

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING –NOVEMBER 3, 2022
FIRST FLOOR LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 2300 WILSON BLVD.
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chair Aguirre at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present

Canek Aguirre
Walter Alcorn (*via electronic participation*)
Sarah Bagley
Nick Clemente (*via electronic participation*)
Katie Cristol
Matt de Ferranti
Jennifer DeBruhl (Alternate, Commonwealth of Virginia) (*via electronic participation*)
Adam Ebbin
John Foust
Libby Garvey (*via electronic participation*)
Matt Letourneau
Jeff McKay
David Meyer
Dalia Palchik
Paul Smedberg
David Snyder
Mike Turner
James Walkinshaw

Members Not Present

John J. Bell
Aimee S. Gilroy
M. David Skiles
John C. Tuck III

Staff Present

Kate Mattice, Executive Director	Aimee Perron Siebert (<i>via electronic participation</i>)
Monique Blyther	Steve MacIsaac (VRE)
Genoveva Cutrell	Joe Swartz (VRE)
Matt Friedman	
Allan Fye	
Rhonda Gilchrest	
Xavier Harmony	
Tenley O'Hara	
Ben Owen	
Ann McGrane	
Melissa Walker	
Ronnetta Zack-Williams	

Opening Remarks

Chair Aguirre welcomed everyone to the November 3, 2022 NVTC meeting and noted that the meeting is being livestreamed for the public on YouTube.

Chair Aguirre stated that several Commissioners are participating electronically via Zoom. DRPT Director DeBruhl is participating from Richmond under the provision of a member living 60 or more miles away from the meeting location. Mr. Clemente is participating from Loudoun County due to a medical reason. Mr. Alcorn is also participating from Fairfax County due to a medical reason. Commission Secretary Rhonda Gilchrest confirmed an in-person quorum was present.

Chair Aguirre noted that next month the Executive Committee meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. since there will be a full agenda related to the budget, financial audit and a Closed Session for the executive director's annual performance review. He encouraged Commissioners to complete and return the executive director's performance review survey to him by November 18.

Ms. Mattice stated that NVTC did not receive any public comments this month.

Minutes of the October 6, 2022 NVTC Meeting

Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Ms. Garvey, to approve the Minutes of the October 6, 2022 meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Letourneau, Palchik, Smedberg, Snyder and Turner. Commissioners Aguirre, Cristol, McKay and Meyer abstained. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Clemente voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

NVTC 2023 Meeting Schedule

Chair Aguirre stated that the 2023 Meeting Schedule is being presented for action. He noted that normally the February meeting is held in Richmond to align with the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) and the Virginia Municipal League (VML) advocacy day, which for 2023 will take place several weeks earlier in January. As such, the recommendation is to keep the February meeting here in Northern Virginia. However, the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) is holding their annual transit day in Richmond on Monday, January 23 and all Commissioners are invited to participate for the day as well as the evening reception planned at Richmond's Main Street Station.

Chair Aguirre also stated that the staff recommendation is to cancel the April 6, 2023 Commission meeting due to multiple jurisdictional budget hearings and meetings during the month of April. Staff will coordinate any anticipated Commission actions to coincide with the March or May meetings. He also noted that the December 7, 2023 meeting is a candidate to be held as an All-Virtual meeting. This could be helpful for staff as next year's Legislative Forum is expected to be held the same week on that Monday, December 4. He stated that the Commission can decide next fall to keep it an All-Virtual meeting. With the new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) legislation, NVTC now can hold at least two All-Virtual meetings each calendar year, as long as

they are not back-to-back meetings. Ms. Bagley observed a typographical error in the Meeting Schedule regarding the September meeting date. Staff confirmed the September meeting date is September 7, 2023.

Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Ms. Palchik, to approve the corrected 2023 Meeting Schedule. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Bagley, Cristol, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Letourneau, McKay, Meyer, Palchik, Smedberg, Snyder and Turner. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Alcorn voted in the affirmative. (Mr. Clemente did not participate in the vote due to audio issues.) The motion passed.

