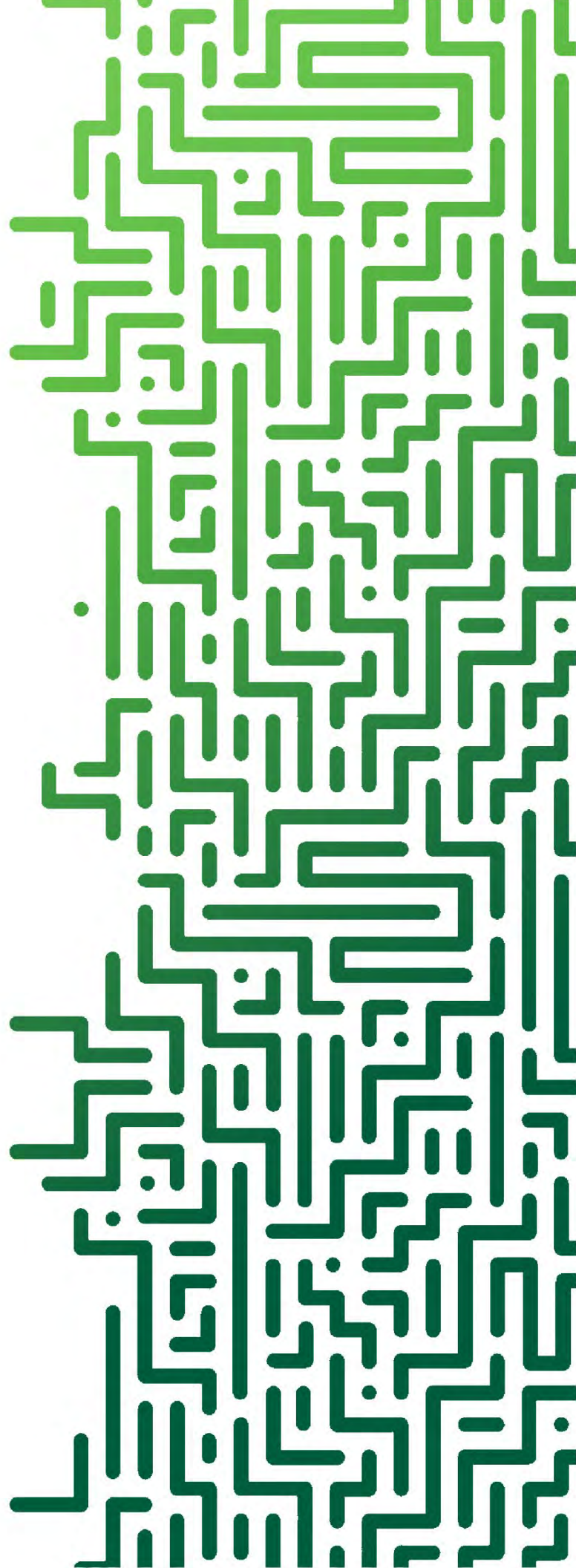




# Commission Meeting Materials

October 5, 2023

NoVaTransit.org | @NoVaTransit  
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 230  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 524-3322



# Meeting Overview

**NVTC’s October 5, 2023 meeting** will be an in-person meeting. It can also be viewed via the [NVTC YouTube Link](#).

## Action Items

- Notice of Direct Contributions to the Jurisdictions
- Letter Endorsing the City of Alexandria’s Federal Planning Grant
- Commuter Choice Annual Report and I-66 Call for Projects
- VRE FY 2025 Budget Referral to the Jurisdictions

## Other Meeting Highlights

- VDOT and DRPT Presentations on I-495 Southside Express Lanes
- Draft Zero Emission Bus Regional Strategic Plan Recommendations
- Marketing Campaign Update
- Reports from the Virginia WMATA Board Members, VRE CEO and DRPT Director

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**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2023  
MAIN FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
2300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201  
[Public Streaming Via YouTube](#)  
7:00 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

**5:45 p.m. Boxed Dinners Available for Commissioners Only**  
**6:00 p.m. Executive Committee – NVTC Suite #230 Conference Room**  
**7:00 p.m. Commission Meeting – First Floor Large Conference Room ([public streaming](#))**

*NVTC is also receiving general public comments. **The deadline for written general public comments is 3:00 p.m., Thursday, October 5, 2023 via [NVTC's website](#).** Comments will be provided to Commissioners prior to the October 5 meeting.*

1. Opening Remarks
  - **ACTION: Approve Commissioners Participating Electronically**
  - General Public Comments Received
2. **ACTION: Approve the Minutes of the September 7, 2023 NVTC Meeting**
3. **CONSENT AGENDA (subject to approval by chair)**
  - A. **Approve the Notice of Direct Contributions to the Jurisdictions**
  - B. **Authorize the Chair to Send a Letter of Endorsement for the City of Alexandria's US DOT Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant Application**
4. Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Presentations on I-495 Southside Beltway
  - A. VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study
  - B. DRPT's I-495 Southside Capital Beltway Transit and TDM Study

5. Report from the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee

A. Commuter Choice Program

- **ACTION: Authorize the Executive Director to Submit the NVTC Commuter Choice FY 2023 Annual Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board**
- **ACTION: Authorize the Executive Director to Issue the I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025 – FY 2026 Call for Projects**

B. Transit Technology Program

- Draft Zero Emission Bus Regional Strategic Plan Recommendations

6. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

A. Report from the Virginia WMATA Board Members

B. Report from the Chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee

7. Marketing Campaign Update

8. Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

A. VRE CEO Report and Minutes

B. **ACTION: Approve Resolution #2055: Authorize the Referral of the Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Participating and Contributing Jurisdictions**

9. Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

10. Executive Director Report

A. Executive Director Newsletter

B. NVTC Financial Report



**MINUTES**  
**NVTC COMMISSION MEETING –SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**  
**FIRST FLOOR LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 2300 WILSON BLVD.**  
**ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chair Palchik at 7:07 p.m.

Members Present

Walter Alcorn  
Sarah Bagley  
Matt de Ferranti  
Jennifer DeBruhl (Alternate, Commonwealth of Virginia) *(via electronic participation)*  
Adam Ebbin  
John Foust  
Libby Garvey  
Takis Karantonis *(via electronic participation)*  
Dalia Palchik  
David Snyder  
Jon Stehle (Alternate, City of Fairfax)  
Dan Storck (Alternate, Fairfax County)  
James Walkinshaw

Members Not Present

Canek Aguirre  
John J. Bell  
Nick Clemente  
Aimee S. Gilroy  
Matt Letourneau  
Jeff McKay  
Catherine Read  
M. David Skiles  
Paul Smedberg  
John C. Tuck III  
Mike Turner

Staff Present

Kate Mattice, Executive Director  
Genoveva Cutrell  
Matt Friedman  
Allan Fye  
Rhonda Gilchrest  
Adam Hager  
Xavier Harmony  
Tenley O'Hara  
Melissa Walker  
Ronnetta Zack-Williams

Aimee Perron Siebert *(via electronic participation)*  
Rich Dalton (VRE)  
Steve MacIsaac (VRE)  
Mark Schofield (VRE)  
Joe Swartz (VRE)

## Opening Remarks

Chair Palchik welcomed everyone to the September 7, 2023 NVTC meeting and noted that the meeting is being livestreamed for the public on YouTube.

Chair Palchik welcomed Fairfax City Council Member Jon Stehle, who is serving as Ms. Read's Alternate. She also noted Dan Storck is serving as an Alternate for Mr. McKay.

Chair Palchik stated that Mr. Karantonis requested electronic participation for a personal reason as he is out of the country on travel. Ms. DeBruhl requested electronic participation from Richmond as she lives over 60 miles from the meeting location. Board Administrator Rhonda Gilchrest confirmed an in-person quorum was present.

Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Mr. Ebbin, to approve Mr. Karantonis and Ms. DeBruhl's request for electronic participation. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Alcorn, Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Palchik, Snyder, Stehle, Storck and Walkinshaw.

Chair Palchik asked the executive director to provide a Look Ahead to some of the major things NVTC has going on through the end of the year. The chair also asked if any public comments were received for this month's meeting.

Ms. Mattice stated that NVTC received one public comment from Stewart Schwartz of the Coalition for Smarter Growth regarding Consent Agenda #3D "Endorsement of Fairfax County's Application to NVT for the Seven Corners Ring Road Project." The comment was provided to Commissioners prior to the meeting. To summarize the comment, they have significant concerns and urge removing the two-car lanes on each of the arms of the proposed Ring Road. They strongly support the Envision Route 7 BRT and the transit-oriented development plans for Seven Corners but are concerned that the proposed wide cross section will undermine the opportunity for a liveable and walkable community. Chair Palchik stated that she will pull #3D from the Consent Agenda to allow discussion.

Ms. Mattice stated that NVTC has a number of activities this fall, and she highlighted the work being done on the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA, which will be accompanied by a technical report from NVTC's Metro Operating and Reform Working Group. NVTC is wrapping up the successful "Ride with Us" marketing campaign, with a staff update scheduled for the October meeting. The 2024 Legislative and Policy Agenda and strategy for the upcoming General Assembly Session and 2024 Congressional activities are also underway, with action to approve both NVTC and VRE Legislative Agendas at the December meeting.

Ms. Mattice also announced that NVTC, along with PRTC and VRE, will be hosting the annual Joint Legislative Forum. This year it is on a new day of the week and a new location: morning of Friday, December 1 at the Schar School at the George Mason University Arlington Campus. More information will be provided later in tonight's agenda. For Commuter Choice, action will be requested at the October meeting to approve the I-66 call for projects, as well as the Commuter Choice Annual Report.

Ms. Mattice noted that action is being requested in tonight's agenda regarding a key study for the Envision Route 7 BRT project, but there is still a lot of work to advance the project. Staff are working diligently with all the stakeholders to keep this project moving forward and plan to update the Commission on the Strategic Implementation Framework at the January 2024 meeting. She also announced that next month she will introduce the new Envision Route 7 senior program manager who will be managing all the work associated with the Congressional earmark NVTC received. As part of the Transit Technology Program, draft recommendations for the Northern Virginia Regional Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan will be presented at the October Commission meeting with action requested in January.

Ms. Mattice stated that the FY 2025 General and Administrative Budget is being developed as well as next year's Work Plan, which both will be presented to the Commission at the December meeting, with action the following month. Regarding the Transit Resource Center, the Commission will hear more about the Northern Virginia Regional Bus Analysis and NVTC's Strategic Research Plan at the December Commission meeting.

Ms. Mattice stated that staff are already working on two major events for next year as 2024 is NVTC's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Those events include a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Research Symposium in June and a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration with a documentary premiere in September. More details about NVTC's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year will be rolled out in the coming months.

Ms. Mattice stated that through the fall, NVTC committees will continue to meet. She reviewed the meeting dates, which include the Program Advisory Committee on September 21 at 4:00 p.m. with the WMATA Committee following at 6:00 p.m. There will also be a joint meeting of the Legislative and Policy Committee and the WMATA Committee on October 19 at 6:00 p.m.

#### Minutes of the July 6, 2023 NVTC Meeting

Ms. Garvey moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to approve the Minutes of the July 6, 2023 NVTC Meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Alcorn, Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Palchik, Snyder, Stehle and Walkinshaw. Mr. Storck abstained. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Ms. DeBruhl and Mr. Karantonis voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

#### Consent Agenda

Chair Palchik stated that there are now three actions on the Consent Agenda, as she is removing Item #3D "Authorize the Chair to Send a Letter of Endorsement of Fairfax County's Application for Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) Funding for the Seven Corners Ring Road Project" for separate consideration. The updated Consent Agenda includes:

- A. Authorize the Executive Director to Award the Contract for the NVTC Strategic Policy Research Roadmap

- B. Authorize the Executive Director to Solicit and Accept Sponsorships in General Accordance with the Sponsorship Terms and Conditions for NVTC's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events
- C. Authorize the Executive Director to Execute Photo and Video Licensing Agreements

Mr. de Ferranti moved, with a second by Ms. Bagley, to approve the Consent Agenda.

In response to a question from Mr. Snyder, Ms. Mattice confirmed legal counsel has reviewed the sponsorship terms and conditions.

The Commission then vote on the motion and it passed. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Alcorn, Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Palchik, Snyder, Stehle, Storck and Walkinshaw. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Ms. DeBruhl and Mr. Karantonis voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Letter of Endorsement of Fairfax County's Application for Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) Funding for the Seven Corners Ring Road Project

Ms. Mattice repeated the comments from the Coalition of Smarter Growth. To summarize the comments, they have significant concerns and urge removing the two-car lanes on each of the arms of the proposed Seven Corners Ring Road. They strongly support the Envision Route 7 BRT and the transit-oriented development plans for Seven Corners but are concerned that the wide cross section that is being proposed will undermine the opportunity for a liveable and walkable community.

