

Combined
Blue Items/Handouts
for
July 1, 2021
NVTC Meeting

Options for Zero-Fare and Reduced-Fare Transit in Northern Virginia

Allan Fye, NVTC Director of Programs and Policy

Why talk about zero/reduced-fare now?



Help Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

Practice Social Distancing

Stay 6 feet (2 arm's lengths) from other people.

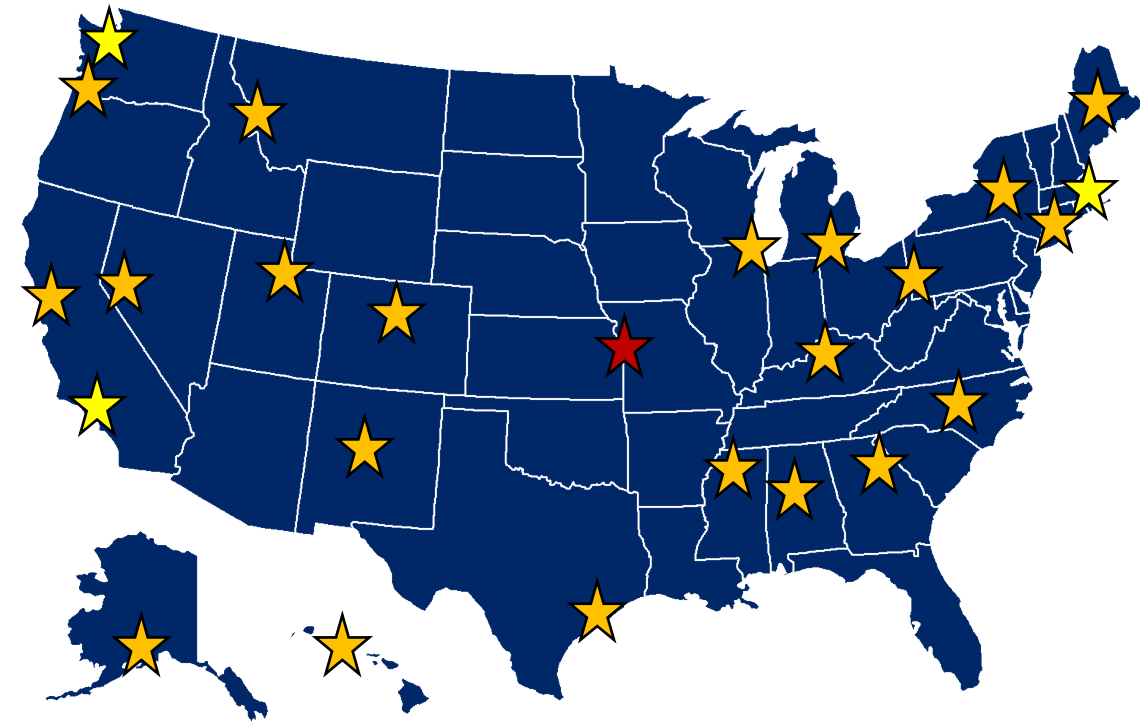
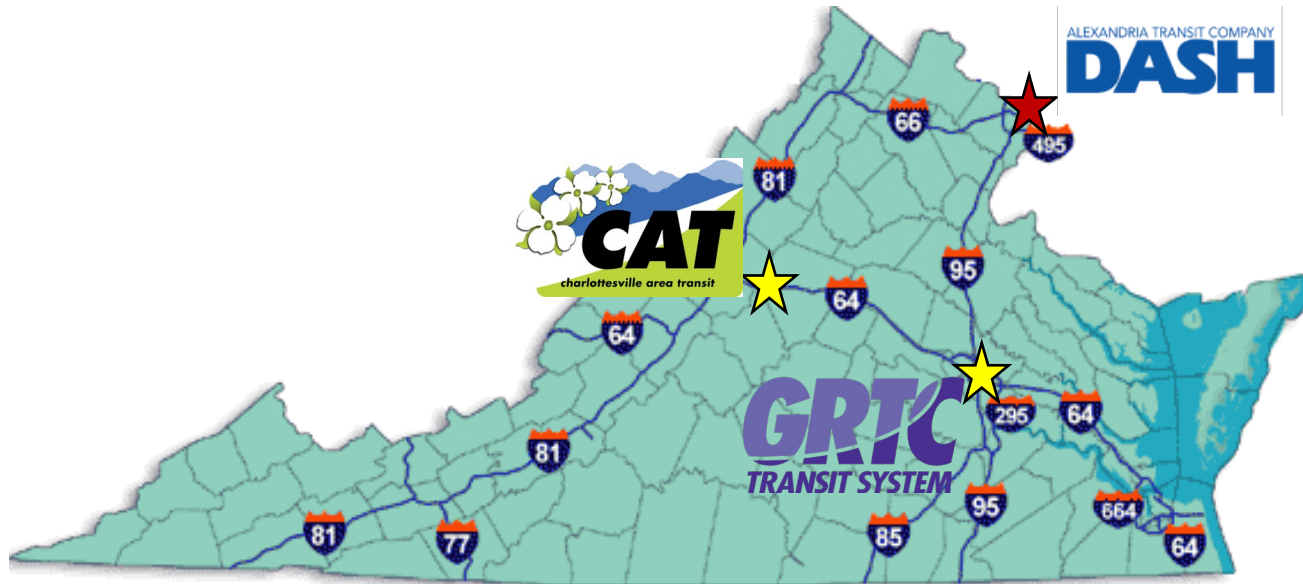
CS 317281-0 07/16/2020