Commuter Choice Program

Chair Aguirre announced that there are two Commuter Choice action items for Commission consideration, including authorizing staff to open the I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 call for projects and adopting minor changes to the Commuter Choice technical evaluation process. He asked Mr. Owen to provide more information.

FY 2024 – FY 2025 Call for Projects for the I-395/95 Corridor. Mr. Owen stated that staff expect \$45-\$48 million to be available for transit and other transportation improvements that benefit I-395/95 toll payers by moving more people and establishing effective additional travel options. Projects selected for funding will be included in the Commonwealth's FY 2024 - FY 2029 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The call for projects notice will be issued next Monday and NVTC will accept online applications starting November 7, 2022 until January 27, 2023.

Mr. Owen stated that staff are expecting strong interest in this round of funding. NVTC staff began to engage with eligible applicants over the summer about the upcoming funding round and ideas for capital projects that would represent transformative uses of the larger-than-usual amount of funding available (about \$30 million would typically be available per two-year program). Discussions will continue in the coming weeks with one-on-one workshops with eligible applicants.

Mr. McKay moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to authorize staff to open the I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 call for projects. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Bagley, Cristol, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Letourneau, McKay, Meyer, Palchik, Smedberg, Snyder and Turner. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Clemente voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Commuter Choice Technical Evaluation Process Changes. Mr. Owen explained that Resolution #2487 would enact minor changes to the Commuter Choice technical evaluation process, last updated in 2019. The changes would apply to the I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 funding cycle and subsequent funding cycles in both Commuter Choice corridors until such time as the Commissions desire to revisit the process. PRTC is also scheduled to act on both I-395/95 actions (call for projects and evaluation process changes) at their November 3 meeting. Staff briefed both Commissions on the proposed changes during their October meetings.

Mr. McKay moved, with a second by Ms. Cristol, to approve Resolution #2487 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Bagley, Cristol, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Letourneau, McKay, Meyer, Palchik, Smedberg, Snyder and Turner. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Clemente voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Chair Aguirre asked the WMATA Board members, Paul Smedberg and Matt Letourneau, as well as NVTC WMATA Committee Chair, Walter Alcorn, to give their reports.

Report from the WMATA Board Members. Mr. Smedberg announced that the opening of the Silver Line Extension will be on November 15. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and other dignitaries will participate in the ribbon cutting and grand opening celebration. He acknowledged Senators Kaine and Warner for their assistance in helping to move the Silver Line Phase 2 project forward to completion.

Mr. Smedberg also reported that today the WMATA Board received a summary of service restoration on rail and bus and the return of the 7000-series trains. This allows for more reliable service at a pivotal time as stations south of National Airport on the Blue Line reopen this weekend and of the Silver Line opening on November 15. Throughout November Metro will gain additional trains to reduce crowding and by December 5 WMATA expects peak headways to reduce crowding. On the bus side, WMATA restored service frequency on routes that were temporarily reduced in September 2022 due to operator shortages. WMATA will continue to improve service as operator availability increases.

Mr. Smedberg announced that the WMATA Board appointed Rene Febles as Inspector General (he was serving as Acting Inspector General). Mr. Febles will serve a three-year term, with automatic extensions for successive one-year terms. Mr. Letourneau stated that the Inspector General's office oversees WMATA's audit process. The WMATA Board received today the official audit report and it was a clean audit.

Mr. Walkinshaw arrived at 7:16 p.m.

Mr. Letourneau reported that starting November 1 WMATA began issuing verification citations, this follows the month-long warning campaign advertised throughout the system. Citations with associated fines may be issued to anyone jumping fare gates, improperly using emergency gates, or not tapping fare boxes on Metrobuses. WMATA is also exploring other methods that will prevent customers from entering rail stations without paying.

