2021.

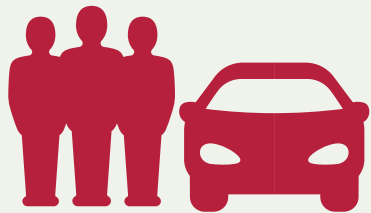


I-395 Corridor Mode Share, 2019



Distribution of I-395 Corridor Transit Trips by Transit Mode, 2019

The Commuter Choice program's support for new and enhanced bus services could contribute to transit mode share increases in the corridor.

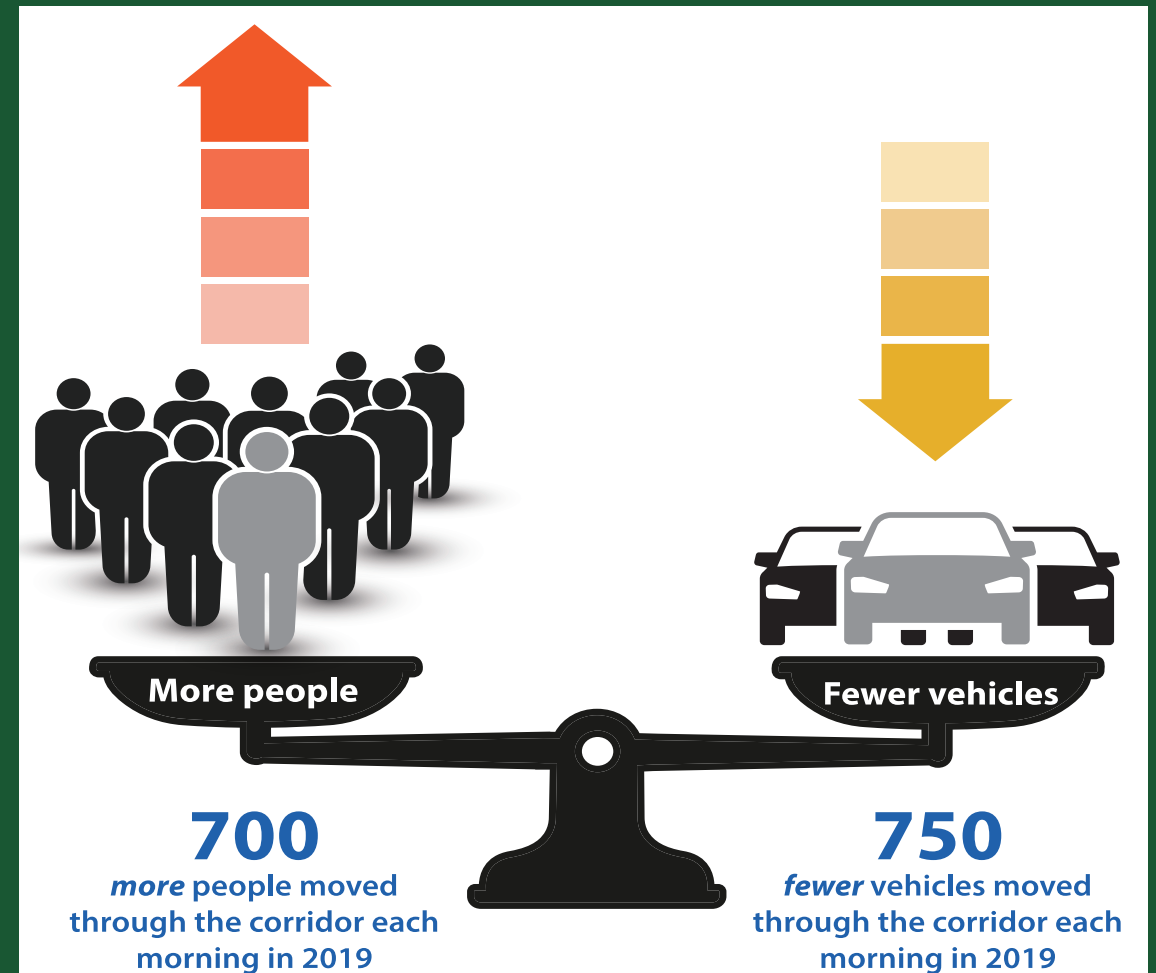


Slugging/Casual Carpooling

The I-395 corridor has an established casual carpooling culture, locally referred to as slugging, with high average automobile occupancy.



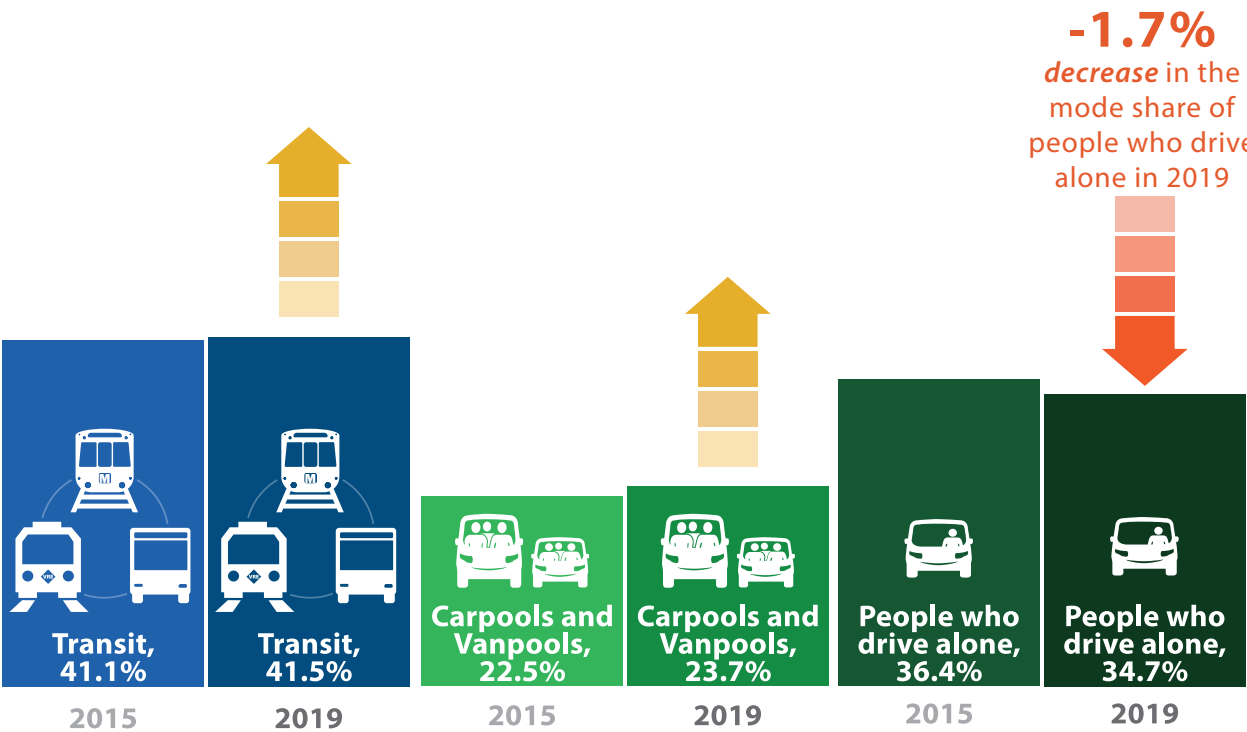
2019 Corridor Performance Report Highlights



Since Commuter Choice funding began in 2017 on the I-66 corridor Inside the Beltway, more people have moved in fewer vehicles.