And Wear a Cloth Face Covering

Be sure it covers your nose and mouth to help protect others.
You could be infected and not have symptoms.

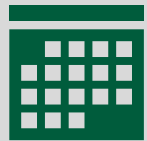
cdc.gov/coronavirus

Zero/Reduced-Fare Across the Country



- ★ Transit Agency
- ★ University/College

Continuum of Zero/Reduced-Fare Options



**Promotional
or Limited
Period**



**Customer
Groups**



**Specific
Routes**



Zones



Time of Day



**Specific
Service Type**



Systemwide

Opportunities	Challenges	Other Considerations
Increased Ridership	Increased Operational Costs if Ridership Significantly Increases	Impact on Paratransit Programs
Reduced Cost of Farebox Infrastructure (capital and back-end operations)	Higher Transit Subsidies Due to Loss of Farebox Revenue	SmartBenefits vs. Non-SmartBenefits Users
Improved Service (faster boarding and improved reliability)	Integration into Regional Fare Options	Changes in Mode Share
Driver Safety (reduce/eliminate fare disputes)	Data Collection	Outside Funding to Support Zero/Reduced-Fare Programs
More Equitable Access		Scalability
Sustainable Quality of Life		
Environmental Benefits		

Regional Integration & Next Steps

- Rail is more complicated (i.e. Metrorail, VRE)
 - Regional organizations
 - Different political dynamics
 - Exponentially larger cost implications
 - Existing reduced-fare options for rail
 - SmarTrip considerations are significantly different
- Next Steps for NVTC
 - How to implement?
 - Support local transit providers with additional analysis



City of Alexandria / DASH Zero-Fare Case Study



Josh Baker, CEO/GM of DASH

ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT COMPANY
DASH

BACKGROUND

- City & DASH have been discussing free/reduced fares for several years.
- DASH was free from March 2020 – March 2021 due to COVID pandemic
- Free/Reduced Fare Study completed in Spring 2021 (MWCOCG TLC Grant)

Study available on city website: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Transit>

- FY 2022 City Budget amended to include free fares on DASH, beginning September 2021 to coincide with launch of New DASH Network
- Staff preparations have included interviews with multiple other transit agencies that have experience with free fare operations prior to COVID.