Chair Palchik provided more information about the background of this long-term project, which hopefully will improve Seven Corners and make it better for everyone – those who travel through on the way and from work as well as those that live there. For Fairfax County, this project is important to improve this area for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the future as well as other multi-modal improvements. Fairfax County's next steps are to seek grant funding to begin the design work. Mr. Alcorn observed that most of the Coalition's concerns are targeted at design issues, and Fairfax County won't get into project design decisions until later on in the process. Chair Palchik stated that the county values the advocacy and the role of other organizations, such as the Coalition for Smarter Growth, to ensure focus continues on the multi-modal aspects.

In response to a question from Ms. Garvey, Chair Palchik stated that this is not an NVTC project. Ms. Mattice explained that the action is to approve an endorsement letter that will go along with Fairfax County's funding application. Mr. Snyder stated that Falls Church has a great interest in this project and will continue to work with Fairfax County staff to improve Seven Corners and shares the concerns of moving pedestrians, bikes and BRT safely and efficiently through that corridor. He sees NVTC's action as endorsing the transit part of the project, which helps make sure the transit elements of the project remain.

Mr. Alcorn moved, with a second by Mr. Snyder, to authorize the chair to send a letter of endorsement of Fairfax County's application for NVTA funding for the Seven Corners Ring Road Project. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Alcorn, Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust,

Garvey, Palchik, Snyder, Stehle, Storck and Walkinshaw. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Ms. DeBruhl and Mr. Karantonis voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

#### Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Chair Palchik noted that both Mr. Smedberg and Mr. Letourneau were unable to attend this meeting. She asked Ms. Mattice to give the WMATA Report.

Report from the Virginia WMATA Board Members. Ms. Mattice reported that in July, the WMATA Board received an update on the Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity and Reliability Study (BOS). The study, which started in 2019, seeks to identify a project or a package of projects that could be addressed by WMATA in the future to address constraints, crowding, reliability and operational flexibility in the project corridor. WMATA staff reviewed the public engagement and potential alternatives that have been developed to date and laid out the next steps and engagement process for the fall that will lead to the WMATA Board's anticipated selection of a locally preferred alternative. Also in July, the WMATA Board received an update on the Better Bus Initiative, which includes various efforts like zero-emission bus implementation, the bus network redesign, and bus priority.

Ms. Mattice stated that WMATA was recently awarded a \$104 million Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant to convert the Cinder Bed Bus Garage in Lorton, Virginia to a fully battery electric bus facility, purchase battery electric buses and develop a workforce training program. Fairfax Connector will also benefit from this grant as they intend to use the Cinder Bed Bus Garage for future Richmond Highway buses. She also provided updates on new rear door SmarTrip targets, fare program updates and new faregates to stop fare evasion, as well as several student transit programs.

Ms. Mattice stated that the WMATA Board authorized the issuance of dedicated capital funding revenue bonds. The \$797.8 million bond sale, which settled on August 17, will fund capital projects across WMATA's capital improvement plan. Dedicated capital funding is essential to advancing the capital program, and dedicated capital funding's debt capacity is projected to be exhausted in FY 2029.

Finally, Ms. Mattice announced that more rail service is coming to Metrorail starting on September 11. Metro will boost peak service on the Red, Blue, Silver, Green and Yellow Lines to meet demand and ridership growth. The service increases will add more than 6% more train trips than today and represents Metro delivering 94% of budgeted FY 2024 service levels.

Report from the WMATA Committee Chair. Mr. Alcorn stated that the WMATA Committee has a full schedule of committee meetings coming up this fall. The committee will get an update on the work staff have been doing to examine some potential future revenue sources that could help get WMATA on the path to long-term financial sustainability. In addition, the 2023 Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA report is being prepared to submit to the governor and General Assembly in December. The next WMATA Committee is scheduled for September 21 at 6:00 p.m. and then on October 19, the WMATA Committee will meet jointly

with the Legislative and Policy Committee to discuss how these important topics inform NVTC's 2024 Legislative Agenda.

In response to a question from Mr. de Ferranti, Greg Potts of WMATA explained that the WMATA Board will be asked to approve in the near future a locally preferred alternative for the BOS Study but it does not imply funding commitments or agreements. It is just the next step.

Mr. de Ferranti noted that NVTC staff briefed him personally on zero-emission bus, which was so helpful and informative. Ms. Mattice stated that later this fall, staff will be presenting to the Commission the recommendations of the Zero-Emissions Bus Strategic Plan. Staff are happy to provide individual briefings for Commissioners.

In response to a question from Mr. Foust, Ms. Mattice stated that the consultants for the working group will be providing Metro operating funding reform recommendations. The WMATA Committee will receive a presentation, as will the Commission later this fall.

#### Transit Resource Center – Findings of the Envision Route 7 Phase 4-1 Mobility Study

Chair Palchik stated that the Commission is being asked to accept the findings of the Envision Route 7 Phase 4-1 Mobility Study related to the proposed bus rapid transit route (BRT) from Tysons to Alexandria. She asked NVTC's Transit Resource Center Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony to give his presentation.

Mr. Harmony stated that this Phase 4-1 focused on the City of Falls Church segment of the corridor and does not make any recommendations on a preferred scenario. Rather, the study was conducted to provide the Falls Church City Council with the technical analysis and initial public input needed for them to make the final decision about how the BRT will operate in Falls Church and the infrastructure that will be needed. Phase 4-2 will start later this year and focus on the segment from Falls Church to Alexandria. He reviewed the extensive public outreach efforts and survey results for this phase and then summarized the different scenarios that were tested, as well as infrastructure treatments.

In response to a question from Ms. Garvey, Mr. Harmony stated that the draft Final Report goes into more detail and there is a section that describes traffic that gets displaced through some of the scenarios to improve bus service. When there is more build-out, there is more displaced traffic. He also noted that the data reflects that there is intense traffic during certain times during the p.m. timeframe. He then summarizes the results of the survey.

Mr. Harmony explained that the Falls Church City Council will be acting on a preferred alternative. The Commission is being asked to accept the findings of the Envision Route 7 Phase 4-1 Mobility Study. NVTC staff will continue to work on the Strategic implementation Plan as well as issuing a Request for Proposals for Phase 4-2 analysis. The new senior program manager for this project will be onboard starting in October.

Chair Palchik thanked Mr. Harmony for his work on this project.



In response to a question from Mr. de Ferranti, Mr. Harmony explained that the Commission is being asked to accept the findings of the work that has been done for Phase 4-1. He also acknowledged that making decisions around transportation is not just about traffic models and this study looks at what might be predicted based on these models. Other things come into consideration when making transportation decisions.

Mr. Snyder noted that for Presentation Slide #9, it is important to go back and look at the data and the assumptions. At the very least there needs to be some explanation about traffic volumes at different times of day. The time-of-day matters. The goal is to get people out of their cars and onto transit. If this data is taken out of context, it can create a very different story. Mr. Harmony stated that there is detailed, comprehensive information in the report. Ms. Mattice clarified that the chart actually shows faster traffic times with certain scenarios, but this can be better explained. Mr. Harmony stated that the chart is just a summary and not actually in the report and staff can add “peak hour” and update the staff presentation for additional context and clarity.

Chair Palchik asked that the executive summary provide visuals and more in-depth discussion of the findings in layperson language. She asked that this information be provided to Commissioners as a follow-up.

Ms. Bagley asked if the full report looked at reliability of arrival and departure times. She stated that it would be a nice data point in support of BRT. Mr. Harmony stated that staff can provide some additional information and although it is not explicit in the report, it is captured. Ms. Bagley stated that having a percentage of reliability would be a good data point.

Mr. Snyder moved, with a second by Ms. Bagley, to accept the findings of the Envision Route 7 Phase 4-1 Mobility Study. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Alcorn, Bagley, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Foust, Garvey, Palchik, Snyder, Stehle, Storck and Walkinshaw. A roll call vote followed for Commissioners participating electronically and Mr. Karantonis voted in the affirmative (Ms. DeBruhl did not participate in the vote). The motion passed.

### Commuter Choice

Chair Palchik stated that here is no action being requested this month, but at the October meeting the Commission will be asked to authorize a call for projects for I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025-2026 funding and authorize the submission of the Commuter Choice FY 2023 Annual Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). She introduced NVTC Commuter Choice Senior Program Analyst Adam Hager to give the presentation on the call for projects.

Mr. Hager gave a quick recap of the Commuter Choice program. He reported that staff expect at least \$40 million to be available for transit and other transportation improvements that benefit I-66 Inside the Beltway toll payers, which is the largest amount available for the I-66 program to-date. Of that amount, it is anticipated that up to 50% could be allocated for transit operations (given the 50% cap on the share of funds that can be allocated to transit operations over any nine-year period). Staff are continuing to work with VDOT to get updated toll revenues, which was requested by the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) at their July meeting.

Mr. Hager stated that staff reviewed with the PAC the plan to open the application window in October rather than November, allowing staff extra time during the program development process in the spring. Staff are not proposing any substantive changes to the Commuter Choice technical evaluation process, last updated in 2022. Staff plan to make minor technical clarifications in the Commuter Choice Recipient Handbook regarding the timing of the application window and descriptions of technical evaluation measures, among other administrative items.

Mr. Hager stated that after Commission action in October, the call for projects notice, which will include information about how to apply for funds, will be issued to eligible applicants. Online applications will be accepted via the NVTC website from October 6, 2023 until December 18, 2023. NVTC staff will hold an overview webinar for all eligible applicants about the program and call for projects on September 27. Staff will thereafter request more information from potential applicants about their project ideas and will review these in terms of alignment with program eligibility and goals with each eligible applicant at one-on-one workshop sessions. The one-on-one workshops will also provide an opportunity for NVTC and applicant staff to review the application form and other required materials in detail. Staff will continue to provide updates to the Commission, concluding with requested action on a Program of Projects in June 2024.

Chair Palchik asked about the level of funding in the last two rounds. Mr. Hager responded that for the last two funding rounds staff were conservative in their toll revenue projections due to the pandemic. Two years ago, for the FY 2022-2023 period, the Commission approved just over \$15 million for a two-year program, and for the previous round (FY 2021), the two-tiered program allocated \$4 million initially and the second tier approved \$5 million for a supplemental program.

#### Report from the Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee

Chair Palchik stated that Mr. Aguirre, chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee, could not attend the meeting since he is out of town. She asked Ms. Mattice to give the report.

Ms. Mattice reported that the Legislative and Policy Committee met on August 31 to discuss important state and federal legislative priorities and begin work on NVTC's 2024 Legislative Agenda. NVTC's Legislative Liaison Aimee Perron Seibert provided the committee with an update on the General Assembly. Next year is going to be a unique legislative year due to the amount of changeover in the General Assembly, with as many as 55 new members in Richmond come January. With the many retirements among the General Assembly members, NVTC staff are working hard behind the scenes to reach out and foster relationships with many elected officials to share knowledge about transit in this region and its vital role in supporting the economic engine that is Northern Virginia.

Ms. Mattice noted that the committee also discussed NVTC's 2024 Legislative and Policy Agenda which will be presented at the November Commission meeting. This document governs the state and federal issues that NVTC can actively support at the Virginia General Assembly as well as the U.S. Congress. The committee reviewed draft topics for consideration which include advocating for long-term and sustainable funding for the transit systems; supporting federal policies that recognize the importance of public transit in keeping the National Capital Region efficiently functioning; and protecting existing NVTC autonomy, programs, and funding sources. The

committee will work with the WMATA Committee on any legislative “asks” and will continue to refine the Legislative and Policy Agenda.

Ms. Mattice reported that at the Special Session earlier this week, the General Assembly passed budget amendments. In general, there are no provisions within the budget related to transportation. One of the items NVTC fought against last Session -- the diversion of \$200 million (House) or \$100 million (Senate) off the top of the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) to the Governor’s Transportation Partnership Opportunity Fund (TPOF) -- was completely removed from the compromise budget. For context, \$200 million off the top of the CTF would have reduced the Virginia Mass Transit Fund by \$22.5 million.

Ms. Mattice also reported that she has been reaching out to staff of the Northern Virginia Congressional delegation to provide them with updates on NVTC efforts and potential federal funding opportunities for the regional transit systems.

Ms. Mattice stated that the committee was also updated on NVTC’s future legislative events, including the joint meeting with the Legislative and Policy Committee and the WMATA Committee on October 19 and the annual joint NVTC-PRTC-VRE Legislative Forum which will be held this year on Friday, December 1 at GMU Schar School in Arlington. She emphasized that this is a new date and location for this event. This event will bring together transit leaders and special guests for an in-person overview of federal and state issues affecting transit in Northern Virginia. Save the Dates were sent out yesterday and 70 people have already RSVP’d.