Mr. Letourneau reported that last month the WMATA Board's Finance and Capital Committee received an update from staff on options to close the FY 2024 budget gap, which is currently at \$184.7 million. WMATA staff proposed service reductions, fare increases and a preventive maintenance transfer to bring it down to \$146.2 million. Over the next month, the WMATA Board will provide staff with guidance on what options or combination of options to formally propose to close the remaining operating budget gap. He stated that the Board is also looking at potential

future service and fare concepts that could change the way WMATA provides service and collects fares. Staff provided revenue, subsidy and ridership estimates as well as other policy considerations for a variety of fare and service concepts. The fare concepts included adopting a fare-free, flat fare or zone-based fare structure, simplifying the existing distance-based rail fare structure, and additional fare optimization concepts including changes to fare levels, changing or eliminating time of day price differences, and offering discounts for low-income customers. Service concepts could include Increasing service on the Green and Yellow Lines with Yellow Line short turns, Improving Red Line transfers with additional service between Grosvenor-Strathmore and Silver Spring, and Optimizing Blue, Orange and Silver Line service, including improving Orange Line service and potential Silver Line express trains. He stated that some of these could be considered new service and not part of the 3% subsidy cap. It is important to note that these fare and service concepts are intended to facilitate policy guidance from the Board and region and are not formal proposals. Mr. Letourneau stated that there was also a discussion about hours of operation. The concern he and Mr. Smedberg have is the maintenance hours. WMATA is working on a proposal to streamline maintenance and reduce down-time hours.

Mr. Letourneau stated that from a process standpoint, the General Manager's budget will be released later in December. Mr. Smedberg clarified that preventive maintenance is not state of good repair. In response to a question from Ms. Cristol, Mr. Letourneau clarified that the transfer of preventive maintenance funds is a one-time thing to close the budget gap, but to continually transfer funds over multiple years is not sustainable.

Mr. McKay stated that these are not necessarily new budget options for WMATA. He expressed concern about turn-backs because they reduce service since they might be considered new service, but it is coming from somewhere. This is troubling for him because there are some Metro lines that are under performing and reduced service will further marginalize them. Mr. Letourneau stated that only the Red Line is being considered for turn-backs. The proposal would be to get all the lines to budgeted service levels so all lines would have service increases, so that no line would receive less service than what was budgeted for in FY 2023. Mr. McKay stated that in normal times this may have been easier to accept but with what the region has been through over the past few years, there are other explanations for lower ridership.

Mr. Snyder stated that it's a real credit to everyone that the region is finally seeing the Silver Line Extension opening. He congratulated WMATA.

Ms. Bagley asked about free parking as an inducement. Mr. Letourneau stated that free parking was available during the shutdown but is not part of the budget discussion. The challenge is the number of private garages that serve Metro stations and other contractual issues with the jurisdictions.

Mr. Letourneau also stated that in regard to the WMATA Strategic Transformation Plan, there is potential to have it presented at the December 1 Commission meeting.

Report from the Chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee. Mr. Alcorn stated that at the last WMATA Committee meeting, the committee received an update on NVTC staff research on peer transit agency operating funding. The agencies that were reviewed include BART (San Francisco Bay Area), CTA (Chicago), LA Metro (Los Angeles), MARTA (Atlanta), MBTA (Boston), NY MTA

(New York), PATCO (New Jersey), PATH (New York/New Jersey), and St. Louis Metro and staff examined their FY 2022 budget and dedicated operating funding sources. Staff also looked at agencies that have an interstate compact similar to WMATA. This research is intended to complement NVTC's WMATA Operating Funding and Reform Working Group, which is a strategy of the 2022 Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA. The committee also reviewed NVTC staff's proposed strategies to reduce the growth in costs and improve efficiencies for the 2022 report. He asked Mr. Fye and Ms. Zack-Williams to speak to the report.

Ms. Zack-Williams stated that the 2018 state legislation which created dedicated capital funding for WMATA also included a legislative mandate for NVTC to produce an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on the Performance and Condition of WMATA. NVTC tasked the WMATA Committee to provide guidance to staff on the annual update to the report. The structure of the report is guided by the legislation.

Ms. Zack-Williams stated that the introduction gives context and background of the operating budget, as well as highlights new services and the first chapter will focus on the strategies to Reduce the Growth in Costs and Improve Operational Efficiency. The second chapter is on the uses of the dedicated capital funds, specifically Virginia's \$154 million share of the \$500 million in annual dedicated capital funding to WMATA from the region. The last four chapters are on safety, reliability, ridership and financial performance data that NVTC collects from the National Transit Database and WMATA's performance reports.