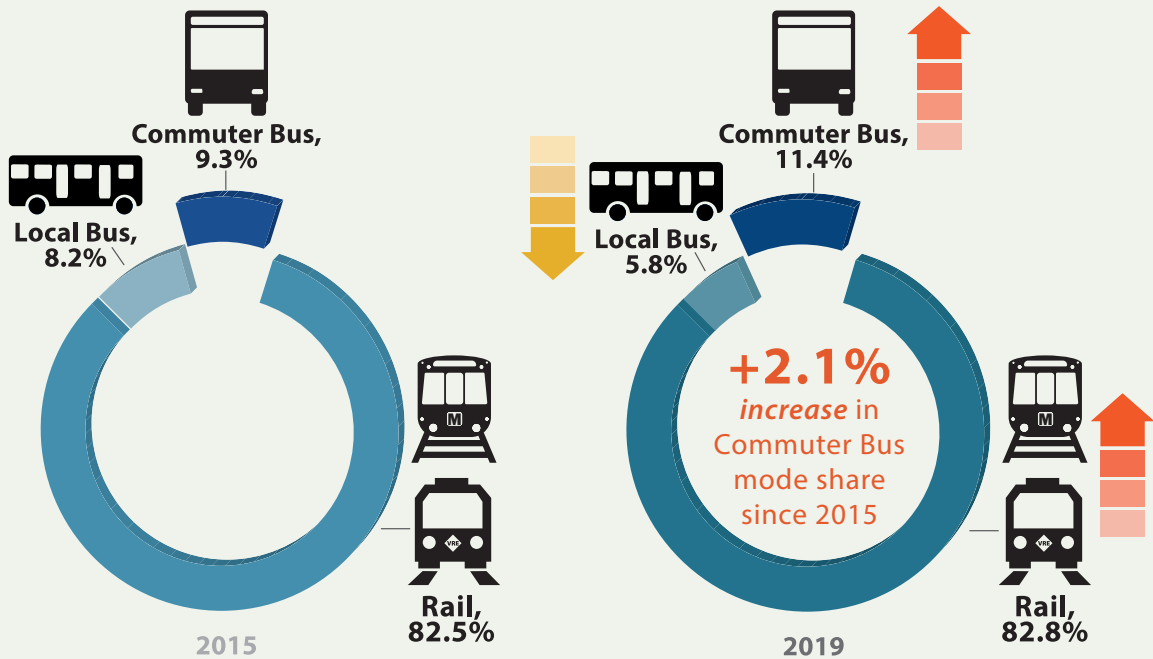
I-66 Corridor Highlights

Since 2015, more people use transit, carpools and vanpools to travel along the I-66 corridor during the morning peak period.



Distribution of I-66 Inside the Beltway Corridor Mode Share, 2015 and 2019

When using transit to commute, most people use Metro and VRE. More people, however, are adopting the long-haul Commuter Bus as their preferred travel mode.

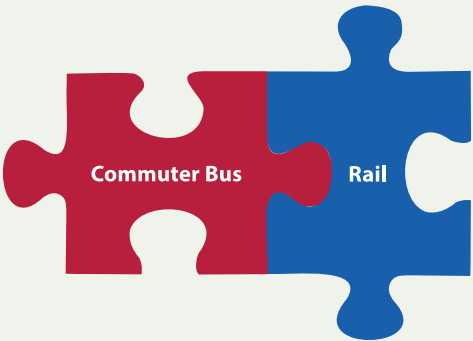


Distribution of I-66 Inside the Beltway Corridor Transit Trips by Transit Mode, 2015 and 2019

Commuter bus ridership in the I-66 corridor has increased markedly as new Commuter Choice-funded services have begun. The corridor’s rail ridership has increased modestly over the last few years.

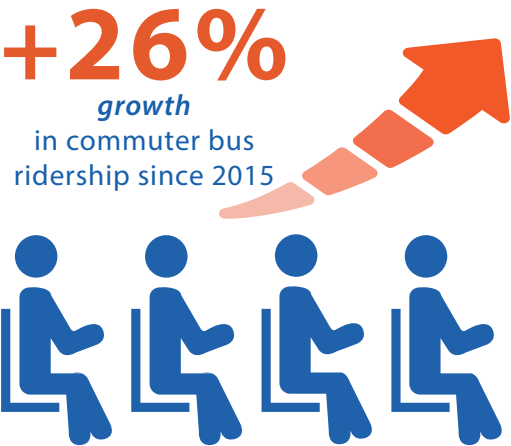
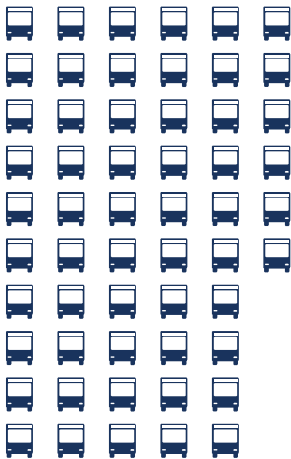
Commuter buses and rail transit complement each other rather than compete for the same base of riders.

The modes serve different markets and trip purposes, and both are enjoying ridership gains.



Commuter bus and rail are complementary transit services

56 additional commuter buses move through the I-66 corridor each day because of Commuter Choice funding



Legislation in the 2020 General Assembly that NVTC is Monitoring

Transportation Omnibus Bills	
HB1414/SB890 (Filler-Corn/Saslaw)	<p>Both bills make significant changes to the structure and funding of Virginia's transportation network and establish a new Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and Transit Ridership Incentive Program. However, the bills diverge on funding levels, revenue drivers and traffic safety provisions after moving through both chambers. The House and Senate have appointed conferees to resolve the differences before the session adjourns.</p> <p>NVTC and PRTC are working to amend language related to the selection of Rail Authority members in our districts is done in consultation with the two commissions. NVTC also proposed a technical amendment to ensure Virginia's match to federal dedicated funding for WMATA is set proportionally (consistent with Federal law) instead of based upon a fixed dollar amount.</p>
Additional Bills	
HB1586 (Watts)	The bill adds an additional exception to WMATA's 3% operating cap to would allow service increases approved by the WMATA Board. The bill passed both the House and Senate and is ready for the Governor's signature.
SB277 (Barker)	The bill establishes a business income tax deduction for employers to provide commuter transit benefits to their employees. The deduction is taxable for years 2020 – 2024. The bill is in a conference committee.
SB735 (Newman)	The compromise peer-to-peer vehicle rental tax bill provides a lower tax rate (6.5% in FY2021 and 7% in FY2022 and beyond) for a shared vehicle owner who registers no more than 10 peer-to-peer vehicles on a platform. The bill passed both the House and Senate and is ready for the Governor's signature.
SB848 (Ebbin)	The bill changes the due date of NVTC's Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA to allow key ridership and financial data from the National Transit Database to be included. The bill passed both the House and Senate and is ready for the Governor's signature.
Budget Amendments	
Item 264 #1s	Directs the Secretary of Finance to convene a workgroup on state tax-supported debt. The scope of this effort could include debt from VRE (C-ROC), NVTA, and NVTC (if we issue bonds from Commuter Choice funds).
Item 442 #2h/ Item 442 #2s	Requires DRPT to evaluate extending the Blue Line or other public transportation from Franconia-Springfield Metro Station to Prince William and Stafford Counties.
Item 442 #4h	Adds an exception to the WMATA 3% cap to allow for any service increases approved by the WMATA Board.
Item 443 #1h	Requires DRPT to evaluate the cost of extending VRE to Gainesville.
Item 430 #2s	Directs the Secretary of Transportation to ensure at least \$5 million is allocated to the Transit Ridership Incentive Fund.

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW



**In December we said
thank you to three
Commissioners who
helped shape the
direction of NVTC
for decades.**



SHARON BULOVA

joined the Commission in 1988 and helped lead the creation of VRE and the extension of Metrorail to Tysons and Dulles International Airport.