Mr. Stehle stated that one area that this region should start paying attention to is autonomous vehicles, especially last mile aerial deliveries, and what that could mean for traffic. He stated that this would be a good forum topic.

### Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Chair Palchik welcomed VRE CEO Rich Dalton and asked him to give his report, to be followed by Mr. Schofield to present the key budget issues.

VRE CEO Report. Mr. Dalton reported that overall, on-time performance for the months of July and August were not the best with multiple operational issues. An Amtrak derailment impacted VRE service for several days, as well as heat orders on the Norfolk Southern Manassas Line, which is out of the ordinary. Ridership continues to slowly increase.

VRE Key Budget Issues. VRE Chief Financial Officer Mark Schofield provided an overview of VRE’s FY 2025 key budget issues and the budget process. He highlighted three key issues. Based on survey results, VRE has received positive feedback about weekend service, which staff are working to include in the budget. As there hasn’t been a fare increase for five years, a fare increase and other fare changes are also being considered. Then there is the issue of balancing the sources of funding.

Mr. Walkinshaw observed that the service issues are mostly not in VRE’s control, but are caused by host railroads, partners, weather, service disruptions, etc. VRE has done a good job of

communicating with riders. The Operations Board would like to see VRE accelerate weekend service. He also spoke about the jurisdictional subsidy and it is his personal perspective that VRE should return to the pre-pandemic subsidy level.

Chair Palchik stated that as a potential Saturday rider, she is excited to hear VRE is considering weekend service. Mr. Dalton also stated that VRE staff are still gathering data on the free fares on Friday during the summer.

Ms. Bagley announced that VRE is holding the annual Tour de VRE bicycle ride on October 13. This event will raise money for breast cancer research. She asked staff to provide more information to Commissioners and encouraged all to participate.

Mr. Dalton also gave information about VRE activities during Rail Safety Week starting September 18. In response to a question from Ms. Garvey, Mr. Dalton provided more information about heat restrictions.

#### Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Chair Palchik explained that DRPT Director DeBruhl, who is participating virtually, is having audio problems and asked the executive director to highlight a few things from the DRPT Report. Ms. Mattice encouraged Commissioners to read the written DRPT Report. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will be meeting in Crystal City in October in conjunction with the Governor's Transportation Conference.

#### Executive Director Report

Ms. Mattice encouraged Commissioners to read her Executive Director Newsletter, which highlights some of NVTC's recent efforts and events. She congratulated Senior Grants and Procurement Manager Brittany Sumpter, who has been selected to the first Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Leadership Institute, where she will be joining transit agency professionals from across Virginia in a one-year program leadership program.

Ms. Mattice then reviewed upcoming meetings including the Program Advisory Committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. on September 21, which will be followed by the WMATA Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m. There will be a joint Legislative and Policy Committee and WMATA Committee meeting on October 19 at 6:00 p.m. The next Commission meeting is October 5 at 7:00 p.m., with the Executive Committee meeting prior at 6:15 p.m. At the October meeting the Commission will acknowledge WMATA Board Chair Paul Smedberg for being awarded the 2023 Outstanding Public Transportation Board Member Award by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for his vision, leadership and commitment to transit.

Ms. Mattice noted that the June and July Financial Reports were provided in the written meeting materials. There were no questions from Commissioners.

### Adjournment

Without objection, Chair Palchik adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.

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Dalia Palchik  
Chair

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David F. Snyder  
Secretary-Treasurer

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Consent Agenda

At the October meeting, the Commission will be asked to approve the Consent Agenda, which includes two action items: the notice of direct contributions to the jurisdictions and a letter of support for the City of Alexandria federal grant application.

**ACTION: Approve the Consent Agenda (subject to approval of chair)**

**A. Approve the Notice of Direct Contributions to the Jurisdictions**

The Commission will be asked to authorize staff to provide notice of the FY 2025 direct contributions to NVTC's member jurisdictions. Each fall NVTC staff proposes a preliminary General and Administrative (G&A) budget for the next fiscal year to be used by its member jurisdictions in planning their own budgets. The NVTC jurisdiction funding is provided to NVTC through direct payments from the member jurisdictions, as well as an amount taken off the top of state aid received by NVTC on behalf of its member jurisdictions. While the direct contributions are fixed in total, each jurisdiction is assigned a share based on its percentage of state aid and gas tax received and administered by NVTC during the previous year. Loudoun County began receiving allocations of state assistance through NVTC when the Silver Line Phase II revenue service began in the fall of 2023. Accordingly, the county's share of the direct contributions increased greatly in percentage terms over the previous year.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION PRELIMINARY FY 2025 DIRECT G&A JURISDICTION CONTRIBUTIONS				
	FY 2023 Actual	Approved Budget FY 2024	Preliminary Budget FY 2025	FY 2025-2024 Budget Increase (Decrease)
City of Alexandria	\$ 44,387	\$ 43,665	\$ 43,542	\$ (123)
Arlington County	66,211	68,483	65,623	(2,860)
City of Fairfax	4,788	3,879	4,486	(607)
Fairfax County	160,532	160,796	155,168	(5,628)
City of Falls Church	2,067	2,087	2,128	41
Loudoun County	6,262	5,337	13,300	7,963
TOTAL	\$ 284,247	\$ 284,247	\$ 284,247	\$ -



**B. Authorize the Chair to Send a Letter of Endorsement for the City of Alexandria's US DOT Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant Application**

The Commission will be asked to authorize the chair to send a letter of endorsement for the City of Alexandria's application for the 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation's Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant Program. The proposed application will advance transit-oriented development planning in the Duke Street Corridor of Alexandria.

The proposed grant will fund a planning effort to comprehensively analyze and update land use for the areas adjacent to the planned Duke Street bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor to reflect current City of Alexandria policy and priorities related to housing affordability, equity, sustainability and mobility while leveraging transit-oriented development principles, such as walkability, variety of uses, and transit-supportive density, among others. The planning effort will continue to integrate recommendations from the recently completed transit planning process for the corridor.



October XX, 2023

--DRAFT--

**Chair**  
Hon. Dalia A. Palchik

**Vice-Chair**  
Hon. Matt de Ferranti

**Secretary-Treasurer**  
Hon. David F. Snyder

**City of Alexandria**  
Hon. Canek Aguirre  
Hon. Sarah Bagley

**Arlington County**  
Hon. Matt de Ferranti  
Hon. Libby Garvey  
Hon. Takis Karantonis

**Fairfax County**  
Hon. Walter L. Alcorn  
Hon. John Foust  
Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay  
Hon. Dalia A. Palchik  
Hon. James R. Walkinshaw

**City of Fairfax**  
Hon. Catherine Read

**City of Falls Church**  
Hon. David F. Snyder

**Loudoun County**  
Hon. Matthew Letourneau  
Hon. Michael R. Turner

**Commonwealth of Virginia**  
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

**Virginia General Assembly**

**Senate**  
Hon. John J. Bell  
Hon. Adam Ebbin

**House of Delegates**  
Nick Clemente  
Aimee S. Gilroy  
M. David Skiles  
John C. Tuck III

**Executive Director**  
Katherine A. Mattice

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to share the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's (NVTC) endorsement of the City of Alexandria's 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation's Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Planning Grant Program application. The proposed application will advance transit-oriented development planning in the Duke Street Corridor of Alexandria.

The City of Alexandria is a leader in advancing and expanding equitable transportation access and providing new methods for guideway and transit project corridors. In June 2023, the City Council approved the concept design for the Duke Street Transitway. That same month, the city approved the FY 2024-2025 Long-Range Planning Work Program, identifying the Duke Street Corridor Plan as the next Comprehensive Plan the city will undertake, scheduled to begin mid-2024.

The proposed planning effort will comprehensively analyze and update land use for the areas adjacent to the planned Duke Street bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor to reflect current City of Alexandria policy and priorities related to housing affordability, equity, sustainability and mobility while leveraging transit-oriented development principles, such as walkability, variety of uses, and transit-supportive density, among others. The planning effort will also integrate recommendations from Alexandria's recently completed transit planning process for the corridor.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the City of Alexandria's grant application.

Best regards,

Dalia Palchik  
NVTC Chair

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Presentations on I-495 Southside Beltway

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At the October meeting the Commission will hear presentations from Michelle Shropshire, P.E., Acting Director, Northern Virginia Megaprojects, and Michelle Holland, Communications Manager, Northern Virginia Megaprojects, of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Jennifer DeBruhl, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), on each agency's respective studies related to the southern portion of the I-495 corridor.

**A. VDOT's I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study**

VDOT commenced its [I-495 Southside Express Lanes \(SEL\) Study](#) in January 2022 and is currently conducting a public outreach process to review and solicit input on preliminary alternative concepts for 11 miles of the I-495 between the Springfield interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County and the MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, Maryland. The study identified several needs in the corridor including continuity of the Express Lanes network, providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion, improving travel reliability and improving safety.

VDOT hosted virtual and in-person meetings in September to educate and hear from the public on the preliminary alternative concepts. VDOT has indicated that it does not intend to move forward with any concept that would preclude transit or rail enhancements across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge in the future. The project team will identify a recommended range of alternatives for further study this fall before engaging the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) with a recommended preferred alternative in spring 2024. VDOT expects a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision from the Federal Highway Administration in late 2024.

**B. DRPT's I-495 Southside Capital Beltway Transit and TDM**

DRPT conducted its [I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study](#) as a separate effort meant to inform VDOT's study from a transit perspective. Published in April 2023, the study recommended new and enhanced transit services that could benefit from an expanded express lanes network, new commuter assistance programs and technology to encourage use of transit. Origin-destination transit service recommendations were developed upon assessing travel demand, land use, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments-designated Equity Emphasis Areas, and existing and planned service.

In addition to transit facility recommendations, prioritized transit service recommendations in the study include service from Alexandria to Tysons, Central-West Fairfax County to Braddock Road and Southeast Fairfax County and Alexandria to Dunn Loring-Merrifield, among others including service originating in Maryland. DRPT grouped investment scenarios into near-, mid- and long-term packages that together would total over \$29 million in annual operating costs and \$144 million in capital costs.

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice, Ben Owen, Adam Hager and Ann McGrane  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Report from the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee

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At the October meeting, the Commission will receive an update from the chair of the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), which will include a brief review of the September 21 PAC meeting. The Commission will be asked to authorize the submission of the Commuter Choice FY 2023 Annual Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and to authorize staff to open the I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025-2026 call for projects. The Commission will also be briefed on the Draft Zero-Emission Bus Regional Recommendations.

Staff have produced a short promotional video that presents the key takeaways from the FY 2023 Commuter Choice Annual Report. Staff will show the video at the Commission meeting and will use it to promote the report across NVTC's social media channels.

#### **A. Commuter Choice Program**

▪ **ACTION: Authorize the Executive Director to Submit the NVTC Commuter Choice FY 2023 Annual Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board**

The Commission will be asked to authorize the executive director to submit the [NVTC Commuter Choice Program FY 2023 Annual Report](#) to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in fulfillment of the annual reporting requirements of the [I-395/95](#) and [I-66 Inside the Beltway](#) corridors' Memoranda of Agreement (MOA).

The FY 2023 report highlights notable achievements for the program over the last year:

- **The highest daily ridership.** The 20 Commuter Choice projects that were active in spring 2023 provided 6,000 passenger trips in the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors each weekday – a 50% increase over spring 2022 and the highest figure in any year to date.
- **The largest funding award.** The \$48 million awarded to 13 I-395/95 Commuter Choice projects, the largest Program of Projects in program history, includes just under \$20 million toward two major and transformative capital projects, Fairfax County's Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit and VRE's Crystal City Station Expansion, both of which will provide long lasting benefits to corridor commuters. The Program of Projects also includes an award to DASH for Commuter Choice's first-ever support for the purchase of electric buses.



- **The most public engagement.** NVTC received over 600 comment submissions on projects under consideration for I-395/95 Commuter Choice funding this spring, by far the most in any funding round to date. The report details Northern Virginians' support in their own words for expanded transit options.

The report also includes a look-back on the performance of projects funded under the program (2017 to present). To illustrate the importance of the program to Northern Virginia's economy and quality of life, staff again estimated broader, regional benefits of Commuter Choice funding since the program began in 2017, shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Commuter Choice Program Benefits Since 2017**



Staff obtained the performance data from annual project-specific data from funding recipients, as required per each project's Standard Project Agreement. Following Commission approval, the annual report will be posted to the [Commuter Choice website](#) on Friday, October 6, along with detail of the projects funded under the program and their anticipated benefits. The report and accompanying information address the annual reporting elements required by the MOAs.