LESSONS LEARNED

DC Circulator / Corvallis (Oregon) Transit / Charm City Circulator (Baltimore)

- Positive experience, with ridership increase of 26-59% from previous year
- Dedicated funding source key to ensuring consistency
- Fare collection resumption plan encouraged if quick change is needed.
- Title VI considerations must be addressed, especially if fares return.

Implementation Considerations:

- **Safety/Training** – riders should have a destination, belongings must fit within the seat, establish contacts with health services and police for any incidents
- **Customer Service** – increased complaints but back down after 2-3 mos.
- **Onboard Equipment** – fareboxes kept for manual passenger counting if Automated Passenger Counters (APC's) are not installed

FARE-FREE FRAMEWORK

Identifies key factors to inform management, evaluation, and modification of fare-free program in future years.

- Primary Goals:**
- Reduce cost-related barriers while increasing transit usage by promoting awareness.
 - Increase efficiency and reliability by reducing dwell times and keeping buses moving.

- Funding:**
- First 10 months funded by the City; however, additional funding is required to cover \$670,000 in foregone fare revenue. Potential funding sources, including TRIP program, are being reviewed.

- Considerations:**
- Program can only continue with sufficient funding; ATV service improvements are high priority.
 - Public Outreach conducted if service reductions or fare resumptions are being considered.
 - Fare collection equipment viable for a minimum of one year.
 - Fare reinstatement requires a minimum number of years to reimplement due to farebox equipment.
 - Program to be evaluated regularly with customer surveys to assess satisfaction and impact.

Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)