CATHERINE HUDGINS

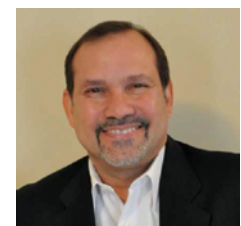
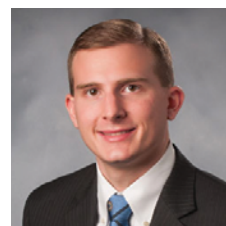
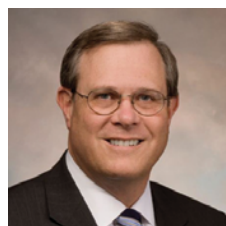
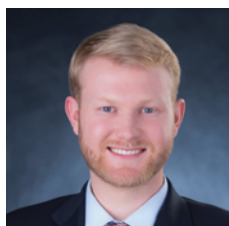
served 15 years on the Commission and represented Virginia on the WMATA Board of Directors for a decade, chairing the Board in 2011 and 2012.



JOHN COOK

joined the Commission in 2010. His contributions included chairing the VRE Operations Board and helping the VRE achieve remarkable growth.

NVTC also honored Ron Meyer, Richard Black, James LeMunyon, M. David Skiles and Raul “Danny” Vargas for their service on the Commission.



Overview

If you had to sum up the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's year in one word, it would be "growth." Growth in the number of projects managed by NVTC. Growth in the amount of money distributed by NVTC. Growth in the number of people working behind the scenes to making it all happen and even growth in the office space occupied by NVTC.

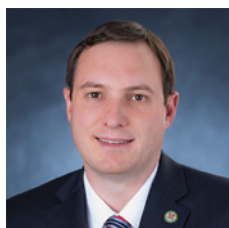
This isn't growth for growth's sake. It's a recognition of the professionalism and expertise NVTC brings to the table. Through the innovative Commuter Choice program, we've awarded more than \$60 million to projects in the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors. Projects that encourage people to ride transit and reduce congestion on our already-crowded roadways.

We relish our role as a one of a kind institution for regional transit cooperation. That was evident in our work before, during and after the Platform Improvement Project that closed six Metrorail stations in Northern Virginia for the summer. From making sure that riders had alternate ways to get to work to encouraging people to take transit once the shutdown ended, NVTC worked to minimize the disruption for tens of thousands of people who needed to get to and from work.

Speaking of WMATA, we continued to strongly represent Virginia's interests on the WMATA Board of Directors through our appointments to the Board, including the chairmanship. Meanwhile, our WMATA Committee provided clear leadership on recommended priorities for the transit agency.

NVTC continues to be a hub for Northern Virginia jurisdictions and transit-providers. On any given day, our new conference room is full of people working on everything from the minute details of keeping fare payment systems up to date to planning new transit systems for a region that will continue to grow in population and jobs in the coming decades.

We said in this space last year that "the momentum continues to build." That was as right then as it is now and will continue to be true in the foreseeable future. We pledge to use that momentum to advance a robust and reliable public transportation network to support communities in Northern Virginia.



Matthew F. Letourneau,
Chairman



Kate Mattice,
Executive Director

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Financial Management

NVTC fiscal year 2019 financial and compliance reports again received clean audit opinions. The opinions covered the financial position and change in financial position of NVTC's activities, internal control over financial reporting and compliance with laws, contracts, regulations, grant agreements and other matters, and compliance with each major federal program. NVTC's financial structure includes a general fund, two special revenue funds – one for transit activities and another for I-66 toll revenue – and an enterprise fund for NVTC's share of ownership in Virginia Railway Express.



\$246.9MIL
SPECIAL REVENUE

During fiscal 2019, the transit special revenue fund allocated \$246.9 million in state and regional assistance to member jurisdictions.

\$15.4MIL
I-66 TOLL REVENUE

The special revenue fund for toll revenue received \$15.4 million in fiscal 2019 and disbursed \$2.5 million for regional projects.

\$170.6MIL
ENTERPRISE FUND

NVTC maintained an enterprise fund, recognizing NVTC's share of ownership of VRE, which equaled \$170.6 million as of June 30, 2019.



**\$154.3
MILLION**
STATE ASSISTANCE

State assistance for WMATA, through NVTC, came to \$154.3 million.

\$285MIL

RECIPIENT OR AGENT OF FUNDS

NVTC served as the recipient or agent of funds for more than \$285.6 million in fiscal 2019.

\$58MIL

State assistance for which NVTC applied on behalf of its member jurisdictions' transit systems, came to \$58 million.

\$34.4MIL

Revenues from the 2.1% regional gas tax, which NVTC received and disbursed to WMATA for operating and capital requirements, equaled \$34.4 million.

\$23.4MIL

TRANSIT ASSISTANCE

Department of Rail and Public Transportation transit assistance to VRE, for which NVTC served as recipient, totaled \$23.4 million.

\$17,000,000

FEDERAL GRANTS on behalf of two NVTC jurisdictions totaled \$17 million, of which \$1.9 million was received in fiscal 2019. NVTC served as recipient for the awards and ensured its jurisdictions' compliance with Federal Transit Administration requirements.



WMATA Policy and Governance



Second Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly on WMATA

The Commission sent the 2019 Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA to the Governor and General Assembly as part of NVTC's new responsibilities from the 2018 dedicated capital funding legislation. The report presents operational and financial data that is vital to measuring the performance of Metrorail and Metrobus and includes WMATA's expenditures from the WMATA Capital Fund (Virginia's dedicated capital funding for WMATA). The report also provides NVTC recommended strategies that, if implemented, have the potential to reduce the growth in WMATA's operating costs and improve operational efficiency. They include: maximize use of eight-car trains, improve weekend rail service, develop parking pass products, optimize parking facilities and expand and enhance fare pass products.

NVTC staff also provided status updates on previously recommended strategies and worked with our local jurisdictions and with the NVTC WMATA Committee to generate new recommendations for the 2019 report.

Oversight & Accountability

NVTC provided support to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation in ensuring that WMATA adhere to the requirements of the dedicated funding legislation, including the adoption of a strategic plan and the adoption of a budget that holds the annual growth in Virginia's operating subsidies to no more than 3%. As required by state code, NVTC also provided its first annual certification of receipt of key budget, audit, and performance data from WMATA.

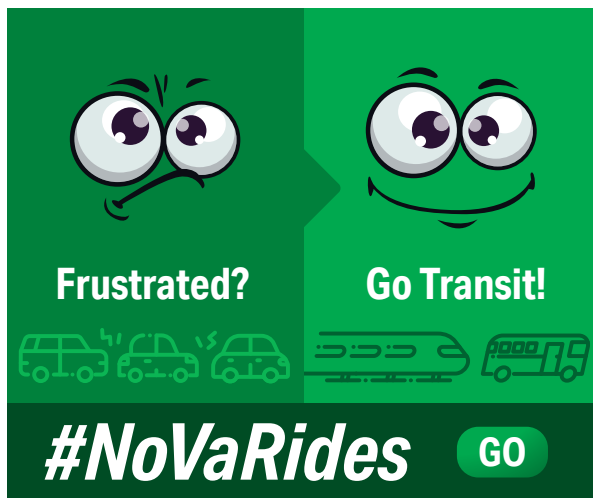
Policy Focus

NVTC continued its regional staffing structure that includes DRPT, NVTC, and jurisdictional staff. This process builds a Virginia consensus on WMATA-related issues, and provides staff support to Virginia's representatives on the WMATA Board of Directors. It also facilitates multi-jurisdictional representation on the WMATA Board. In addition to ensuring that all jurisdictions are represented by the NVTC Principal appointment to the WMATA Board, the policy focus for 2019 included WMATA's implementation of the 3% cap requirement, developing an approach and strategy to the Bus Transformation Project, and facilitating discussion of the proposed service changes to Metrobus in WMATA's proposed FY2021 budget.

NVTC WMATA Committee

With updates to NVTC's bylaws becoming effective in 2019, the WMATA Committee met with Cathy Hudgins as the Committee Chair. The Committee serves as a forum for key issues pertaining to WMATA and provides guidance to staff as they craft the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA. The Committee recommended approval of comments on WMATA's FY2021 Proposed Budget and received updates requested from staff on fare policy for children, low-income fare products, and complementary paratransit services in Northern Virginia.