Ms. Zack-Williams reviewed the first five strategies from the 2022 report which are directed to WMATA:

- Rebuild customer confidence by continuing the return of the 7000-series trains to service and offer frequent and reliable rail service. (This point was slightly adjusted with the recent news of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) approving Metro's return to service plan for the 7000-series trains.) This strategy also focuses on safety to make sure customers feel safe riding the system as well as a reformed safety culture within WMATA as an organization.
- Enforce fare payment uniformly across the system – the core of this strategy is that everyone should pay their fares and enforcement is needed. The strategy is primarily framed around public safety and security and the welfare of transit operators, who have experienced an increase in assaults. Jurisdictionally sponsored and funded low-income fare products are available options to address equity concerns.
- Implement a simple and convenient fare structure by exploring simple concepts like a flat or zone fare and recognizing that there are revenue and ridership implications to any such move. It also calls for simplifying the customer experience to make sure that it's easy to pay for fares and easy to manage transit benefits, passes and/or other types of fare products. And lastly it calls for integrating local and regional transit providers into WMATA's fare structure and fare payment systems.

- Increase non-fare revenues from real estate and advertising, with a strong focus for WMATA to continue its joint development efforts in the region to gain ridership and revenues from fares and real estate.
- Manage labor costs, focusing recommendations on amendment to the federal Wolf Act that would increase considerations of budget constraints in labor negotiations.

Mr. Fye stated that following guidance from the WMATA Committee, staff included two new recommendations directed to NVTC:

- Explore the implications of local transit agencies assuming the operation of Metrobus services in Northern Virginia.
- Examine and develop options for a new financial operating model for WMATA that understand the unique dynamics of Virginia.

Mr. Fye went into further detail about some of the future work on these recommendations, including Identify the challenges and opportunities of local transit agencies assuming the operation of Metrobus services in Northern Virginia. This effort will produce a White Paper on the Role of Metrobus that can be used by local jurisdictions to inform policy decisions, as well as NVTC convening a WMATA Operating Funding and Reform Working Group to explore Virginia-focused options to attain sustainable operating funding. The Commission will be asked to take action at the December 1 meeting to authorize submission of the annual report to the Governor and General Assembly, which is due by December 15; authorize consultant support to develop the white paper; and authorize technical support for the funding working group.

Mr. de Ferranti stated that he appreciates the safety component in the report. He also stated that for the big picture, now that 7000-series railcars are coming back and service levels are improving, there is a narrative that can be developed that the “system is getting back.” He is hopeful that if WMATA continues to develop better service, ridership will increase. He noted that this comment is probably outside the scope of the report.

Ms. Palchik observed that there are some exciting opportunities to look into an operating model that is Virginia specific, as well as looking at Metrobus options. Ms. Garvey stated that Arlington County has three different bus systems: Metrobus, ART system and the school bus system. She stated that the county is looking at options to get students using the other bus systems. She asked if the option of using transit buses to transport students is being considered by NVTC. Mr. Fye stated that many of the jurisdictions have discounted fare programs to get people using transit at an early age, many of whom work with the schools and Metro.

Mr. Foust stated that looking beyond the next fiscal year and the looming budget deficit, he asked about the 3% cap [on the annual growth in operating subsidy in Virginia]. Mr. Letourneau stated that WMATA cannot increase the subsidies higher than the 3% cap. Mr. Smedberg stated that there will need to be a robust regional discussion on how to fund Metro. Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of a subsidy cap. Mr. Turner stated that he has been on NVTC for three years and still hasn’t heard a plan to fix the funding issue. He would like to see a marker laid down to start the discussion. He asked if these problems are unique to WMATA and if other

large transit systems are having the same issues. Mr. Letourneau stated that other systems, such as New York and Boston, have the same budget issues. He stated that there needs to be a federal government component. Mr. Smedberg stated that New York's deficit is much larger than WMATA's. Mr. Walkinshaw observed that in regard to Strategy #6, one factor to consider is that not everyone in Virginia rides Metro and they may not be invested in the success of the system. This makes it difficult to build support for the system.