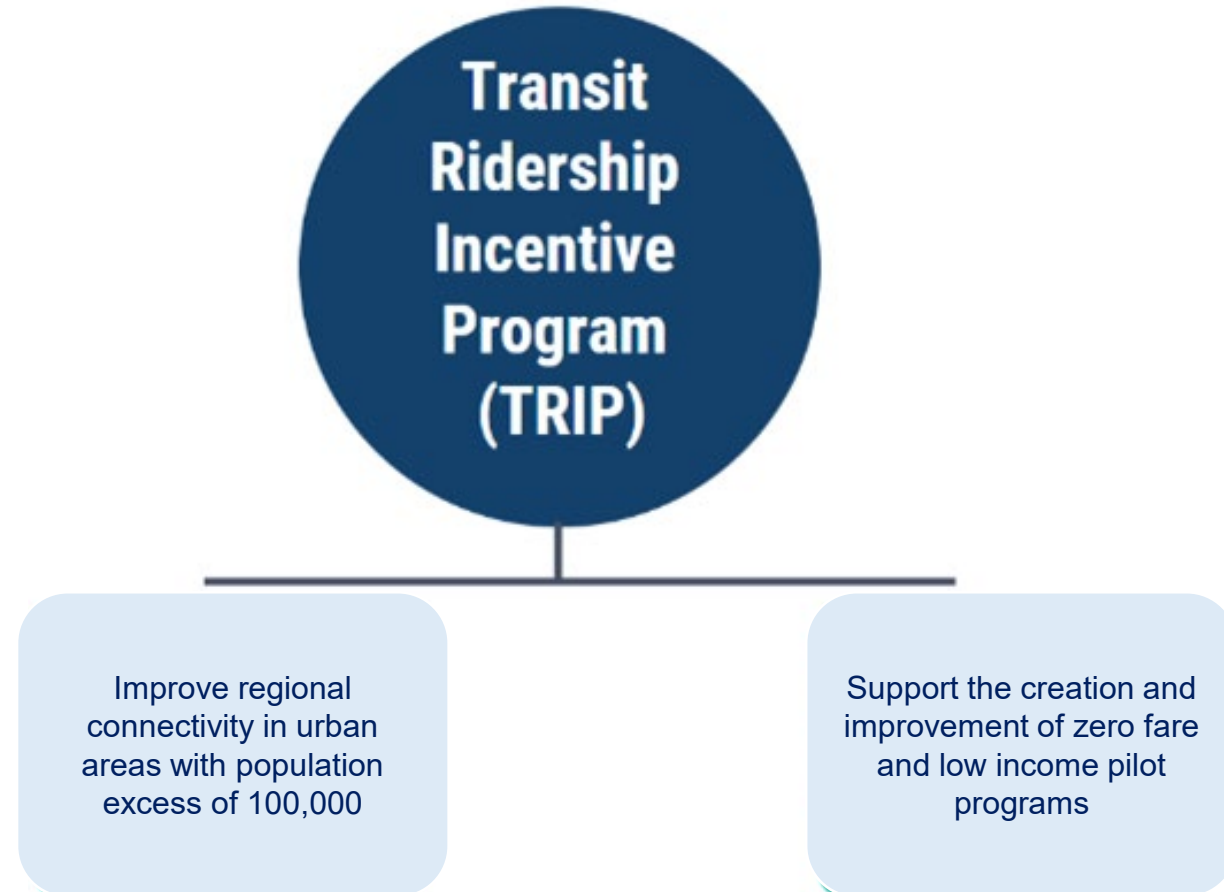
NVTC Commission Meeting– July 1, 2021

Jennifer DeBruhl, Chief of Public Transportation
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation



General Program Overview

- Established in the 2020 General Assembly Session, [HB1414](#) and [SB890/Code of Virginia §33.2-1526.3](#)
- Promote increased ridership of large urban transit systems
- Reduce the barriers to transit use for low-income individuals
- Implementation delayed due to COVID-19



TRIP: Zero Fare and Low Income



The provision of subsidized or fully free passes to low-income populations

- Individual based
- define metrics of need
- ensure proper deployment of passes
- accessible use of passes (digital, paper, etc.)



The elimination of fares on high-capacity corridors

- Zero fare zones
- Zero fare routes that serve low income populations and vital services



The deployment of an entirely fare-free system

- Ensure financial and technical capacity for an efficient deployment
- Define need and perform appropriate research

Program Funding FY22-27

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	Total
Regional Routes	\$7.5	\$11.3	\$16.9	\$16.5	\$18.0	\$18.2	\$88.4
Zero Fare/ Low Income	\$12.5	\$3.7	\$5.6	\$5.8	\$6.0	\$6.0	\$39.6
Total	\$20.0	\$15.0	\$22.5	\$23.3	\$24.0	\$24.2	\$129M

- FY22 – Includes \$10M in 2021 Transportation Initiative Funding dedicated for Zero-Fare Pilots
- Beyond FY22, up to 25% annually can be utilized for Zero-Fare/Low Income projects on a statewide basis

Key Themes for Project Evaluation

Well Planned

- Project included in statewide or local transportation plans (I.E TSP, TDP, etc.)
- Well defined and quantifiable measures of success - clear rationale behind target performance measures

Collaborative

- Supported by appropriate MPO (regional connectivity projects), serviced localities, and VDOT if project has infrastructure needs
- Built through partnerships with local organizations or municipalities

Quickly Implementable

- A strong rationale for funding duration request and financial capacity to continue after pilot
- Existing technical capacity and experienced project management
- Low start up costs and a quick implementation timeline



MINUTES
VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING
June 25, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Webex

Members Present

*Walter Alcorn (NVTC)
*Andrea Bailey (PRTC)
*Preston Banks (PRTC)
*Elizabeth Bennett-Parker (NVTC)
*Meg Bohmke (PRTC)
*Katie Cristol (NVTC)
*Margaret Franklin (PRTC) **
*Matt Kelly (PRTC)
*Jeanine Lawson (PRTC)
*Cindy Shelton (PRTC)
*Gary Skinner (PRTC)
*Dan Storck (NVTC)
*James Walkinshaw (NVTC)