The annual report is due to the CTB by October 31 each year (within 120 days of the end of NVTC's fiscal year). For the I-395/95 corridor program, the MOA requires that the report be submitted jointly by NVTC and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), which has joint approval authority with NVTC over the program. As NVTC manages the program on the



two Commissions' behalf per [MOA with PRTC](#), NVTC staff have prepared the report and PRTC will also take action on October 5 to authorize its submittal to the CTB.

▪ **ACTION: Authorize the Executive Director to Issue the I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025 – FY 2026 Call for Projects**

The Commission will be asked to authorize the executive director to issue the I-66 [Commuter Choice](#) FY 2025-2026 call for projects. Staff expect \$40 million to \$50 million to be available for transit and other transportation improvements that benefit I-66 toll payers by moving more people and establishing effective additional travel options. The range of funding will provide the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) and Commission with short- and medium-term programming flexibility. Projects selected for funding will be included in the Commonwealth's FY 2025 to FY 2030 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

The call for projects notice, which will include information about how to apply for funds, will be issued to eligible applicants following approval by the Commission. Online applications will be accepted from October 6 through December 18, 2023.

Table 1 shows the primary steps and schedule for the funding cycle. The program selection process meets the [I-66 MOA's requirements](#), whereby staff evaluate eligible projects and develop a proposed Program of Projects for the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) to consider. The PAC recommends a Program of Projects to the full Commission, which then adopts a program and refers it to the CTB for final approval and adoption into the SYIP. NVTC staff will conduct a public comment period and share comments with the PAC and Commission prior to any action to adopt a Program of Projects.

**Table 1: Proposed Schedule for the I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2025-2026 Funding Cycle**

Fall 2023	Winter 2023-2024	Spring 2024	June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commission approves Call for Projects (Oct.)</li><li>• Application period opens (Oct.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application period closes (Dec.)</li><li>• Eligibility review and project evaluation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of draft program</li><li>• Public meeting and comment period</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commission selects program</li><li>• CTB approves program for inclusion in SYIP</li></ul>

NVTC staff began to engage with eligible applicants over the summer about the upcoming funding round and ideas for projects that would benefit I-66 corridor toll payers. The discussions will continue in the coming weeks with one-on-one workshops with eligible applicants to review project ideas further and the application form and other required materials in detail.

## **B. Transit Technology Program – ZEB Strategic Plan**

At the September 21 Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, staff provided an update on the Northern Virginia Regional Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Strategic Plan. After spending the spring and summer working with the consultant team to identify existing conditions, challenges and opportunities, industry trends and private sector opportunities, staff presented draft regional recommendations for discussion during the meeting.

The draft ZEB Regional Recommendations are summarized below with actions related to implementing each of the six strategies.

### **1. Serve as Regional ZEB Forum**

- a. Continue to lead or participate in regional and industry working groups that share lessons learned about ZEBs.
- b. Share operational data and findings among regional partners.
- c. Coordinate on best practices for working with utilities and track hydrogen technology.

### **2. Advocate for Consistent and Supportive ZEB Standards and Policies**

- a. Engage with local jurisdictional staff and elected officials to ensure alignment with regional efforts.
- b. Support the zero-emission transition as part of the NVTC legislative agenda.
- c. Encourage interoperability across technologies and manufacturers.

### **3. Coordinate Among Regional Partners on Funding and Procurement Opportunities**

- a. Identify additional funding and resources to implement the recommendations of the strategic plan.
- b. Develop proposals for multi-agency grant applications for federal or state funding.
- c. Identify cost saving opportunities through joint procurement.

### **4. Support Development of Shared Charging Infrastructure in Northern Virginia**

- a. Conduct a feasibility study for shared on-route charging location(s).
- b. Work with regional partners and local utilities to pilot a shared charging station.

### **5. Evaluate Opportunities for Private Sector Partnerships**

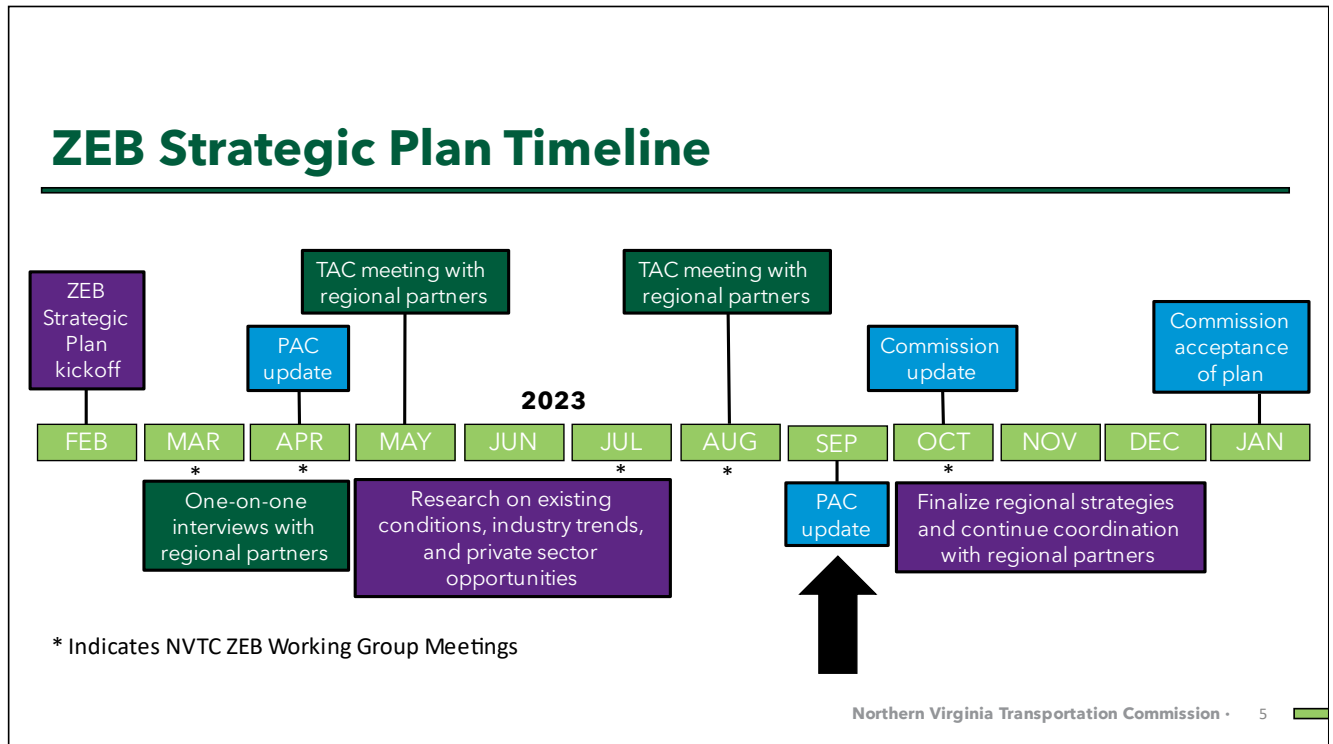
- a. Host listening sessions or industry days to learn more about ZEB infrastructure and technology vendors.
- b. Develop a process through which vendors can propose solutions to demo with Northern Virginia transit agencies based on identified regional problems.
- c. Explore options for an RFI to assess private sector interest in working with Northern Virginia agencies.

### **6. Support ZEB-Related Workforce Training Programs**

- a. Identify and share ZEB training resources with regional partners.
- b. Engage with education institutions, regional partners and DRPT about ZEB training opportunities.

Staff will update the recommendations based on feedback received during the PAC meeting, as well as any comments from the Commission meeting, in order to finalize the Regional ZEB Strategic Plan for Commission acceptance in January 2024 (Figure 1).

**Figure 2: Schedule for the Zero-Emission Bus Regional Strategic Plan**



Source: NVTC September 21 PAC Meeting



# Commuter Choice

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

[NoVaTransit.org/CC](https://NoVaTransit.org/CC)





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- 4 I-66 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
- 5 I-395/95 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
- 6 CURRENT PROJECTS
- 8 COMMUTER CHOICE BY THE NUMBERS
- 10 COMMUTERS SPEAK UP FOR MORE TRANSIT OPTIONS

# Annual Report Fiscal Year 2023

*July 1, 2022 — June 30, 2023*



*Commuter Choice, a trailblazing, innovative and competitive grant program, reinvests Express Lanes toll revenues in public transit and other transportation improvements along the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors in Northern Virginia.*

A partnership between the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Commuter Choice improves commuters' travel in two of the most congested corridors in the nation. NVTC selects projects for funding through a competitive process that considers each project's ability to support the program's goals: moving more people, supporting diverse travel choices and enhancing mobility, transportation safety and travel reliability.

***Commuter Choice projects benefit Express Lanes toll payers in two main ways:***

1. By offering more options, toll road users and transit riders can choose the means of travel that gets them to the places that they want to go; and
2. By moving people more efficiently, Commuter Choice projects lessen congestion and support more consistent travel speeds for Express Lanes users.

## Letter from the Executive Director

*Fiscal Year 2023 proved to be a record year for NVTC's Commuter Choice program. Not only did Commuter Choice-funded projects provide 6,000 passenger trips in the I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 corridors each weekday, the most in any year in the program's history, we also allocated over \$48 million to new projects and received a record level of public input in our project selection process.*

It's no secret that traffic volumes have surged over the last year across Northern Virginia, leading to pre-pandemic levels of congestion. Our Commuter Choice program played as important a role as ever for the region and its quality of life by supporting a broad range of transit options that offer commuters faster and more reliable ways to travel through our expressway corridors. The return of traffic congestion also meant more people chose to use Express Lanes for speedier travel and that has meant full funding for Commuter Choice in both the I-395/95 and I-66 Inside the Beltway corridors, giving us the ability to fund more projects now and in the future.

The region's Express Lanes network also continued to expand. I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes opened in late 2022 and the first portion of the I-95 Express Lanes Fredericksburg Extension opened in summer 2023. These megaprojects add up to faster, more reliable trips for our region's longest-distance commuters.

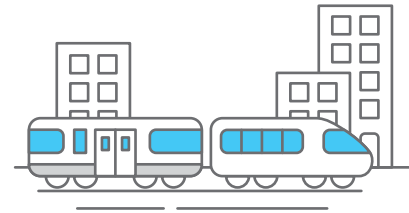
Commuter Choice began supporting major capital investments that will provide benefits to toll payers for decades to come, including funding for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit system in Fairfax County and the relocation and expansion of the Virginia Railway Express station in Crystal City.

All told, Commuter Choice funded \$48 million of new projects in the I-395/95 corridor in the FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects. We anticipate \$40 million available for projects for I-66 Commuter Choice in this upcoming year, continuing to provide new ways for people to get where they need to go for work, school, shopping and recreation — all without having to sit in traffic.

I also want to thank members of the public for their overwhelming engagement in the Commuter Choice project selection process. We heard from a record number of people — 646 in total — during the public comment period earlier this year, highlights of which can be found in this report. Voices from across the region loudly said they support public transit and relief from traffic congestion. This vital feedback from those who benefit directly from our funded projects keeps us excited to continue playing an integral role in shaping Northern Virginia's transit future.



**Kate Mattice**  
Executive Director



# 6,000

passenger trips each weekday on  
Commuter Choice-funded projects

**First funding awards  
in program history for**



**A BRT line**



**A new rail station**



**Electric buses**

# \$48 MILLION

for new I-395/95 Commuter  
Choice projects



## I-66 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

# New Express Lanes & Exciting Future

FY 2023 marked several important milestones for I-66 Commuter Choice and provided plenty to look forward to in the near future. The I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes opened in November 2022 and immediately afforded substantial travel time savings for longer-distance corridor commuters. OmniRide and Fairfax Connector services benefitted from more reliable travel and saved up to 15-minutes compared to their prior travel times, a level of savings that plays a significant factor in attracting new transit riders.

Elsewhere in the corridor, the City of Manassas Park broke ground on its Park Central VRE Parking Garage, a Commuter Choice-supported project that is poised to attract new VRE riders looking to avoid congestion and anchor the City's downtown redevelopment.



The City of Fairfax is putting the finishing touches on its CUE transit access and technology improvements and its bikeshare implementation, both of which will offer more choices to corridor commuters later this year.

Fairfax County generated significantly higher levels of ridership on its Connector services in FY 2023, including its Route 599 where Commuter Choice funded a fare buy-down, and is soon slated to implement a new Commuter Choice-funded service from Reston to Crystal City in early 2024. Prince William County enjoyed a successful launch to its fare buy-down on five OmniRide routes originating in the County coupled with a marketing campaign geared toward I-66 corridor commuters.

