

2022 NVTC Legislative & Policy Agenda

Preliminary DRAFT

2022 STATE PRIORITIES

Protect Existing Transit Programs and Funding

NVTC supports continuing the existing state transit programs and revenue sources that benefit our local transit providers and protecting the state dedicated funding for WMATA and VRE. In 2018, the General Assembly established dedicated funding for both WMATA and VRE, setting forth a continued investment in these two transit systems. Then in 2020, the General Assembly adopted an historic transportation omnibus bill that streamlined Virginia's transportation funding allocation model, secured sustainable revenues for local transit operators, created the Transit Ridership Incentive Program and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, and restored \$30 million/year to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. NVTC strongly supports the continued implementation of these historic legislative packages and will continue to seek full realization of the anticipated revenue levels.

Support the Implementation of the Transit Equity and Modernization Study

NVTC continues to support programs and initiatives that reduce barriers to transit. Accessible, affordable transportation is critical to helping people reach jobs, education and health care. In addition to transit's well-documented environmental and economic benefits, transit can be a powerful tool to advance racial equity and social justice. As such, NVTC supports the continued focus on equity and modernization in transit service across the Commonwealth. NVTC will continue to engage with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) as they complete and form recommendations stemming from HJ542 (McQuinn), DRPT's two-year study of transit equity and modernization in the Commonwealth that focused on transit services and engagement opportunities for underserved and underrepresented communities.

Leverage Unallocated COVID Relief Funding for Public Transit Purposes

NVTC supports the allocation of surplus COVID relief funds to public transit operators to assist in the continued recovery of their systems following the pandemic. In Northern Virginia, most bus operators were not direct recipients of federal relief funding, but they are still experiencing increased operating costs and loss of fare revenues.

Support Funding to Implement Zero and Low Emission Public Transit

NVTC supports legislation that will provide funding and remove barriers for public transit operators to implement innovation in transit technology, such as zero and low-emission vehicles, zero and low-emission required infrastructure, and training for the necessary workforce to implement zero and low-emission transit vehicles. NVTC supports ongoing and comprehensive coordination between the State and Federal government on this issue.

Continue Support for the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program

NVTC encourages continued support for state funding initiatives for the Long Bridge expansion and Transforming Rail in Virginia projects, and protect funds currently allocated for those projects. Across Virginia, drivers experience 230 million hours of delay resulting in \$6.5 billion in annual congestion costs,

and the Long Bridge is at 98% capacity during peak periods. The Long Bridge project along with some of Governor Northam's other rail initiatives are projected to generate nearly \$370 million in annual economic benefits and remove an additional 165 million passenger miles from the state's roadways. Furthermore, NVTC supports advancing legislation requiring that future gubernatorial appointees to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board of Directors for the NVTC/PRTC districts are selected from lists provided by the NVTC and PRTC boards of commissioners.

Preserve NVTC Stewardship of NVTC Programs

NVTC supports preserving its programs and interests in Northern Virginia. NVTC provides a venue for and is a model of policy coordination and program implementation that works in Northern Virginia and has the participation of its component jurisdictions and their elected leaders. As an experienced steward of transit funding and regional partner to the Commonwealth, the General Assembly should continue to support NVTC's role in administering programs that promote transit and multimodal options that serve Northern Virginia.

Restore Funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

NVTC continues to support restoring full funding to NVTA. Two of the NVTA's three revenue streams were redirected due to the implementation of the WMATA Capital Fund in 2018. In 2020, the General Assembly passed legislation to secure additional revenue for NVTA, but prior funding levels have not been restored. The loss of these revenues directly affects funding available for transit capital, as well as the local revenues to support transit operations.

Continue to Support Flexibility for Remote Public Meetings

NVTC supports efforts to maximize flexibilities for regional governments to conduct electronic meetings, allowing greater access to the public and opportunities for members to participate remotely outside of a declared state of emergency.

2022 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Effective and Timely Implementation of New Infrastructure Package

[Awaiting outcome of infrastructure bill negotiations.] Following the enactment of this milestone federal infrastructure package, NVTC supports the following:

- Timely and transparent implementation of any new programs and changes to existing programs.
- Opportunities for local transit systems to participate in discretionary federal funding programs without unnecessary administrative burdens such as requiring system-wide audits or other expansive federal oversight efforts that may overwhelm our jurisdictional resources.
- Access to competitive and formula funding opportunities for zero and low-emission public transit vehicles and supporting infrastructure, as well as workforce training.
- Funding opportunities to support major capital investments, such as the Long Bridge, a second Metrorail station/additional tunnel at Rosslyn, and both the Envision Route 7 and Richmond Corridor bus rapid transit systems.

Continue support for COVID-19 Relief for Transit Agencies

NVTC urges Congress and the Administration to provide the greatest flexibility in the use and duration of eligibility for COVID-19 relief funding for transit agencies to address growing operating costs and ongoing revenue losses.

Explore Federal Funding Support for Transit Operations

NVTC supports exploring the expansion of federal transit funding to include the cost of transit operations. Currently federal funding for operations is only available to rural and small transit operators in regions that are less than 200,000 in population. As the transit industry continues to restore following the pandemic, federal support for transit operations in those systems with strong fare-based revenue structures may be critical to the continued health of these public transit systems.

Continue Support for Commuter Tax Benefits

Commuter tax benefits make transit service more attractive to commuters who currently drive alone. NVTC supports the continuation of federal transit commuter benefits that are on par with the tax incentive provided for parking. Further, NVTC encourages federal programs that support the use of carpools, vanpools, rideshare, bike share, and transportation demand management (TDM) as effective tools to eliminate traffic congestion.