Ms. Cristol asked in regard to streamlining the fare structure, is there a way to do it in a way that is fiscally neutral. Mr. Letourneau stated that he can send some slides from a previous WMATA meeting that show revenue impacts from fare and service changes. He believes that there is a way to do it that is fiscally neutral.

Mr. Meyer stated that the pre-pandemic argument that investment in the Metro system raises the economic activity in the region still somewhat resonates post-pandemic for those areas of high-density around Metro stations. Mr. McKay stated that there are two benefits of Metro service – environmental benefits and congestion relief on the roads. The region is already way behind on starting the discussion about solutions to the looming budget deficit problem. He stated that there needs to be a federal component to the solution, but even with a federal solution it doesn't get the region off the hook for a long-term solution. He stated that for those jurisdictions that hope for expansion, this won't happen without dedicated funding as a solution. If the Metro system is going to grow, the region is going to have to stop its reliance on cars, address environmental impacts, and continue economic success along these corridors. For those that don't ride Metro, it benefits them as it gets cars off the roads. These are the kinds of things to be conveyed to people about the benefit of transit service. He expressed his concern that the clock is ticking and WMATA needs federal help but also a long-term solution. Now is the time to have the conversation. Metro is no different than other systems facing the same issues, but what makes it different is that local governments in Northern Virginia have to pay for the system because there is no dedicated operating funding. There needs to be a strategy of which entity/agency should spearhead the message (and it's probably not WMATA or NVTC) that has credibility with the business community. Mr. Smedberg agreed and stated that WMATA needs to get its house in order, which he believes WMATA is close to doing. Many of the things the WMATA Board and management are doing will be helpful. Mr. Letourneau agreed that the private sector needs to be actively involved, but WMATA has a credibility problem with them. Over the last several months, WMATA has worked hard to rebuild their trust and confidence. Ms. Garvey stated that the 3% cap is important and Virginia needs to hold the line on it.

Mr. de Ferranti left the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Ms. Bagley asked about environmental issues. The transition to electric vehicles and federal and local Vision Zero commitments will address many of the safety and environmental concerns. These themes can support the long-term vision of the need for transit. Mr. Snyder stated that he does not want a repeat of the [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority] funding referendum failure in 2002. This region has had many changes, including generational changes among riders. He suggested some entity conduct survey work to know people's opinions in order to know how to pitch the message. Mr. Smedberg also noted that there are also misperceptions about Metro. There are also a whole new group of players, especially within the Silver Line corridor, who weren't there in the earlier days of Metro.

Mr. Foust stated that the region needs solutions and a plan. He questioned if Commuter Choice funds could be used as a dedicated Metro funding source. Ms. Mattice responded that the revenues are legally linked to support those corridors in which they are tolled. NVTC has funded individual Metrobus and local bus routes that benefit toll payers in those corridors. Mr. MacIsaac stated that the funds would be in jeopardy unless federal legislation regarding the use of toll funds was changed.

Mr. Meyer stated that in regard to the private sector, he recalls a meeting back in 2017 with other local officials at the Washington Board of Trade to discuss strategies to get state of good repair initiative across the finish line in all three jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia and the District). The goal and ask were well defined, which is what Metro needs now. Whatever the ask will be, he believes the business community and chambers of commerce will respond. Chair Aguirre stated that the Washington Board of Trade and Washington Partnership are holding an annual transportation event in Crystal City on November 9. Ms. Mattice stated that it is her understanding that WMATA General Manager Randy Clarke and Secretary of Transportation Shep Miller are panelists.

Report from the Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee

Chair Aguirre asked Mr. Meyer to give his report. Mr. Meyer reported that the Legislative and Policy Committee met on September 29 to discuss the draft 2023 NVTC Legislative and Policy Agenda. This year there are a several new items for both state and federal legislative priorities. As a reminder, the final 2023 Legislative and Policy Agenda will be presented for action at the December Commission meeting. He asked Ms. Mattice to provide additional information.