Post-Shutdown Marketing Campaign



The campaign branded "NoVaRides" launched in September, a week after WMATA resumed Metrorail service to six Northern Virginia stations that were closed for the summer. It consisted of radio ads on WTOP and WAMU, web banner advertisements on the websites of WTOP, WAMU and DCist, which is owned by WAMU. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter users saw ads targeted at social media audiences. Movie-goers saw a 15-second campaign video both in the lobby of the eight selected theatres and during the previews of their chosen movie.

That same video, along with a 30 second version, was served to YouTube viewers. The call-to-action for each element of the campaign encouraged people to learn more about transit in Northern Virginia by visiting a new landing page for the campaign at novarides.org.

The display advertisements alone garnered 3.5 million impressions while novarides.org received over 15,000 unique page views in a three-and-a-half-month period, with users spending an average of over five minutes on the site.

NVTC Commissioner Paul Smedberg elected WMATA Board Chair

In June, WMATA Commonwealth of Virginia Representative Paul Smedberg was elected chairman of the Board. Smedberg, who was appointed by the Governor of Virginia in 2018, has served on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission since 2006 and was NVTC Chairman in 2014 and 2018. Smedberg also served on Alexandria City Council from 2003 to 2018. In 2016 he joined the WMATA board as an Alternate Director representing the City of Alexandria and became a Principal Director representing the Commonwealth of Virginia in January of this year. Smedberg has also served as chairman and a member of the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board.



Potomac Yard Metro Station

The City of Alexandria held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the future Potomac Yard Metro station in December. Gov. Ralph Northam was on hand to mark the start of construction for the \$320 million dollar project. Paul Smedberg, chair of the WMATA Board and NVTC Commissioner also made remarks at the event. NVTC is managing \$20 million in federal money for the station.



WMATA Regional Response Coordination



Northern Virginia Transit Response Coordination

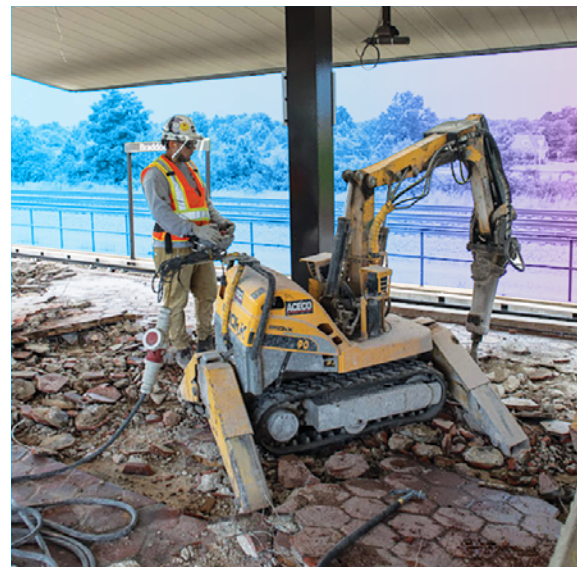
NVTC assisted WMATA with regional coordination efforts leading up to, and throughout the summertime shutdown of six Metrorail stations south of Reagan National Airport on the Blue and Yellow Lines. NVTC Program Analyst Matt Cheng conducted regular meetings, conference calls and coordinated with representatives from municipalities and agencies impacted by the monthslong closures. The coordination work was focused on ensuring commuters had a menu of available travel alternatives during the summer shutdown including shuttle buses, increased local bus service, and additional support for VRE and Amtrak.

In October, NVTC hosted a debrief meeting to review lessons learned during which staff evaluated critical steps and events in the planning and coordination timeline, starting in May 2018 through the reopening of the stations. In 2020, Vienna, Dunn Loring, West Falls Church and East Falls Church are scheduled to undergo similar platform reconstruction.

NVTC will continue to engage regional partners on coordination and planning for the Summer 2020 Orange Line platform work, and look to apply lessons learned from previous shutdowns to help improve mitigation services in the future.

“I want to thank
Fairfax and
Alexandria and
NVTC and the
Commonwealth
of Virginia for
everything they
did to help us get
through this.”

- Paul Wiedefeld, WMATA General Manager



Transit Technology



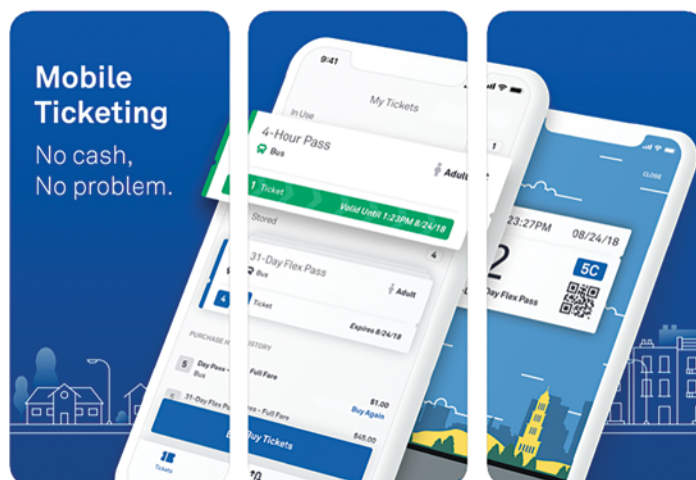
Regional Fare Collection Program

NVTC's Regional Fare Collection program continued to implement the strategic priorities established in the Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan, which was developed by NVTC in collaboration with the local transit systems and approved by the Commission in June of 2018. The strategic plan lays out the need for improvements to the current aging fare collection system, assisting Northern Virginia partners with grant funding and mobile ticketing, as well as continued engagement with WMATA on SmarTrip, SmartBenefits, and technology improvements.

In 2019, NVTC continued working with partners and WMATA to upgrade the bus farebox Driver Control Unit hardware and software to ensure that aging fareboxes can continue collecting revenue. In addition, NVTC assisted partners with grant coordination for upgrades. Partners placed the first hardware orders in 2019. The upgrade software development and testing are expected to be completed in 2020, and NVTC will continue providing technical assistance for upgrades to garage computers and communications, as well as fare policy initiatives.

NVTC assisted DASH with Northern Virginia partners' first mobile ticketing app pilot, which began in June, by assisting with the funding application, procurement process, and design. The process maximized the opportunity for the pilot to provide valuable lessons on a regional solution for mobile ticketing. Furthermore, NVTC facilitated a quarterly information exchange for upcoming off-board fare collection and all-door boarding projects for the region.

NVTC provided input to WMATA's Fare Payment Systems Vision and Strategy project, which will establish long-term program goals and business objectives related to improving and modernizing fare payment and collection operations and technology. In addition, NVTC continues to track related WMATA initiatives such as its mobile app development to ensure the requirements of Northern Virginia transit systems are identified and addressed.