Members Absent

Jennifer Mitchell (DRPT)
Ralph Smith (PRTC)

Alternates Present

*Michael McLaughlin (DRPT)

Alternates Absent

Canek Aguirre (NVTC)
Victor Angry (PRTC)
Pete Candland (PRTC)
Hector Cendejas (PRTC)
Deborah Frazier (PRTC)
Libby Garvey (NVTC)
Jason Graham (PRTC)
Jeff McKay (NVTC)
Alanna Mensing (PRTC)
Pam Sebesky (PRTC)

Jurisdiction

Fairfax County
Prince William County
City of Manassas Park
City of Alexandria
Stafford County
Arlington County
Prince William County
City of Fredericksburg
Prince William County
Stafford County
Spotsylvania County
Fairfax County
Fairfax County

Commonwealth of Virginia
City of Manassas

Commonwealth of Virginia

City of Alexandria
Prince William County
Prince William County
City of Manassas Park
Spotsylvania County
Arlington County
City of Fredericksburg
Fairfax County
City of Manassas Park
City of Manassas

*Voting Member

**Indicates arrival/departure following the commencement of the Operations Board Meeting. Notation of exact arrival/departure time is included in the body of the minutes.

Staff and General Public

Rich Dalton – VRE
John Duque – VRE
Karen Finucan-Clarkson – VRE
Allan Fye - NVTC
Robert Hostelka – VRE
Lezlie Lamb – VRE

Steve MacIsaac – VRE
Kristin Nutter – VRE
Dr. Bob Schneider – PRTC
Mark Schofield – VRE
Alex Sugatan – VRE
Joe Swartz – VRE

Chair Bennett-Parker called the meeting to order at 9:00 A. M. The Roll Call followed.

Consent Agenda – 2

- Resolution Finding Need to Conduct the June 25, 2021 Meeting Electronically – 2A
- Approval of the Agenda – 2B

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol to approve the Consent Agenda. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Approval of the Minutes of the May 21, 2021 VRE Operations Board Meeting – 3

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to approve the Minutes from May 21, 2021 VRE Operations Board meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Storck and Walkinshaw. Mr. Skinner abstained.

Chair's Comments – 4

Chair Bennett-Parker announced VRE was recognized by the Virginia Green Travel Alliance for the environmentally friendly railcar disinfectant system VRE implemented during the pandemic and congratulated VRE CEO, Rich Dalton on being elected to the Commuter Rail Coalition Board of Directors.

Chair Bennett-Parker reminded the Members there would be a Finance Committee meeting following the Operations Board meeting. The Chair indicated the July Operations Board meeting was expected to be held in person at PRTC and the Legislative Committee was scheduled to meet afterwards.

Chief Executive Officer's Report – 5

VRE CEO, Rich Dalton, briefed the Operations Board on the following topics:

- Safety COVID-19 Update
- Ridership
- Performance
- Project Spotlight
- Legislative Update

[Ms. Franklin joined at approximately 9:10 a.m.]

Public Comment Time –6

Chair Bennett-Parker stated that in the virtual meeting environment, Public Comments were being accepted electronically through the VRE Website. The Chair asked the Clerk to read any comments received into the record. There were none.

Action Items - 7

Authorization to Issue a Maintenance Services for VRE Facilities Task Order for Renovations to VRE Headquarters -7A

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Lawson, to authorize the CEO to issue a task order under the Maintenance Services for VRE Facilities contract for renovations to VRE's headquarters. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Authorization to Issue a MEC VII Task Order for Engineering Oversight for New Passenger Railcars – 7B

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Bohmke, to authorize the CEO to issue a Task Order under the Mechanical Engineering Consulting Services (MEC VII) Contract for engineering oversight for new passenger railcars. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Approval of Amended VRE Operations Board Bylaws and Adoption of an Operations Board Electronic Participation Policy – 7C