Draft 2023 Legislative and Policy Agenda. Ms. Mattice stated that following feedback from the last Legislative and Policy Committee meeting, staff prepared the Draft 2023 NVTC Legislative and Policy Agenda. State and federal priorities in 2023 include:

- Restore lost transportation funding from the grocery tax (NEW) as well as restore full funding to NVTA
- Work with VRE to support legislation to remove their operating funding from the bus-based state formula model (NEW)
- Protect existing state transit funding, programs, and authorities that benefit Northern Virginia transit operators, WMATA and VRE
- Support funding and reducing barriers to implementing transit technologies such as zero- emission buses
- Continued support for the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program
- Continued support for flexibility for remote public meetings to allow for greater accessibility and participation

On the federal front, Ms. Mattice reviewed the following legislative initiatives:

- Secure project funding to complete planning and NEPA for the Route 7 BRT (NEW)

- Identify opportunities to leverage federal funding to address WMATA operational funding cliff (NEW)
- Encourage federal return to work policies that can maximize our local transit network and leverage transit benefits (NEW)
- Continued support of federal initiatives to maximize the region's access to opportunities in the new infrastructure bill, including awarding of USDOT and FTA discretionary funding
- Continued support for commuter tax benefits
- Identify long-term structural fix to provide a solution to ensure the long-term solvency and sustainability of the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF)

Mr. Meyer stated that the peer review that NVTC did regarding WMATA shows that WMATA is unique in that it serves the nation's capital. The message that Washington DC, in concept, is a city that belongs to the nation, may resonate with Congress. National security, tourism or other factors can be put that into context. Mr. Walkinshaw expressed his opinion that it is important to communicate with the federal government the importance of spreading out telework policies and days. It is difficult to run a transit system for everyone who wants to ride on Wednesdays but not on other days of the week, for example. Mr. Turner agreed and suggested adding to the Legislative and Policy Agenda "encourage the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish procedures to spread out telework schedules."

Value of Transit in Northern Virginia to the Commonwealth Study. Ms. Mattice stated that in September staff kicked off the Value of Transit in Northern Virginia to the Commonwealth study, which will quantify and visualize the overall economic benefits and revenue that bolster the Commonwealth due to investments in Northern Virginia's transit systems. This is an update to NVTC's 2016 study.

Mr. Fye provided an overview of the study and noted the many changes in transit since the 2016 study, including:

- Metrorail in Virginia has grown by six stations along the Silver Line (extending into Loudoun County) and the Potomac Yard infill station in Alexandria will open soon.
- VRE has invested heavily in expanding station capacity and facilities and the Commonwealth's Transforming Rail in Virginia program will significantly increase VRE's evolution from a peak-hour, commuter-based service to a regional rail style service that operates throughout the day, seven days a week.
- NVTC's jurisdictions and transit providers have continued to invest heavily in local bus transit operations and capital (new and replacement buses, technology upgrades, new and expanded bus maintenance and storage facilities, fleet electrification, etc.) and while also planning for several Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines that will involve significant investment (The One in Fairfax County; West End Transitway and Duke Street Transitway in Alexandria; Envision Route 7 in the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church and Arlington and Fairfax Counties).

Mr. Fye explained that the goals of the study are to quantify the economic value of Northern Virginia's multi-modal transit system to the Commonwealth; leverage the findings to inform

NVTC's legislative efforts; and educate public and private stakeholders to support long-term, sustainable investments in transit by the Commonwealth.

Mr. Fye outlined the next steps of the study, which include engaging with technical and policy staff, jurisdictions and NVTC's legislative liaison; briefing the Legislative and Policy Committee and Commission at key milestones; and wrapping up the study in mid-2023.

In response to a question from Ms. Bagley, Mr. Fye stated that the study will capture transit-oriented development.