Transit Resource Center

Envision Route 7

ENVISION ROUTE 7

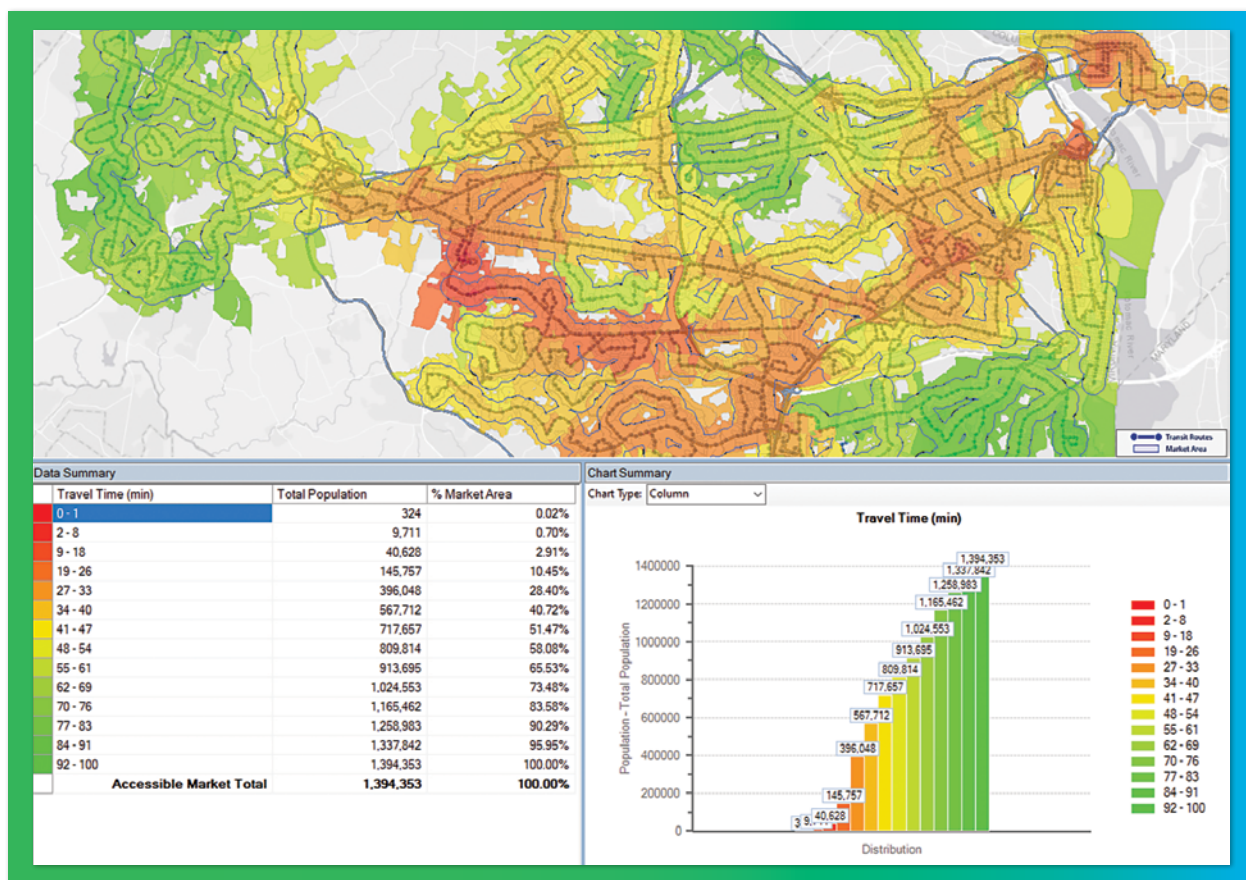
The Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is planned as a high performing BRT service that connects the Mark Center in Alexandria to Tysons through Bailey's Crossroads, Seven Corners, and Falls Church. The project is part of a network of BRT Services being planned, designed, and implemented to better link Northern Virginia that includes the Metroway BRT in the City of Alexandria and Arlington County, the West End Transitway in the City of Alexandria, and the Embark Richmond Highway BRT in Fairfax County. The Envision Route 7 project will serve the Route 7 corridor and will utilize the West End Transitway infrastructure from Route 7 to the Mark Center.

High performing transit in the Route 7 corridor has been in the planning phase for more than five years. Early phases of the Envision Route 7 project found the need for transit in the broad corridor from Alexandria to Tysons, identified BRT as the transit technology to serve the corridor and defined an alignment for the service to travel along. Detailed analysis was undertaken in these early efforts to identify potential transit ridership, suggest the location for BRT operations within the roadway, also known as runningway, and select general station locations.

The goal of the Envision Route 7 BRT Phase IV-1 Mobility Analysis Study is to evaluate and determine the mobility benefits and impacts resulting from the proposed BRT from Tysons to Seven Corners. Future analysis (Phase IV-2, timeframe to be determined) will examine the segment from Seven Corners to the Mark Center.

Phase IV-1 analysis will require the development of a traffic micro-simulation model using Vissim software and will build off ongoing efforts by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT). This effort will require the development and calibration of the micro-simulation software as well as validation of the entire modeled corridor including the Tysons segment.





NVTC's Transit Planning Tool

NVTC continued its technical assistance to jurisdictions under the Transit Resource Center, including expanded ridership modeling and forecasting analyses with its Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST). NVTC has been in the development of its TBEST modeling program over several years, during which NVTC staff have built an in-house database of socioeconomic, land use and transit network data used to estimate ridership and accessibility down to the bus stop and parcel level.

In 2019 NVTC used TBEST with the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County to analyze the impacts of major bus network redesigns. For Alexandria's Transit Vision Plan, NVTC produced ridership estimates for DASH's 2030 preferred network alternative, helping planners evaluate the impacts of major route restructuring. Staff also assisted Fairfax County in analyzing its Connector Bus service in the Franconia-Springfield and Silver Line Phase II areas providing ridership, accessibility and network connectivity data. In 2020 and beyond NVTC is planning to continue the development and utilization of TBEST in other program areas such as Commuter Choice and other regional transit initiatives, as well as participating on several technical panels on the implementation of the NVTC TBEST model.

Regional Transit Performance Report

NVTC's FY2019 Annual Transit Performance Report is a reframed effort that provides an overview of the transit service in Northern Virginia focused on average daily ridership, the best way to understand how transit is consumed in the Northern Virginia. The report is now produced shortly after the end of the fiscal year and reflects the quarterly ridership data collected and reported on by NVTC during the previous fiscal year. Transit moves over a quarter million people on an average day in Northern Virginia. Virginia Railway Express continues to experience strong ridership and train utilization. The service carries close to 10% of the transit riders in Northern Virginia.

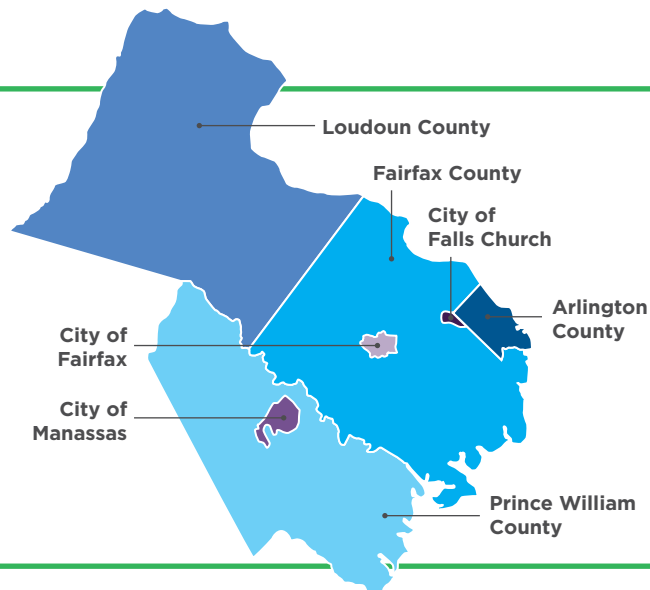
Commuter Choice



We've supported and funded
46 PROJECTS FOR

OVER \$60MIL

including the following
municipalities, agencies, and
organizations across the region



Commuter Choice, the trailblazing competitive funding program that invests toll revenues in public transit and other multimodal projects along two expressway corridors in Northern Virginia, has continued to grow and expand in 2019. Since its start in 2017, the Commuter Choice program has awarded a total of over \$60 million to local jurisdictions along the I-66 Inside the Beltway corridor and, more recently, the I-395/95 corridor. Collectively, the projects move an additional 9,000 people in Northern Virginia each day. This unique program is a partnership between NVTC and the Commonwealth of Virginia that evaluates the performance of every grant proposed project through the lens of benefits to toll road users and ability to support broader mobility goals. Commuter Choice grants, including projects that add express bus services and increase connectivity to existing transit, among others, efficiently move more people and help Northern Virginians get to the places that they want to go.