As the program gears up for its sixth funding cycle, we expect a fully-funded program — at least \$40 million — thanks in large part to I-66 toll revenues continuing their upward trend throughout FY 2023. NVTC looks forward to supporting new, creative project applications that will benefit corridor toll payers for years to come.

A blue-tinted background image showing a construction site. In the foreground, several construction workers wearing hard hats are visible. In the background, a large Volvo excavator is working. The text '\$40 million' is overlaid in large white font.

# \$40 million

anticipated for the I-66 FY 2025-2026 call for projects, opening in fall 2023



OmniRide and Fairfax Connector riders now save up to 15 minutes per trip on I-66 routes thanks to the Outside the Beltway Express Lanes

## I-395/95 CORRIDOR SUMMARY AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

# Record Ridership & Awards in FY 2023



I-395/95 Commuter Choice had a banner year both in terms of ridership and funding awards. Beyond supporting 50% more daily trips each weekday than in spring 2022, NVTC approved a further \$48 million across 13 I-395/95 Commuter Choice projects in FY 2023 — the largest collective award to date.

DASH Routes 35 and 36A/B continue to shine as Commuter Choice supports enhanced levels of service all day in the City of Alexandria. Local and express OmniRide routes in the I-395/95 corridor, also strong performers in prior years, experienced record levels of ridership. A Commuter Choice-funded incentive program also helped rebuild the corridor's vanpool market in FY 2023. Whether supporting local transit trips that offer alternatives to driving on I-395/95 or serving some of the region's longest-distance commuters, I-395/95 Commuter Choice continues to support strong performers.

The \$48 million awarded to 13 projects in FY 2023 includes just under \$20 million toward the program's first larger capital projects — Fairfax County's Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit and VRE's Crystal City Station Expansion projects. These will provide decades of benefits to corridor toll payers and are primed to be staples in the region's transit landscape.

DASH, OmniRide and Arlington County also had projects funded while VRE is set to reinstate its Amtrak Step-Up program on its Fredericksburg Line thanks to Commuter Choice. With the recent opening of the I-95 Express Lanes Fredericksburg Extension, projects even further south — including a brand-new park and ride lot in Spotsylvania County supported by Commuter Choice and likely to soon see OmniRide service — will benefit from the growing Express Lanes network and commuters will benefit from the options afforded by the Commuter Choice program.

# \$48 million

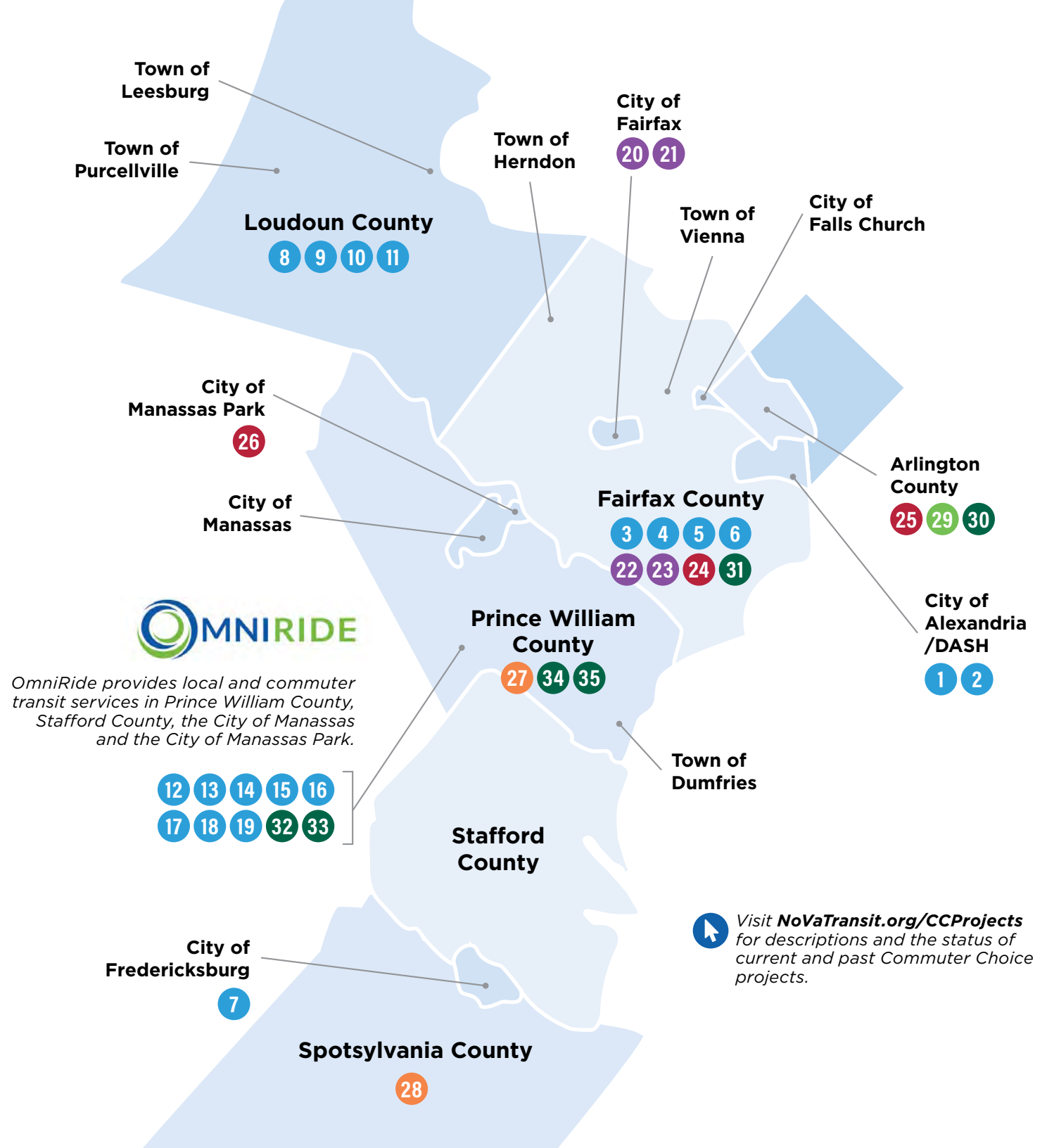
approved for 13 I-395/95 Commuter Choice projects in FY 2023 — the largest collective award to date.

# Current Projects

as of June 30, 2023

## Project Type

- Bus Service
- Access to Transit
- Rail Capital
- Park-and-Ride
- Roadway Operations
- TDM



## BUS SERVICE

- 1 **DASH - Enhanced Bus Service from Van Dorn Metro to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$5,734,000
- 2 **DASH - Enhanced Bus Service from Mark Center to Potomac Yard** I-395  
Funding: \$3,650,000
- 3 **Fairfax County - New Bus Service to the Pentagon with Gambrill and Backlick North Park and Ride Improvements** I-395  
Funding: \$4,926,903\*
- 4 **Fairfax County - Fairfax Connector Express Bus Service between Vienna/ Fairfax-GMU and Pentagon Metrorail Stations** I-66  
Funding: \$4,685,468\*
- 5 **Fairfax County - Enhanced Bus Service for Route 371: Lorton to Franconia-Springfield Metro Station** I-395  
Funding: \$2,496,529
- 6 **Fairfax County - New Bus Service from Reston South to Crystal City** I-66  
Funding: \$5,110,800
- 7 **City of Fredericksburg - New Bus Service from Route 208 Park and Ride Lot to Fredericksburg VRE** I-395  
Funding: \$1,218,800
- 8 **Loudoun County - Loudoun County Transit Metro Connection from New Purcellville Park and Ride** I-66  
Funding: \$1,774,990\*
- 9 **Loudoun County - Stone Ridge Enhanced Transit** I-66  
Funding: \$2,472,970\*
- 10 **Loudoun County - New Bus Service from Purcellville to DC** I-66  
Funding: \$949,482
- 11 **Loudoun County - New Bus Service from Stone Ridge to Pentagon** I-66  
Funding: \$1,257,226
- 12 **OmniRide - Gainesville to Pentagon Commuter Service** I-66  
Funding: \$8,581,149\*
- 13 **OmniRide - Enhanced Bus Service from Gainesville to DC** I-66  
Funding: \$1,519,100
- 14 **OmniRide - New Bus Service from Haymarket to Rosslyn** I-66  
Funding: \$1,861,354\*
- 15 **OmniRide - Enhanced Bus Service from Dale City to Ballston** I-395  
Funding: \$543,431\*
- 16 **OmniRide - Enhanced Bus Service on Prince William Metro Express** I-395  
Funding: \$997,176\*
- 17 **OmniRide - Enhanced Bus Service on Route 1 Local** I-395  
Funding: \$1,674,669\*
- 18 **OmniRide - New Bus Service from Staffordboro to Downtown D.C.** I-395  
Funding: \$4,537,508\*
- 19 **OmniRide - New Bus Service from Staffordboro to the Pentagon** I-395  
Funding: \$4,200,073\*

## ACCESS TO TRANSIT

- 20 **City of Fairfax - Bike Share Implementation** I-66  
Funding: \$460,000
- 21 **City of Fairfax - CUE Access and Technology Improvements** I-66  
Funding: \$965,000
- 22 **Fairfax County - I-66 Corridor Vienna/Merrifield Bike Share Expansion** I-66  
Funding: \$497,100
- 23 **Fairfax County - Trail Access to Vienna Metrorail Station** I-66  
Funding: \$2,200,000

## RAIL CAPITAL

- 24 **Fairfax County - McLean Metro Station North Entrance** I-66  
Funding: \$1,000,000
- 25 **Arlington County - Ballston-MU Metrorail West Entrance** I-66  
Funding: \$4,500,000
- 26 **City of Manassas Park - Manassas Park VRE Station Parking Garage** I-66  
Funding: \$2,500,000

## PARK-AND-RIDE

- 27 **Prince William County - Horner Road Park and Ride Lot Expansion** I-395  
Funding: \$2,800,000
- 28 **Spotsylvania County - New Park and Ride Lot in Massaponax** I-395  
Funding: \$1,100,000

## ROADWAY OPERATIONS

- 29 **Arlington County - U.S. 29 HOV and Bus-Only Lane in Rosslyn** I-66  
Funding: \$710,000

## TDM

- 30 **Arlington County - Expanded TDM Outreach to the I-66 Corridor** I-66  
Funding: \$2,050,000\*
- 31 **Fairfax County - TDM Strategy - Fare Buy-Down on Bus Service from Reston North to Crystal City** I-66  
Funding: \$154,500
- 32 **OmniRide - TDM Strategy - I-395/95 Corridor Vanpool Monthly Incentive** I-395  
Funding: \$604,800
- 33 **OmniRide - TDM Strategy - I-66 Corridor Vanpool Parking Benefit** I-66  
Funding: \$85,000
- 34 **Prince William County - New TDM Outreach to the I-66 Corridor** I-66  
Funding: \$200,000
- 35 **Prince William County - TDM Strategy - Fare Buy-Down on I-66 Commuter Bus Service** I-66  
Funding: \$650,000

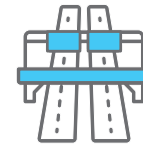
*\*denotes the total funded amount for projects funded in multiple rounds*



# Commuter Choice by the Numbers

## *Bolstering Northern Virginia's Mobility with Record Ridership*

*Commuter Choice projects produced record levels of ridership and usage in FY 2023. Active projects in spring 2023 supported 6,000 passenger trips through the two corridors each weekday — the highest figure in program history and a 50% increase over FY 2022. With more investments underway, future ridership growth will be supported by new capital projects coming online.*



# 20

projects in operation in  
spring 2023

Each weekday in FY 2023, Commuter Choice projects saved travelers a total of



**1,000 hours**  
of travel time



**84,000 miles**  
of vehicle travel




**\$11,000**  
in fuel expenditures



*Since 2017, Commuter Choice's \$108 million investment in transit and other transportation projects has improved travel and overall quality of life for Northern Virginians.*

**104M**  
fewer vehicle miles  
traveled



**69%**  
greenhouse gas  
emission reduction  
relative to  
single-occupancy  
vehicle trips




**\$31M**  
in regional  
economic benefit  
from reduced  
travel delay



**\$14.5M**  
in fuel cost savings  
for commuters



**130**  
automobile crashes  
avoided



**5M**  
Commuter Choice-  
supported trips  
on the I-66 and  
I-395/95 corridors



**1.1M**  
hours of travel  
time savings





# Commuters Speak Up for More Transit Options

## *Public input reflects how Commuter Choice projects will benefit Northern Virginians*

Each spring, NVTC holds a one-month public comment period to gather input on projects under consideration for Commuter Choice funding. NVTC received a record 646 comment submissions this spring, on the projects under consideration for funding in the I-395/95 FY 2024-2025 Program of Projects — a function of effective efforts by applicants to get the word out to their communities, a local TV

news segment on the projects under consideration and easy-to-use materials produced by NVTC, all available both in English and Spanish. The overwhelming response from the public — highlights of which are included — reinforced the critical role Commuter Choice continues to play for those who live, work and play in the region.

