

MEETING SUMMARY
NVTC LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
via Electronic Participation
Public Streaming via YouTube
May 17, 2023

NVTC Legislative and Policy Committee Members Present:

Canek Aguirre, Chair
Adam Ebbin
Libby Garvey
Catherine Read
David Snyder
James Walkinshaw

NVTC Legislative and Policy Committee Members Absent:

Matt Letourneau

NVTC Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, Executive Director
Genoveva Cutrell
Andrew D’huyvetter
Allan Fye
Scott Kalkwarf
Ann McGrane
Melissa Walker
Aimee Perron Seibert (Commonwealth Strategy Group)

Legislative and Policy Committee Chair Canek Aguirre called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. He stated that the meeting is being conducted as an all-virtual public meeting as permitted under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and NVTC’s Electronic Participation Policy. This meeting is also simultaneously being broadcast to the public and can be viewed on NVTC’s YouTube link. Chair Aguirre asked Executive Director Kate Mattice to call the roll to identify Commissioners present on the call. Ms. Mattice confirmed quorum.

Chair Aguirre asked for any changes to the September 29, 2022 Legislative and Policy Committee Meeting Summary. Committee members accepted the previous meeting summary with no changes.

Ms. Garvey joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

General Assembly Update

Ms. Perron-Seibert informed the committee that not much had changed since she last briefed the full Commission. Primary elections are coming up on June 20 after which, the Commission will know much more about the Northern Virginia delegation composition. Ms. Perron-Seibert continued stating that following the elections, a key concern is losing institutional knowledge. Educating incoming law makers on NVTC's transit priorities, policies and history will be a key focus moving into the next session.

Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth Study

Chair Aguirre asked NVTC Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane to present the findings of the Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth Study. He informed the committee that this study was last done in 2017 and those findings were instrumental to making the case for dedicated capital funding for Metro. Chair Aguirre stated that this year's report may also be influential in future revenue discussions.

Ms. McGrane presented the findings of the study. She emphasized that the purpose of the study was to quantify the value of Northern Virginia's transit network to the Commonwealth not only in jobs and investment, but also in terms of income and sales tax revenue sent to Richmond. The study found that for the analysis year, 2025, Northern Virginia's transit network generates about \$1.5 billion in income and sales tax revenue for Virginia. Ms. McGrane pointed out that more details can be found in the technical report and an in-depth analysis will be available on novatransit.org.

Ms. Garvey asked if there is a way to animate or illustrate this information to convey how the region's congestion levels would be severely impacted without transit. Ms. Garvey emphasized that it is important to put these huge numbers into a format that is relatable to the layperson. Chair Aguirre agreed with Ms. Garvey's feedback and added that there is opportunity to make the graphics more impactful. Senator Ebbin added that putting data from the report into a Virginia centered context would help drive home the points being made. Mr. Snyder stated that it would be nice to illustrate what the loss of transit dollars to the Commonwealth means in more intelligible terms, adding that now the task is to make the numbers real to the entire State of Virginia. Ms. Read stated that a goal should be to help people understand that transit is part of a larger ecosystem and is the thread that ties together how people access healthcare, recreation, education and spending.

Senior WMATA Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter then briefed the committee on NVTC's Metro Operating Funding and Reform Working Group. Mr. D'huyvetter reviewed WMATA's funding sources, reminding members that once pandemic aid is exhausted, there will be an approximately \$738 million funding gap in FY 2025. To address these challenges, NVTC has started a staff level working group to consider revenue sources and reform. The menu of options, recommendations and next steps will be presented to the full Commission in the fall.

Mr. Snyder commented that a broader view of potential revenue sources is needed, looking beyond just taxes. He also made the point that it is important to examine what can be done to fix the running deficit at Metro. Ms. Garvey added that she is skeptical about private interests making a profit from public transit and isn't so sure that privatization is the way to go, adding that further subsidization is also an uphill battle. She concluded that she is not sure what the answers are but hopes there is a solution.

Ms. Mattice wrapped up the last agenda item by stating that this conversation has been really helpful in terms of directing NVTC staff on next steps. Ms. Mattice also added that she has been doing a lot of outreach to the business community to discuss work on the Value of Transit study and WMATA funding strategies. This has generated a lot of buzz about NVTC's work in this space. Ms. Mattice also added that there is a lot of work and education that will need to be done to address the changing dynamics of the General Assembly after the November elections.

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.