Collectively the Commuter Choice program has funded 12 new express bus routes and increased bus service on another 12 existing routes. The remaining awarded projects improve access to transit and support roadway operations and transportation demand management programs. Three highly successful bus routes that were initially funded during the first round of the Commuter Choice program on the I-66 corridor were awarded continued grant funding. Commuter Choice projects also connect 30 unique activity centers across Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia and have reduced close to 1 million annual hours of travel delay for commuters since 2017. NVTC monitors the performance and effectiveness of projects and continues to report on the program and corridor performance to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Commuter Choice on the I-66 corridor

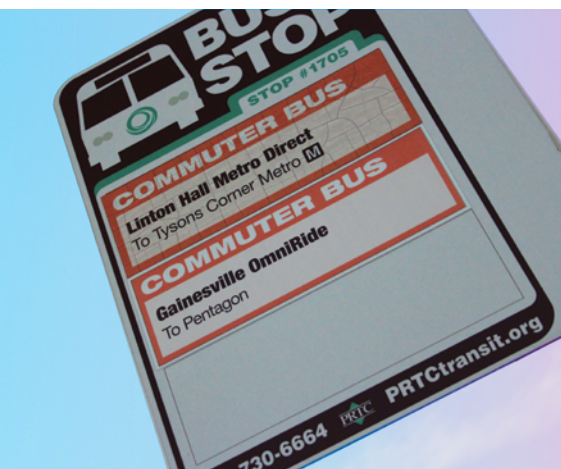
During 2019, NVTC awarded funds to local jurisdictions and transit agencies, including Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County and OmniRide, for 13 projects totaling over \$19 million. Nearly 90% of the funding supports new bus and enhanced bus service that will collectively move an additional 3,000 people through the I-66 Inside the Beltway corridor each day. The remaining grant funds support transit incentives, alternate ways to travel, such as carpool and vanpool and the program's administration.

Commuter Choice on the I-395/95 corridor

NVTC also launched the expanded Commuter Choice to the I-395/95 corridor in 2019. The program expansion on this corridor is the result of a 68-year Memorandum of Agreement between the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and the Commonwealth of Virginia. When the new 395 Express Lanes opened in November 2019, eight of the 10 awarded projects were already in service and efficiently moving commuters on the new lanes. Largely due to a scoring priority for toll day readiness, 93 percent of the first round of funding supported new and enhanced bus services, including bus purchases and other capital improvements. The remaining grant funding supported transit incentives, encouraged alternate transportation modes like carpooling and supported NVTC's program administration.

“The Commuter Choice program illustrates the Commonwealth’s commitment to creating safe, reliable travel choices across Virginia’s transportation system. Multimodal investments along this corridor support the Commonwealth’s economic competitiveness and create a more seamless network for people to access jobs, education, healthcare and opportunity.”

- Shannon Valentine,
Virginia Secretary of Transportation



Virginia Railway Express



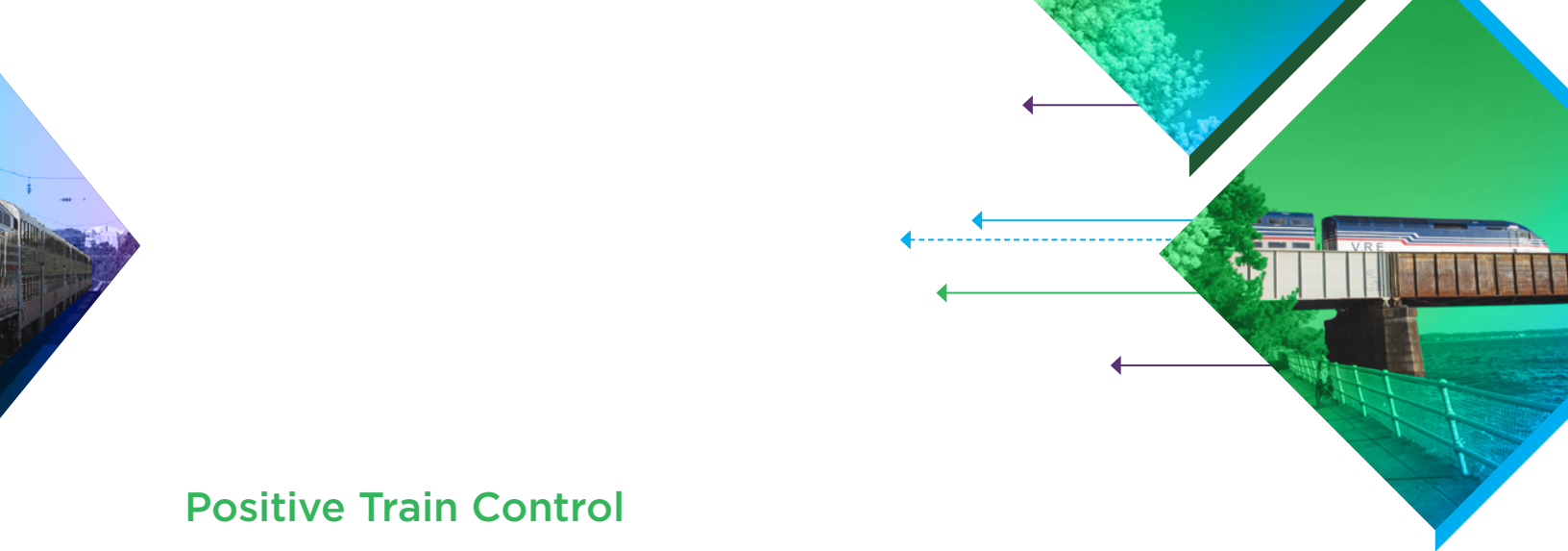
As a co-owner of the Commonwealth's only commuter rail system, NVTC provides governance and oversight of the Virginia Railway Express directly and through its appointments to VRE's Operations Board.

Transformational Agreement



A landmark agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and CSX Transportation will allow VRE to significantly expand service and improve reliability on its Fredericksburg Line over the next decade. Infrastructure improvements and property acquisition by the commonwealth will result in a dedicated passenger rail corridor between Franconia, Virginia and the District of Columbia. In addition to a second rail bridge, proposed infrastructure improvements include a fourth track between Crystal City and Alexandria, a third track between Franconia and Lorton, a Franconia-to-Springfield bypass for passenger trains, and six sidings to allow trains to pass. The improvements are estimated to cost \$3.7 billion.





Positive Train Control

In 2019, positive train control (PTC) became operational on all VRE trains. The safety milestone was achieved April 11, 2019 when each of VRE's 32 inbound and outbound trains on the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines ran under PTC operation. PTC is designed to automatically control train speeds and movements should an engineer not take suitable action for a given situation. PTC implementation is expected to cost VRE \$15 million.



Upgraded Ticket Vending Machines

VRE staff rolled out the first upgraded ticket vending machine (TVM) in September at Union Station and upgrades were completed system-wide by the end of the year. While the stainless-steel cabinet remains the same, all major components have been replaced. The new touch screen uses the same technology as a smartphone. This should eliminate issues that the optical sensor screens occasionally experienced, such as not reacting when touched. The new pin pad and credit card reader, which rely on chip technology, provide greater security. A contactless payment pad will eventually allow riders to pay by cell phone.

Annual Master Agreement Survey

NVTC staff joined their colleagues from OmniRide/ PRTC and VRE to administer the railroad's Master Agreement Survey on October 3. NVTC uses residency data from the annual survey to help VRE determine subsidies from Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William, Stafford and Spotsylvania counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Manassas and Manassas Park. The survey is conducted on both the Fredericksburg and Manassas lines. Staff from the three organizations served as onboard survey collectors on 14 morning inbound VRE and four Amtrak trains. NVTC staff assist on GIS analysis and validation of the Master Agreement Survey.