“

*I support all expansions of public transportation service. Public transportation is exceedingly important for economic diversity and the environment. I use public transportation exclusively ... and I want it to be conveniently accessible to as many people as possible.*

“

*It is amazing to see the huge projects that we are able to fund through just toll revenue. It is an amazing example of transportation justice and equity; providing free, reduced fare, and expanded services to all members of the community paid for by those that can afford to pay.*

“

*As an Arlington County resident who switches between use of car, Metro, and walking to get around I value the ability to have different options. The traffic on highways like 66 and 95 at times causes me to avoid those routes. This program is a great way to fund transit/pedestrian projects that can work to reduce that traffic and pollution.*

“

*The Program is a great initiative that supports many transit alternatives that would have been not possible otherwise. I support this Program and what it brings to local communities.*

“

*The diversification of options is really grand, highly support the investment in choice overall. Most of these proposals indirectly affect me, but anything to remove cars from the road and congestion from the 95 corridor is a good investment.*



“

**Metrobus 16M Service Enhancement: Skyline to Crystal City**

*Increasing frequency of bus service on Columbia Pike is hugely valuable.*

“

**DASH Line 35 Service Enhancement: Van Dorn Street Station to the Pentagon (Continuation)**

*I use this line to take my daughter to and from daycare several times a week. Because my trip includes a transfer, high frequency service is very important to ensuring I can get to daycare and then on to work on time on a consistent basis.*

*This line helps me keep a paycheck going. And the frequency of how it runs has saved the day a couple of times.*

“

**DASH Line 36A/B Service Enhancement: Mark Center to Potomac Yard-VT Station (Continuation)**

*Si esta línea es MUY IMPORTANTE! La necesitamos, los que vivimos aquí y trabajamos y no tenemos coche.*

*English translation: Yes, this line is VERY IMPORTANT! All of us with no cars that work and live here need it.*

*I am blind and depend heavily on the 36A bus to go from my home to the shopping center at the King Street and Quaker Lane intersection, as well as to the metro. This service is essential for me.*

“

**Ballston-MU Metrorail West Entrance**

*I live near this Metro Station and use it several times a week. Rebuilding the entrance is an important project that serves thousands of commuters and energizes the public/commercial area around the station.*

*This is the most impactful upgrade we can make in the area.*

“

**Renewal of Bus Service from Haymarket to Rosslyn**

*This has been an enormous quality-of-life improvement.*



# Eligible Applicants

## Localities

 NVTC Jurisdiction

 PRTC Jurisdiction

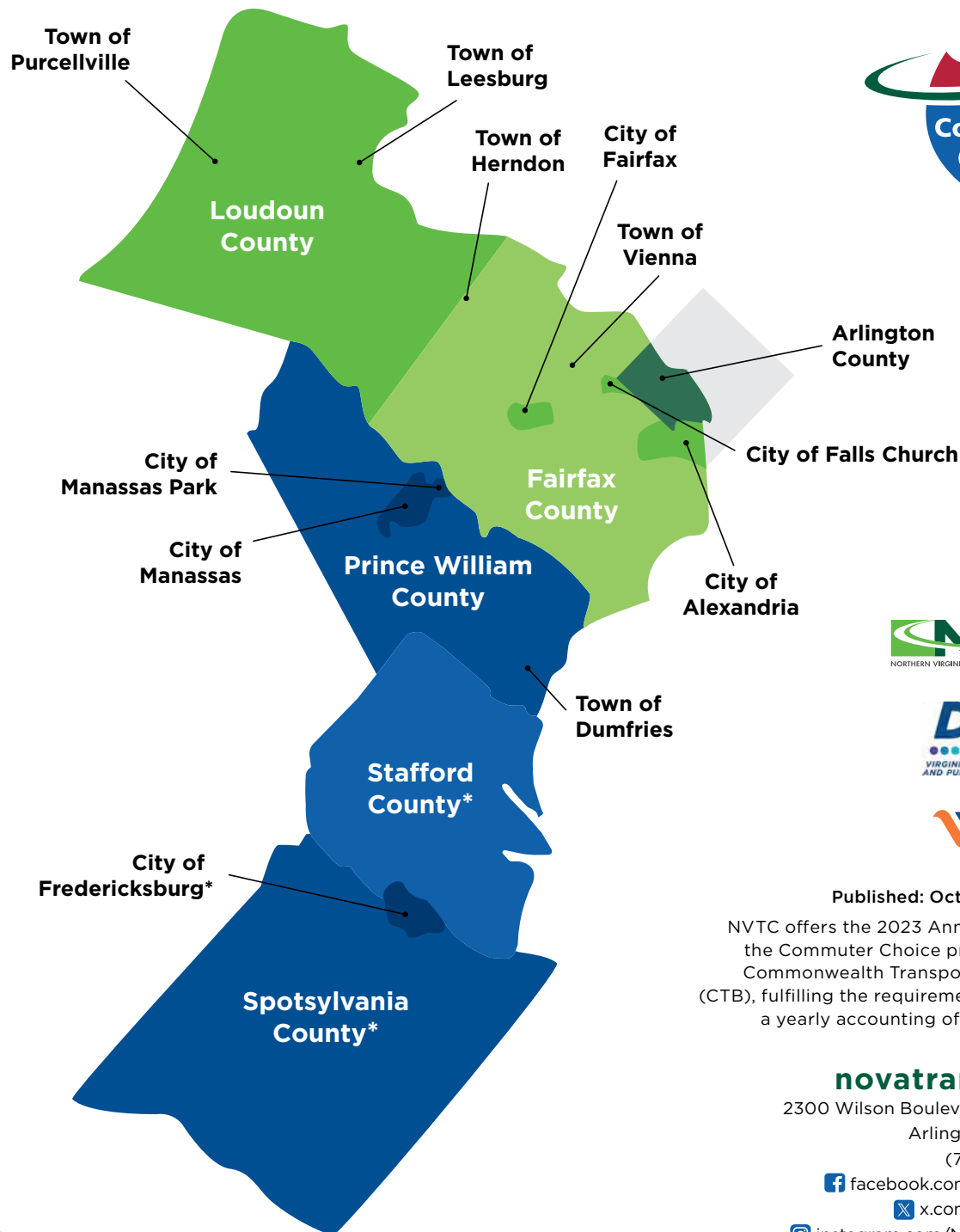
*\*Only eligible for I-395/95 Commuter Choice*

## Transit Agencies

 OmniRide

 Virginia Railway Express

 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority




Published: October 31, 2023

NVTC offers the 2023 Annual Report of the Commuter Choice program to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), fulfilling the requirement to provide a yearly accounting of the program.

**[novatransit.org](https://novatransit.org)**

2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 230  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 524-3322

 [facebook.com/NoVaTransit](https://facebook.com/NoVaTransit)

 [x.com/NoVaTransit](https://x.com/NoVaTransit)

 [instagram.com/NoVaTransit\\_IG](https://instagram.com/NoVaTransit_IG)





**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice, Andrew D’huyvetter and Ronnetta Zack-Williams  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

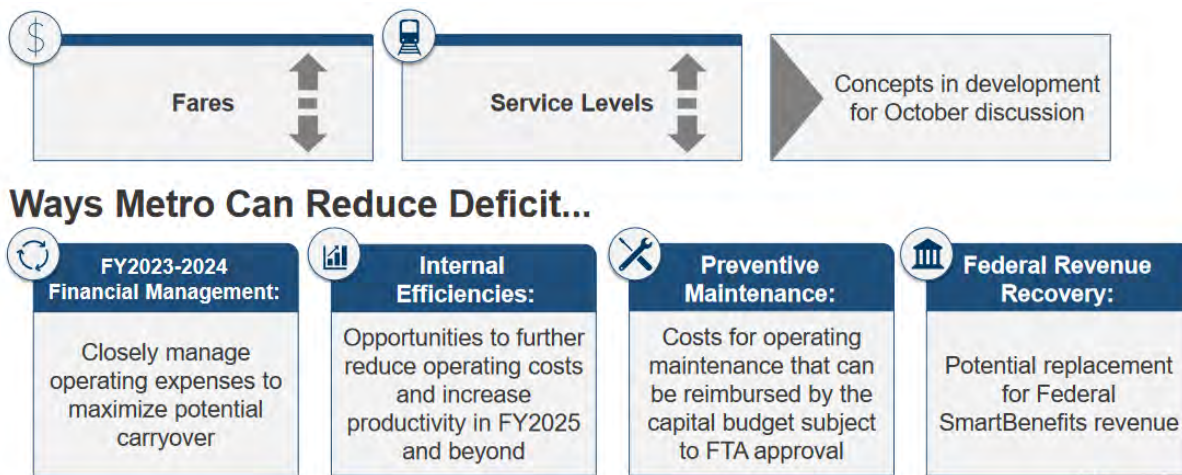
At the October meeting the Commission will receive reports from the Virginia WMATA Board members and the NVTC WMATA Committee Chair.

## A. Report from the Virginia WMATA Board Members

### ▪ Metro Financial Update

On September 28, 2023, the Finance and Capital Committee [received a financial update from WMATA staff](#). The presentation covers the initial forecast for the FY 2025 budget and potential service impacts, lays out FY 2025 budget planning considerations (Figure 1), and discusses FY 2025 budget scenarios, timeline, and challenges.

**Figure 1: Key Decisions for WMATA FY 2025 budget**



7

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

15 of 50

Image Courtesy of Metro

[Source: WMATA Finance and Capital Committee Meeting – September 14, 2023](#)

Key decisions for the FY 2025 budget include fares and service levels, which will be developed into further concepts in October. WMATA can also reduce the deficit through financial management, finding cost efficiencies, transferring eligible preventive maintenance (PM) expenses from the operating budget to the capital budget, and finding a potential replacement for federal SmartBenefits revenue. WMATA has found \$95 million more in one-time savings than was originally forecasted when the FY 2024 budget was approved and identified \$50 million in additional cost savings for FY 2025. These are somewhat reduced by a \$45 million forecast adjustment to FY 2024 revenues.

WMATA has provided three budget scenarios at various levels of PM expense transfers. It is important to recognize that while it is a potential tool to close the operating gap, transferring additional PM expenses will bring the anticipated exhaustion year of dedicated capital funding bond capacity forward to FY 2028 or earlier instead of FY 2029. The three scenarios are:

- **Scenario A:** Returning to a historic level of PM transfer (\$60 million) revises the FY 2025 deficit forecast to \$650 million.
- **Scenario B:** Maintaining the FY 2024 level of PM transfer (\$199 million) revises the FY 2025 deficit forecast to \$510 million.
- **Scenario C:** Increasing to the maximum allowable PM transfer (\$345 million) revises the FY 2025 deficit forecast to \$365 million.

Additional possibilities that cannot be counted on – like a reduced level of inflation and a potential replacement for federal SmartBenefits revenues – could reduce the gap further.

The presentation lays out additional background about foregone subsidy to WMATA that was a result of: 1) the [revised FY 2021 operating budget](#) which lowered the total jurisdictional operating subsidy by \$135 million; and 2) [not increasing the base subsidy by 3% in FY 2022](#). The presentation lays out that in order to avoid service cuts, the 3% subsidy growth cap in Maryland and Virginia will need a one-time adjustment of baseline subsidy in FY 2025. The presentation notes that there are significant timing challenges to advancing legislation in Virginia and Maryland while going through the regular WMATA budget process.

▪ Agency Safety Plan Approval

On September 14, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation from staff seeking WMATA Board approval to send [Metro's Agency Safety Plan \(ASP\)](#) to the Washington Metropolitan Safety Commission (WMSC) for final approval. The WMATA Board is required to review and approve the ASP annually. The ASP specifies how the Safety Management System (SMS) will be implemented over the course of a multi-year period and is a requirement for federal funding under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Grants. SMS is a comprehensive, collaborative approach that brings management and labor together to build on the transit industry's existing safety foundation to continuously improve how safety risks are identified and assessed with mitigating actions taken before an accident or incident occurs.