Annual Joint NVTC-PRTC Legislative Forum. Mr. Meyer announced that the annual Joint NVTC-PRTC Legislative Forum will be held on Monday, December 5 at 8:30 a.m. at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in Springfield. Ms. Mattice stated that Congressman Don Beyer is confirmed to give the welcome message and DRPT Director Jen DeBruhl will be the keynote speaker. Other confirmed speakers include NVTC Chair Canek Aguirre, PRTC Chair Victor Angry, WMATA General Manager/CEO Randy Clarke, VRE Chief Executive Officer Rich Dalton, PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider and NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Chair Aguirre stated that VRE CEO Rich Dalton was unable to attend the meeting, but VRE Operations Board Vice-Chair Walkinshaw will present the action and information items.

Amendment to Site Lease Agreement with Qwest Corporation of Delaware. Mr. Walkinshaw stated that the VRE Operations Board recommends Commission approval of Resolution #2488, which will authorize the VRE Chief Executive Officer to execute an amendment to the Site Lease Agreement with Qwest Corporation of Delaware for property owned by the Commissions adjacent to the railroad right-of-way and VRE Fredericksburg Office. This action will extend the term of the Lease by 10 years for a total of \$60,000 due to VRE for rent. He noted that VRE General Counsel Steve MacIsaac was present to answer specific questions. There were no questions.

Mr. Walkinshaw moved, with a second by Ms. Palchik, to approve Resolution #2488 (copy attached). The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Bagley, Cristol, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Letourneau, McKay, Meyer, Palchik, Smedberg, Snyder, Turner and Walkinshaw. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Alcorn and Mr. Clemente voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

VRE Free Fares Initiatives Update. Mr. Walkinshaw reported that VRE offered Fare Free September, which allowed passengers to ride VRE for free during the month of September to promote VRE service and build ridership, as well as a thank you to those riders who stayed with VRE throughout the pandemic. Additionally, the free fare promotion allowed VRE to serve as a major contributor to the regional mitigation efforts during the Metrorail Blue and Yellow Lines shutdown south of Reagan National Airport. VRE continued to provide free fares during October for riders traveling between Zones 1, 2 and 3 until Metrorail service south of the airport reopens.

Mr. Walkinshaw noted that for the month of September, ridership increased by 21% compared to the previous month. VRE conducted a rider survey that showed the Fare Free September promotion was especially successful in getting riders who took VRE pre-pandemic back on the service.

Mr. Walkinshaw also stated that the shutdown of the Blue and Yellow Lines south of Reagan National Airport was originally expected to end in October. As VRE staff was notified the shutdown would extend into November, the Operations Board took action to continue offering free fares for Zone 2 and 3. The Operations Board also approved extending the promotional initiative after the Blue Line service resumes by offering a reduced fare between Zones 1, 2 and 3 until Yellow Line service resumes, scheduled for Spring of 2023.

Draft VRE 2023 Legislative Agenda. Mr. Walkinshaw stated that VRE has drafted a 2023 Legislative Agenda, which will be brought to the Commission for action at next month's meeting. VRE's Legislative Agenda is compatible with NVTC's Legislative and Policy Agenda.

VRE System Plan 2050 Update. Mr. Walkinshaw stated that VRE is in Phase 1 of updating the System Plan. The draft System Plan 2050 outlines the visioning and goals-setting process that will form the planning context with which Operations Board members can make decisions on future service planning and infrastructure and operating scenario concepts. He reviewed the draft System Plan goals: 1) Safety and Reliability; 2) Market Growth and Financial Stability; 3) Regional System Integration and Equitable Service; and 4) Sustainability and Resiliency. Mr. Walkinshaw stated that the next steps will include a comprehensive market analysis and ridership forecast. The 2025 System Plan will be brought to the Commission for action in 2023.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

DRPT Director DeBruhl announced that DRPT's new Chief of Transportation Zach Trogon started on October 25. She also reported that DRPT is entering the typical application cycle for FY 2024 grants, with submissions being accepted starting December 1.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Mattice encouraged Commissioners to read her Executive Director Newsletter, which highlights some of NVTC's recent efforts and events including staff getting out in the community, engaging with professional colleagues and learning the latest and greatest in transit issues. Staff held a Route 7 public meeting and pop-up events in and around Falls Church, participated in committees and sessions at the APTA Annual Conference, spoke at a national zero-emission bus conference, presented to the Transportation Planning Board technical committee, and participated in a Women in Transportation technology event. Earlier this week, Transit Technology Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane hosted a day-long workshop with NVTC's jurisdictional partners to focus on the latest information sharing on zero-emissions bus implementation as well as regional fare collection. Staff plan to come to the Commission in the near future to approve a contractor for the regional zero-emission strategic plan work.