Ms. Cristol moved, with a second by Mr. Alcorn, to approve amendments to the VRE Operations Board Bylaws and adopt an Operations Board Electronic Participation Policy. The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Recommend Authorization to Submit L'Enfant Station and Fourth Track Project to USDOT for FY2021 RAISE Funding Consideration – 7D

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Mr. Skinner, to recommend the Commissions authorize the CEO to submit the L'Enfant Station and Fourth Track Project to USDOT for FY2021 RAISE funding consideration.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Alcorn, Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Information Items - 8

Spending Authority Report – 8A

In, the following purchases greater than \$50,000 but less than \$200,000 were made:

- On May 17, 2021, VRE issued a Sole Source Purchase Order to Infodev EDI, Inc. in the amount of \$65,234 to acquire an inventory of spare parts, including sensors, cables, and antennas, to support maintenance of the automatic passenger count system previously installed on VRE's fleet of passenger railcars.
- On May 20, 2021, VRE issued a Task Order in the amount of \$77,550 to Keolis Rail Services Virginia LLC (KRSV) under the Maintenance Services for Commuter Rail contract to remove the on-board COVID-19 messaging, to include signs, decals, and automated announcements. VRE has not provided KRSV formal Notice-To-Proceed (NTP) with this work and will continue to monitor federal and state guidance prior to providing NTP for this Task Order.
- On May 26, 2021, VRE issued a Task Order in the amount of \$100,373 to Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) under the General Planning Consulting Services contract to conduct a LiDAR survey of the rail corridor from the L'Enfant Interlocking to the Virginia Interlocking, including the preparation of a base map, to be used in design efforts for the L'Enfant Station and Fourth Track project.
- On May 27, 2021, VRE issued a Task Order in the amount of \$66,404 to NVE, Inc. under the Maintenance Services for VRE Facilities contract to remove and replace the joint sealant on the 5th floor of the Manassas Station Parking Garage.

Publication of Proposed Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Goal for Federal Fiscal Years 2022-2025 – 8B

The proposed FFY 2022-2024 DBE goal of 14.1 percent for FTA-assisted contracts is based on an assessment of projected expenditures for FFY 2022–2024; a review of U.S. Census and other sources concerning the availability of DBE companies in the industries and geographic markets relevant to PRTC and VRE contracting activity; and consideration of PRTC's and VRE's historical utilization of DBE companies. Management believes this goal is a reasonable projection of overall DBE participation for the upcoming fiscal years.

At their meeting on June 3, 2021, the PRTC Board of Commissioners authorized the publication of the proposed FFY 2022-2024 goal and provisionally adopted the goal, subject to the condition that the public inspection and consultation process does not result in any public comments that necessitate reconsideration/possible modification of the proposed goal. If reconsideration is needed, the Commission will be asked to review and adopt the final FFY 2022-2024 goal after completion of the consultative process and the public comment period.

Proposed VRE Rules for Administering Real Estate Relocation Services Program – 8C

It is anticipated that multiple businesses will be displaced in conjunction with property acquisition for the Broad Run Expansion project and eligible for relocation assistance payments. To comply with federal and state law, as applicable, and to ensure the consistent application of those requirements to those displaced and requiring relocation, it is advisable for VRE to adopt rules for administering relocation

services and assistance in advance of conducting any relocation activities associated with planned property acquisition(s).

[Mr. Alcorn left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.]

Board Members' Time – 10

Chair Bennett-Parker asked if Members had any additional business.

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Bohmke to adjourn the meeting.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bailey, Banks, Bennett-Parker, Bohmke, Cristol, Franklin, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Shelton, Skinner, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Approved this 16th day of July 2021

Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
Chair

James Walkinshaw
Secretary

CERTIFICATION

This certification hereby acknowledges the minutes for the June 25, 2021 Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Meeting have been recorded to the best of my ability.



Lezlie M. Lamb