There were several updates made to this year's plan including:

- **Regulatory Changes:** establishing a risk reduction program that includes efforts to reduce bus operator accidents and transit worker assaults.
- **SMS Implementation Progress:** completion of 2022-2023 milestones, establishment of safety committees and safety risk management process flow, and the launch of the incident management framework.
- **Solicitation of Feedback:** incorporating feedback solicited from Metro employees, the Joint Labor and Management Safety Committee (JLMSC), Executive Safety Committee (ESC), FTA, WMSC, and Senior Executive Team (SET).

Following WMSC approval, WMATA must self-certify that it complies with federal safety requirements in the FTA's transit award management system while continuing to build and implement the Safety Management System based on the plan.

- Red Line Winter Shutdowns

On September 14, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation on the [shutdown of four stations on the Red Line](#) to address critical capital improvements. Farragut North, Metro Center and Gallery Place will be closed from December 18-30, 2023, and Judiciary Square will be closed from December 22-24, 2023. The Blue, Orange and Silver Lines will continue to operate at Metro Center and the Green and Yellow Lines will continue to operate at Gallery Place. The shutdown is necessary to repair structural issues that span both tracks and will consist of "beam repairs to address spalling concrete and delamination due to water intrusion." While the shutdown is active Metro will take care of additional work needed in that area like installing radio fiber optic cable. This timeframe in December was chosen as the best time to complete this work because ridership is 40% less during this period. In October, staff will release the travel alternatives, followed by community and partner outreach in November.

**Figure 2: Red Line Shutdown Map – December 18-30, 2023**



Image Courtesy of Metro

Source: [WMATA Safety and Committee Meeting – September 14, 2023](#)



- FY 2023 Metro Performance Report

On September 28, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation on [Metro's FY 2023 Performance Report](#). Ridership has continued to trend upwards and has increased by approximately 40% in FY 2023 compared to FY 2022 (Figure 3). FY 2023 Quarter 4 brought the highest ridership numbers since the pandemic. An average weekday (defined as Tuesday-Thursday) brought an average of 753,000 trips, with a September 20 record of 832,000 trips. The Silver Line Extension has received over 2.8 million passenger trips since its opening last November, while the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station has received over 270,000 entries and exits since the May 19 opening.

**Figure 3: Systemwide Ridership**

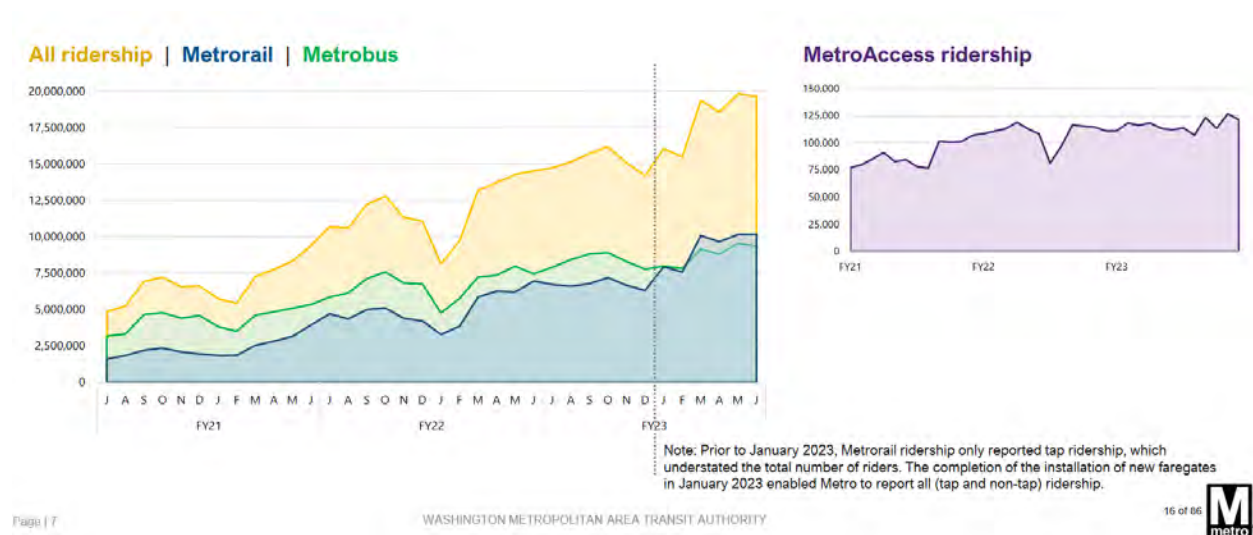


Image Courtesy of Metro

Source: [WMATA Safety and Committee Meeting – September 28, 2023](#)

Metrorail saw its highest levels of customer satisfaction since 2013, while Metrobus and MetroAccess customer satisfaction remained steady. Increased customer satisfaction on Metrorail is driven by frequent service as 98% of rail trips have gotten faster in FY 2023 and increased police presence to address safety concerns. Part 1 crime (crimes against persons and crimes against property) fell 20% from February 2023 to June 2023. Furthermore, officers issued more than five times the number of citations for fare evasion in FY 2023 compared to FY 2022.

- Acceptance of Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Report

On September 28, the Executive Committee [accepted the Office of the Inspector General's \(OIG\) Evaluation Report – Review of WMATA's 7000 Series Rail Car Cannibalization for Spare Parts](#). The report originated from concerns raised by the previous chief mechanical officer and assessed the effectiveness of the cannibalization of two 7000-series rail cars for spare parts.

- Crystal City Metrorail East Entrance

On September 28, the Project and Design Management Office sought WMATA Board approval [to authorize the general manager/CEO or other designee to negotiate and execute a reimbursable agreement with Arlington County](#) to fully support the design and construction of a new east entrance at the Crystal City Metrorail Station.

- Customer Experience Improvements

On September 14, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation on [plans to enhance the customer experience](#). Metro's customer experience strategy is focused on building brand awareness and targeting the various stages of a customer's travel journey from considering Metro as a travel option to post-travel (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Customer Mapping Journey**

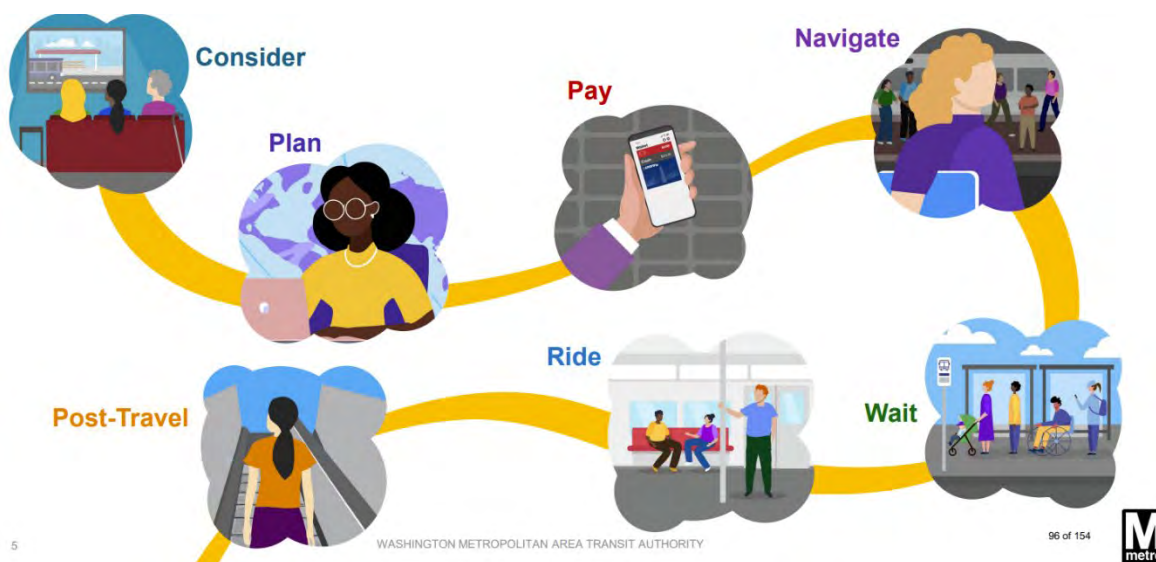


Image Courtesy of Metro

Source: [WMATA Safety and Operations Committee – September 14, 2023](#)

WMATA will enhance the recently launched [MetroPulse](#) platform to include Metrobus, mobile app and real-time customer service interactions well as real-time MetroAccess vehicle tracking. The Metro team is also looking to revise the Metrorail and Metrobus maps to include VRE, MARC, the Purple Line, regional buses and bikeshare to create a comprehensive regional transportation network. Improvements to fare payment will include establishing more customer friendly policies and fare modernization efforts like fare capping, tapping credit cards to pay fares, and next-generation account management. This year, WMATA will also begin installing fareboxes and implement rear-door boarding to allow customers to board the buses from the front and rear door.

The Metro team is also looking to create signage and wayfinding systems that are inclusive to all riders by studying worldwide best practices from places like New York City, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and across Norway. Digital and static signage will be improved to make riding Metro easier to

navigate and there will be more integration with partner services and connections to local airports.

WMATA introduced a pilot in September at L'Enfant Plaza with new signage that will include a larger font, cardinal travel direction and improved accessibility directions (Figure 5). There will also be neighborhood/landmark maps that will include walking estimates, landmarks, bus and rail connections and clearer directions on exiting Metro. By November 2023, there will be upgraded passenger information displays at Gallery Place, Metro Center, L'Enfant Plaza, Bethesda, Union Station and Reagan National Airport. There will also be an updated Intermodal service map, a new Metrobus line and neighborhood map and a Beta version of [MetroPulse](#) app this winter.

**Figure 5: Current and Pilot Signage**

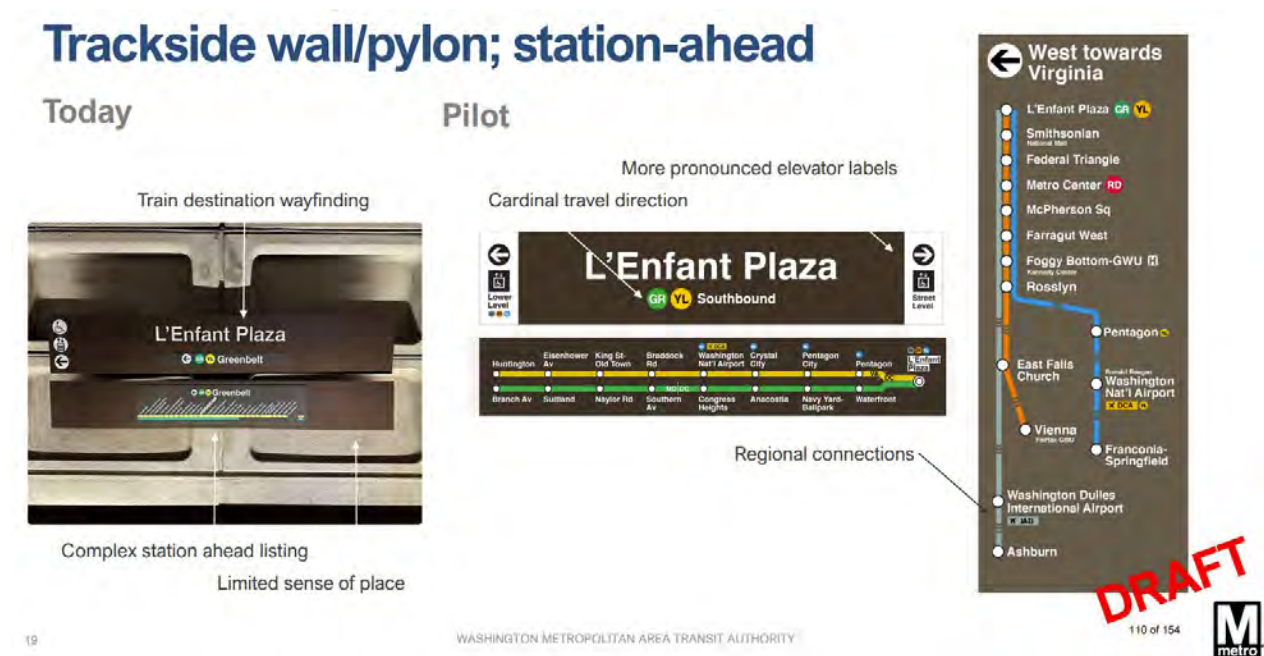


Image Courtesy of Metro

Source: [WMATA Safety and Operations Committee – September 14, 2023](#)

## ■ Rail Automation Update

On September 14, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation on [Metro's progress in retuning to automatic train operations \(ATO\)](#). Through initial planning and inception, Metro was designed to operate utilizing ATO. Metro intends to go back to ATO under Grade of Automation 2, where starting and stopping are automated, but the driver operates the doors, drives the train if needed and handles emergencies. WMATA staff have highlighted that ATO increases Metro's safety goals and will lead to a decrease in red signal overturns which are the result of human error. It also provides energy saving enhancements through optimized acceleration and braking.