Operations & Commission Support



Staff Support

NVTC staff grew by leaps and bounds this year, welcoming six new people. They include Program Analyst Dinah Girma, Program Analyst Zach Smith, Grants Manager Brittany Sumpter, Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager Ben Owen, Communications and Outreach Manager Matt Friedman and Administrative Assistant Tenley O'Hara.

New Office Space

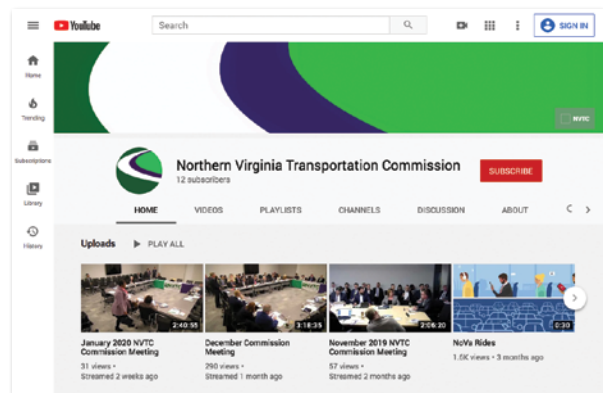


The growing NVTC staff needed more space and moved into a larger office suite in March. NVTC remains in the Navy League Building in the Court House neighborhood of Arlington, but can now be found on the second floor. The new space features a large conference room that hosted two Commission meetings in 2019, as well as multiple NVTC committee meetings and jurisdictional meetings. The first floor conference room also received upgrades and hosts most regularly-scheduled Commission meetings.

Meeting Livestreams

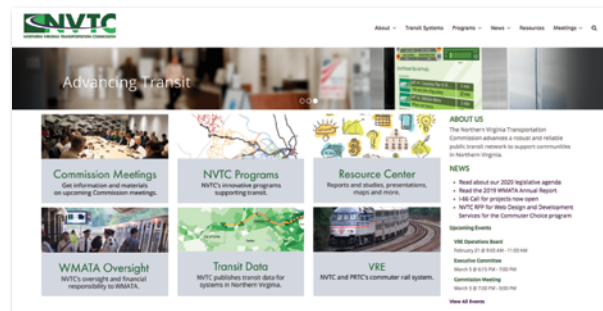
NVTC began livestreaming Commission meetings in December 2018 and continued providing live video of meetings throughout 2019. Full meetings are available on YouTube, live as they happen, and are available for playback once the livestream has ended.

Providing the video helps expand transparency of Commission meetings. Local reporters have also used the livestreams to write news stories based on discussions and actions taken at the meetings.



Website Overhaul

The new novatransit.org went live in December, following several months of behind the scenes work. IT and Web Services Manager Melissa Walker built the new website, in close consultation with Kate Mattice and other key staff members. We wanted to give the site a more modern look and make it more user-friendly. The refresh better organizes information about the growing number of programs managed by NVTC. It also enhances readability and site navigation.





Partnerships

Virginia Transit Association

When the General Assembly in 2018 mandated that state transit capital and operating funding be prioritized, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) turned to the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC), on which NVTC has a seat, for assistance. As VTA's representative on TSDAC, NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice worked to ensure the equity of the legislative mandates prioritization formulas for capital and operating assistance. After approval of the new capital funding approach in 2018, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approved the new formula allocation approach for operating assistance at its March 2019 meeting. The adopted formula, which was immediately implemented for the FY 2020 funding cycle, did have some impact to transit agencies serving the NVTC region. However, DRPT updated its policy guidance to decrease the impact on longer-haul commuter bus services and the General Assembly passed HB2334 (2019) to provide up to \$3 million total to transit agencies negatively affected by changes to the allocation formula.

Transportation Planning Board

NVTC staff actively participate in TPB activities including the Regional Public Transit Subcommittee (RPTS) where we have presented on Envision Route 7 and Transit Signal Priority Treatments during the past year. NVTC staff regularly attend the TPB Technical Committee on a monthly basis. Other committee activities include attending the Travel Forecasting Subcommittee. NVTC staff also helped with the selection of the consultant team for the new Generation 3 Travel Demand Forecast Model being developed by TPB staff. This model will be used to forecast and analyze travel patterns in the metropolitan region as well as for air quality conformity analysis.



Regional Public Information Officers

NVTC communications staff Matt Friedman and Jae Watkins participated in meetings of the Regional Joint Public Information Officers group. Discussion topics included communications strategies around transportation and transit events and best practices for government and public agency use of social media accounts.

Other attendees include PIOs of local jurisdictions and agencies and providers such as VDOT, VRE and PRTC/ OmniRide. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority hosts the quarterly gatherings.

Washington Area Bus Transformation Project

In the fall, The Washington Area Bus Transformation Project released its Strategy and Action Plan outlining four goals: 1) Frequent and convenient bus service 2) bus priority on roadways 3) customer experience and 4) task force to implement the study. Previously, representatives of the project management team came before Commission to outline the goals of the study and answer questions. Commissioners expressed a desire for local jurisdictions to maintain control of their bus systems and drafted a letter supporting many of the recommendations while maintaining service levels and controlling costs. The BTP team will seek endorsement of its recommendations from the Commission in early 2020.



Blue/Orange/Silver Lines Study

WMATA released concept designs designed to mitigate Metrorail congestion in the Rosslyn tunnel. The concepts are part of the ongoing Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity and Reliability study. In December, WMATA held public meetings, including one each in Arlington and Tysons. The agency expects select the preferred alternative by fall of 2020. Kate Mattice serves on the advisory committee while WMATA Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter serves on the technical committee.

R3MP

NVTC Program Analyst Dinah Girma, Transit Planning and Programs Manager Dan Goldfarb and Transit Program Manager Patricia Happ, along with various other regional stakeholders, are participating in the Regional Multimodal Mobility Program (RM3P).

RM3P is an innovation technology funded program, implemented through ITTF federal funding source that will address mobility and congestion problems throughout the region.

Through a holistic and collaborative approach to data sharing across regional stakeholders, RM3P will allow for more optimized transportation system performance, improve travel time reliability and support on-demand multimodal trip options for regional providers through AI-Based DSS, Dynamic Incentivization and a Mobility Dashboard. Deliverables and completion of the program is expected in Fall 2022.

NVTC in the Community



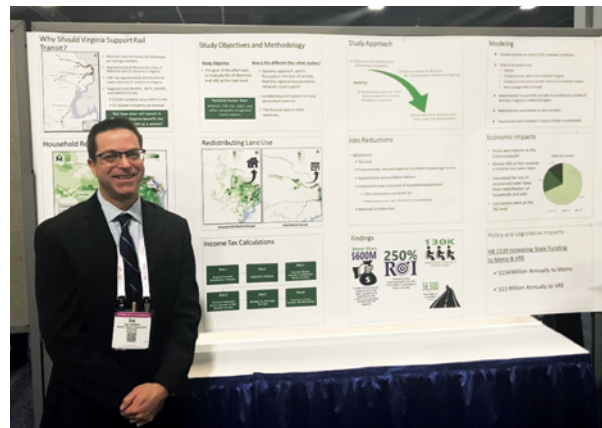
Annual Joint Legislative & Policy Briefing



We joined with PRTC to hold our annual Legislative Briefing in Springfield. The event helps inform newly-elected General Assembly members and county and local officials about important transit and transportation issues and needs in Virginia.

Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine talked about shrinking fuel tax revenues and how that makes funding projects more difficult. Fairfax County Supervisor Jeff McKay opened the event and welcomed people to his district. PRTC Executive Director Robert Schneider, WMATA Vice President of Government Relations Regina Sullivan and VRE Acting CEO Rich Dalton joined Kate Mattice on a panel to discuss the roles of our organizations and answer questions from attendees.

NVTC Presents at Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting



NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice and Transit Planning and Programs Manager Dan Goldfarb presented at the prestigious Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting in January.