Ms. Mattice announced that the next Commission meeting is December 1, which will include the roll-out of the new “NoVaTransit Data Dashboard” – NVTC’s new online tool that will show a wealth of ridership, access to transit and performance measures on the transit systems that serve Northern Virginia. She also reminded Commissioners that the Annual Joint NVTC-PRTC Legislative Forum will be held on December 5.

Ms. Mattice noted that the September 2022 Financial Report was provided in the written meeting materials. Commissioners had no questions.

Adjournment

Without objection, Chair Aguirre adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Approved this 1st day of December 2022.

Canek Aguirre
Chair

Matt de Ferranti
Secretary-Treasurer



RESOLUTION #2487

SUBJECT: Adopt Commuter Choice Technical Evaluation Process Changes

WHEREAS: The Third Amended and Restated Memorandum of Agreement – Transform66: Inside The Beltway Project (“I-66 MOA”) and the Amended and Restated Memorandum of Agreement Regarding the Annual Transit Investment from the 395 HOT Lanes (“I-395/95 MOA”) require that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and, on the I-395/95 corridor, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) develop and maintain criteria for project selection;

WHEREAS: The current Commuter Choice technical evaluation process was approved in 2019 and includes Technical Merit (70 points), Annualized Cost Effectiveness (15), Applicant Preference (10) and Interagency Collaboration (5) criteria;

WHEREAS: The Commissions (NVTC and PRTC) wish to emphasize the measurable elements of the evaluation process which assess projects’ ability to support the corridor improvement goals identified in the MOAs;

WHEREAS: The current technical evaluation process includes the Accessibility sub-criterion within Technical Merit which evaluates a project’s ability to link regional activity centers; and

WHEREAS: The Commissions wish to add equity considerations into the evaluation process in a straightforward way by adding Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ designated Equity Emphasis Areas to the regional activity centers currently used in evaluation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission hereby approves two technical evaluation process changes to the Commuter Choice program in both the I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 corridors: 1) removing the Interagency Collaboration criterion and redistributing points to Technical Merit (75), Annualized Cost Effectiveness (20) and Applicant Preference (5) and 2) adding Equity Emphasis Areas to the list of regional activity centers within the Accessibility sub-criterion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that approval of these changes in relation to the I-395/95 corridor program is contingent upon PRTC’s approval of a comparable resolution.

Approved this 3rd day of November 2022.

Matt de Ferranti
Secretary-Treasurer

Canek Aguirre
Chair



RESOLUTION #2488

SUBJECT: Authorize the VRE CEO to Execute an Amendment to the Site Lease Agreement with Qwest Corporation of Delaware

WHEREAS: A Site Lease Agreement was executed by and between the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (the "Commissions") and Qwest Corporation of Delaware in September 1999 for a term of 20 years for property owned by the Commissions adjacent to the railroad right-of-way and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Fredericksburg, Virginia office;

WHEREAS: The leased property is utilized by Qwest to operate and maintain its communication equipment and facilities;

WHEREAS: Qwest and VRE wish to amend and reinstate the Lease retroactively to September 21, 2019;

WHEREAS: A market rent analysis was recently prepared and demonstrates that the proposed rent associated with the amendment is both fair and reasonable; and

WHEREAS: The VRE Operations Board recommends the following action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission hereby authorizes the VRE Chief Executive Officer execute an amendment to the Site Lease Agreement with Qwest Corporation of Delaware for property used for communications equipment and facilities in Fredericksburg, Virginia to extend the term of the Lease by 10 years for a total of \$60,000 due VRE in rent.

Approved this 3rd day of November 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matt de Ferranti".

Matt de Ferranti
Secretary-Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Canek Aguirre".

Canek Aguirre
Chair