Mattice shared NVTC's approach to the financial and agreement elements of the successful I-66 and I-95/I-395 Commuter Choice program during a session on the cross-subsidization of transportation assets. Goldfarb presented findings of NVTC's fall 2017 study on the Value of Rail to the Commonwealth at a poster session. The poster detailed the cutting-edge study, which showed that Metrorail and VRE generate over \$600 million annually in state sales and income tax revenues.

Transportation Camp



NVTC Program Analyst Matt Cheng and Transit Fellow Joey de St. Aubin attended Mobility Lab's Transportation Camp in January at The Catholic University of America. They participated in sessions focusing on specific modes of travel as well as those exploring transit data, planning, equity and policy. Transportation Camp, a self-described "unconference," features attendee-led sessions and discussion with no pre-determined agenda. The camp occurs in the Washington, D.C. region every year on the Saturday before the Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting and draws attendees from around the world.

ATP Annual Breakfast



NVTC staff joined Arlington's Board Chair Christian Dorsey and Deputy Director of Transportation Dennis Leach for a breakfast celebrating Arlington Transportation Partners' champions in January. The breakfast recognized businesses, multi-family residential communities, commercial properties, hotels and schools that provide mobility options for their constituents. Launched in 2013, the Champions program has grown from 31 to 243 businesses and properties. Champion organizations choose from a host of transportation demand management strategies—among them telework, carpool/vanpool, SmartBenefits, bike share, and guaranteed ride home—to reduce single occupancy vehicle commutes.

Regional Discussion with Amazon



NVTC's Director of Programs and Policy, Allan Fye, attended an invitation-only event focused on Amazon's plans to locate its second headquarters in National Landing. The panel discussion featured executives from Amazon, JBG, Arlington Economic Development, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and GMU's Stephen F. Fuller Institute. Great transit was one of the things that attracted the company to the region, said Amazon's Head of Worldwide Economic Development Holly Sullivan. "In Seattle, over 50% of our employees choose another mode of transportation than taking an automobile. We anticipate that to be even higher here. We are a biking company, so we design our parking garages so the autos and the bikes have different entrances," she said.

NVTC And DRPT Present to the CTB



NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Jennifer DeBruhl updated the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on the I-66 Commuter Choice program at the CTB's May workshop in May. Their presentation highlighted details about the scored projects, the status of public comment received to date, and the upcoming steps as the project moves into its 3rd round of projects. The board was excited to hear about the large amount of public comments submitted. DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell was particularly interested in comments received that could help guide the upcoming Outside the Beltway program.

NVTC Staff Attend VRE/MARC Integration Panel



NVTC's Matt Cheng and Joey de St. Aubin attended a regional discussion about the future of through service integration between MARC and VRE. The event, which was hosted by Greater Greater Washington in April, was anchored by a panel featuring VRE's Marc Schofield, Prince George's Dannielle Glaros, and Herb Harris from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. The discussion centered on the opportunities and challenges of integration between the region's commuter rail systems and what might such expanded service look like.

Sustainable Transportation Competition



Zach Smith, a Program Analyst at NVTC, volunteered to judge a national transportation competition for middle school students in May. The event, called the Garrett Morgan Sustainable Transportation Competition features teams of middle schoolers who create a sustainable transportation project to submit to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

NVTC Hosts Mobile Ticketing Panel At VTA Annual Conference



NVTC staff gathered experts from several organizations at this year's annual Virginia Transit Association conference to discuss mobile ticketing and share best practices, opportunities and challenges and to encourage other transit agencies to adapt and respond to the needs of their customers. The general session, "Mobile Solutions for Virginia Transit Agencies: Challenges and Opportunities" featured Allan Fye as moderator and presentations from our staff expert Patricia Happ, Bob Schneider from OmniRide, Alesia Cain from Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), and Rob Taggart from Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC). Transit agencies across the nation are implementing pilot mobile ticketing programs and innovative solutions to satisfy the increasing desire of transit riders to use their phones to pay for their transit trips.

NVTC Participates In Celebrate Fairfax



NVTC staff helped foster community among Northern Virginians at Fairfax's annual county fair, Celebrate Fairfax. NVTC partnered with Fairfax County DOT (FCDOT) to staff the Transportation Station at the event and answered questions about NVTC and Commuter Choice. NVTC staff engaged with over 200 people over the two-day event.

NVTC staff rides self-driving shuttle



NVTC staff members Dan Goldfarb, Patricia Happ, Dinah Girma, Matt Friedman and Joey de St. Aubin visited Joint Base Meyer-Henderson Hall in Arlington to ride “Olli,” an autonomous shuttle bus. Olli’s creator, Local Motors, tested the vehicle during a 90-day pilot study on the self-contained base. Officials say they are exploring ways to move people more efficiently across the 270-acre site.

NVTC Participates In Bike to Work Day



In May, experienced and new riders alike participated in the region’s annual Bike to Work Day festivities. The event encourages people to give biking to work a try and celebrates people who already regularly use pedal power. Across the region, 115 ‘pit stops’ promoted bicycle culture and handed out ‘Bike to Work Day’ T-shirts to those that registered in advance. Each pit stop featured local giveaways and upbeat music bringing a little joy to the morning and afternoon commutes. NVTC staff engaged with over 75 participants, sharing information about the Commission and its programs.

Virginia transit associations identify shared priorities



Kate Mattice, NVTC Commissioner Dave Snyder, and DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell joined colleagues from the Virginia Transit Association and the Community Transportation Association of Virginia to dive into how the two trade associations can better collaborate to improve transit in the Commonwealth. At this first-ever joint retreat, the two associations recognized that despite their unique roles, there are several opportunities for collaboration, especially in the areas of legislative engagement, development of young professionals, and sharing the story of transit’s impact across the Commonwealth.

Transportation leaders hear from the public



Executive Director Kate Mattice took part in the fall CTB public meeting as part of a transportation leadership panel that heard public comment about Commonwealth and Northern Virginia transportation funding programs. The panel included Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine, DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell, NoVa District Engineer Helen Cuervo, VDOT Commissioner Stephen Brich, CTB member Mary Hynes and NVTA Chairman Martin Nohe. The event gave Kate an opportunity to talk about the work NVTC is doing and to engage with transportation leadership on important transit issues in Northern Virginia.

Patricia Happ and Dinah Girmah attended the APTAtech Conference in Columbus, Ohio.



Jae Watkins and Zach Smith attended the ACT Legislative Summit on Capitol Hill



Commissioner Christian Dorsey and Arlington Director of Transportation Dennis Leach participate in a panel on “How Northern Virginia is Preparing for Amazon.”




NVTC in the news

The Washington Post
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Transportation

Virginia's Paul Smedberg is seen as front-runner to be next Metro board chair



Paul Smedberg, a Metro board member who represents Virginia, is viewed as the likely pick to replace Jack Evans as chairman of the panel. (Astrid Riecken for The Washington Post/For The Washington Post)

By Robert McCartney

May 25, 2019 at 5:10 p.m. EDT

The nominating committee hasn't even met, but Paul Smedberg has already emerged as the front-runner to succeed Jack Evans as chair of the Metro board, officials said Friday.

Smedberg, a former Alexandria City Council member with transportation experience, is seen as a broadly acceptable candidate who won't seek the limelight and can help unify the jurisdictions served by Metro after Evans's occasionally stormy tenure over the past 3½ years.

"Smedberg is a good choice," said a Metro board member who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the matter is politically sensitive. "After three years of Jack, I think it's a good time for the board to step back and let [General Manager Paul J.] Wiedefeld be the face of Metro."

Regional and national news organizations published more than 40 stories featuring NVTC in 2019. Among them, an article in Progressive Railroading Magazine detailing recommendations put forward in NVTC's report on WMATA. In addition, multiple news outlets, including The Washington Post, DCist and The Alexandria Times reported on the election of Commissioner Paul Smedberg as Chair of the WMATA Board of Directors.

NVTC staff





The 2019 Year in Review is a product of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

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