The Metro team is accelerating automatic door operations (ADO) ahead of ATO to deliver safety and customer experience improvements. Staff concluded the first phase of integrated testing

this summer. Based on the results, Metro will be operationally ready, with the concurrence of the WMSC, to reintroduce automatic door openings first on the Red Line in October 2023. The ATO schedule is being adjusted to permit learning from testing, training, and procedural documentation, consistent with Metro's Concept of Operations and Readiness Plans. This will also include conducting a comprehensive review of system design and operations in sessions with the WMSC. With concurrence from the WMSC, Metro will begin demonstrating ATO in passenger service on the Red Line early in 2024.

- Better Bus: Modernizing the Customer Experience

On September 14, the Safety and Operations Committee received a presentation from staff on the on various projects to [modernize the bus customer experience under the Better Bus Initiative](#). These projects will include improving bus stops and shelters, making connections across all transit providers simple and easy, and developing a Metrobus route naming system that is simple and that aligns with a customer-focused bus network.

### **Bus Stops and Shelters**

While some jurisdictional partners have their own guidelines for bus stop amenities and designs, Metro sees an opportunity to develop a regional standard for bus stops amenities and designs, regardless of the transit provider. Standardization would include signage and real-time information, accessibility, light and other safety/security elements and shelters, seating, and other amenities. Through the National Capital Region Bus Leaders Committee, which includes jurisdictional partners in the region, Metro will share best practices from around the country and facilitate discussions on how to move towards a shared regional bus stop and amenities standard.

### **Transit Connections across Regional Transit Providers**

There are nine different bus providers that operate in Metro's service area, not including commuter buses as well as two commuter rail systems. With so many regional transit providers, Metro is seeking to simplify connections between providers as much as possible. This would include signage, maps, real time information, wayfinding and utilizing apps. Metro is conducting customer research to understand customers' preferences for signage, real-time information and wayfinding at transit stations served by more than one transit provider. Once the research is complete, the Metro team will use the findings to improve the customer's travel experience in navigating the region's interconnected transit systems.

### **Metrobus Route Naming**

As a part of WMATA's bus network redesign, staff are looking at renaming routes across the region to allow for practical and easy recognition. In Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, bus routes are all named differently with no uniformity or standard. Customer research found that when naming routes, states are easiest to understand and learn (as in the first letter of each state) and streets provide the most useful information, but three-digit route names are harder to remember.

Through analyzing best practices from peers across the industry, it was found that there is not a single approach to route renaming. Route names can be based on geography, frequency or type of service. Customer research found that riders find the current route names difficult to understand and hard to remember and are open to changing route names. WMATA has developed two options to address this: using street names where possible and organizing routes by state.

The first option would name frequent service network routes after street with letter or number suffixes for branches and “X” suffixes for limited-stop overlays. All other routes use one-letter state prefixes followed by number from 1 to 99. The second option would organize all routes by state, and within each state, further sort them using a number tied to geography. Frequent service network routes feature one-letter state prefixes followed by numbers at the lower end of the 1 to 99 range and “X” prefixes for limited-stop overlays. All other routes would use one-letter state prefixes followed by numbers at the higher end of the 1 to 99 range. WMATA launched a survey in September to receive additional feedback on these two options.

## **B. Report from the Chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee**

The [NVTC WMATA Committee met on September 21](#) and received an update from NVTC staff on the NVTC’s Metro Operating Funding and Reform Working Group and on Metrobus service and subsidy trends in Virginia.

### Update from the Metro Operating Funding and Reform Working Group

NVTC staff provided the preliminary findings and recommendations of NVTC’s Metro Operating Funding and Reform Working Group to the committee. The purpose of the working group is to examine the structural funding challenges at Metro, identify opportunities for better transparency and oversight of Metro, and examine potential funding sources for future consideration as Virginia as the region tackles Metro’s long-standing need for dedicated operating funding. Depending on how the WMATA Board and the region choose to solve the immediate operating budget gaps, the menu of revenue sources developed by the working group could also be used for additional dedicated capital funding.

The menu of 10 revenues options identified by the working group, along with preliminary revenue estimates, will be presented at the October 19 joint meeting of the NVTC Legislative and Policy and WMATA Committees. Revenue estimates and findings will be documented in a “Working Group Technical Report” and will inform the recommendations in the 2023 “Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA” which the Commission is scheduled to approve at its December meeting.



The Working Group's Findings and Recommendations have been organized into five categories:

- Structural Cost Growth
- Operational and Financial Accountability
- Oversight
- Structural Funding Deficit
- Capital and Other

Key Preliminary Working Group Findings to highlight include:

- When compared to peer agencies, Metro performs above average on measures of transparency and publicly available information on its website.
- The legislative 3% operating cap is a useful tool in controlling costs and protecting NVTC member jurisdictions, but it is based on a pre-pandemic financial model and has resulted in unintended consequences. It has altered Metro's subsidy allocation process in a way that distorts the amount of subsidy owed from the amount of service received.
- Both jurisdictional subsidies as well as Metrorail and Metrobus fares have not kept up with inflation.
- Cost savings, fare increases, and service reductions are important tools for Metro to consider, but the size of the operating gap is such that it cannot be closed without new revenues.

Key Preliminary Annual Report Recommendations to highlight include:

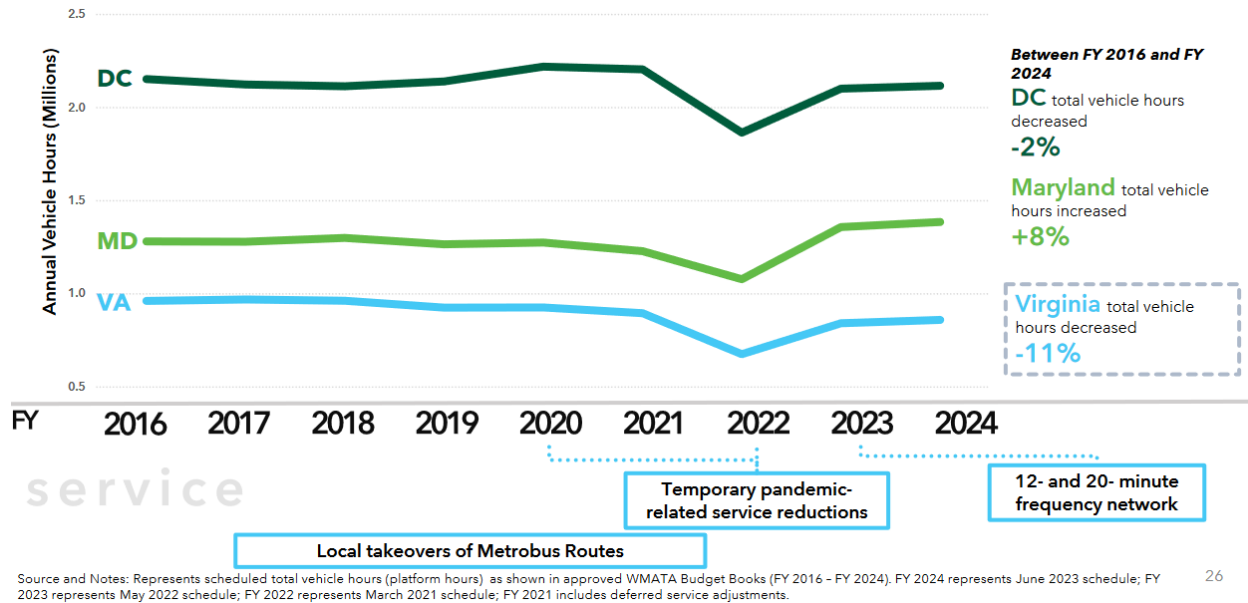
- The legislative 3% operating cap should be revised to reflect a new operating funding structure and address the unintended consequences of the current cap.
- Through collective bargaining, WMATA should seek to manage labor cost escalation through reforms to pension and OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) that are in alignment with national averages
- Securing one or more sustainable and reliable sources of dedicated revenues to support transit operating and/or capital in the Northern Virginia Transportation District, including Metro.

#### Updated Metrobus Service and Subsidy Trends

NVTC staff provided an update on Metrobus service and subsidy trends from FY 2016 to FY 2024. During this period, Metrobus service was impacted by the pandemic and subsequent recovery and restoration of service. During this time, Virginia has seen an 11% decrease in Metrobus service, due in part to local service takeovers and a reallocation of service across the region that responds to post-pandemic shifting travel patterns.



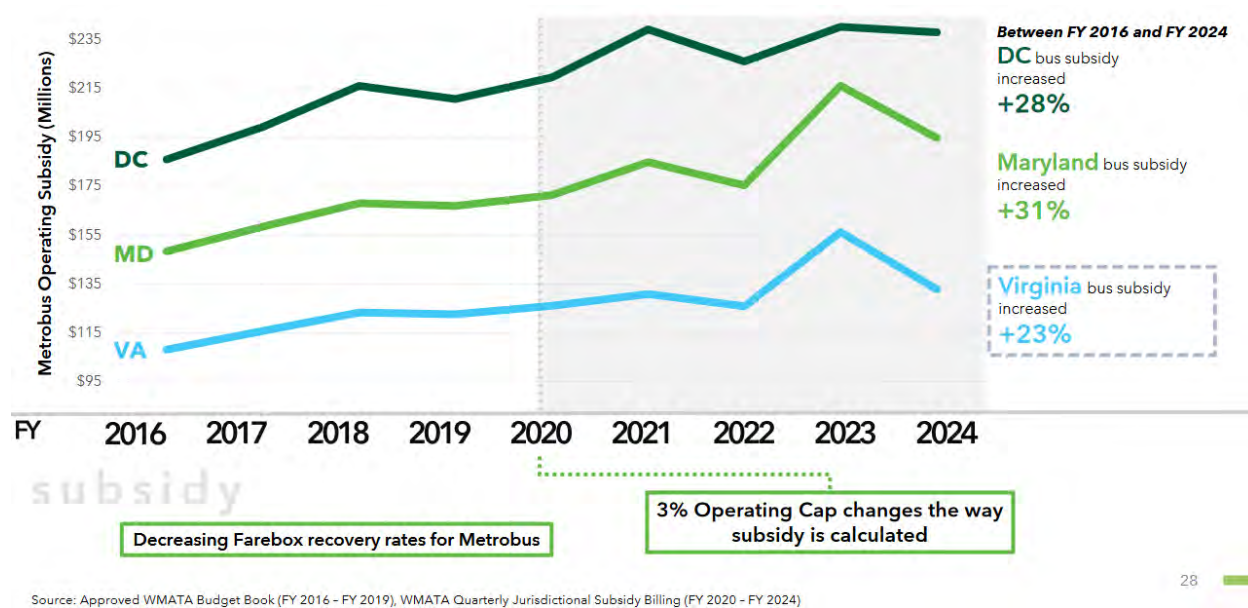
**Figure 6: Metrobus Service from FY 2016 to FY 2024**



Source: [NVTC WMATA Committee Presentation, September 21, 2023.](#)

During the same period, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia all paid more in Metrobus operating subsidies; Virginia's subsidy increased by 23%. Overall, Virginia has paid more for less service. This is due in some part to the unintended consequences of the 3% operating cap, which is distorting the relationship between subsidy and service.

**Figure 7: Metrobus Service from FY 2016 to FY 2024**



Source: [NVTC WMATA Committee Presentation, September 21, 2023.](#)

NVTC staff will update this analysis each year.

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice, Monique Blyther and Matt Friedman  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Marketing Campaign Update

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At the October meeting the Commission will be updated on the performance of the regional “Ride With Us” marketing campaign, including insights on the performance of the campaign and any related trends in ridership.

This summer NVTC launched its fourth regional marketing campaign in support of the opening of the Potomac Yard-VT Station and the reopening of the Yellow Line Bridge/Tunnel. The campaign featured a rebranding of the [NoVaRides.org](https://NoVaRides.org) English and Spanish language webpage, and featured radio, digital, streaming, event sponsorship and social ads on over a dozen platforms. New this year, NVTC dramatically expanded advertising on the number of radio stations from two to 15 stations. The expanded reach engaged wider audiences including minority and Spanish-speaking communities.

Funding for this campaign was provided by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and NVTC’s local partners, the City of Alexandria, counties of Arlington and Fairfax, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

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At the October meeting, the Commission will be briefed by the VRE CEO on recent VRE activities and will take action to forward VRE's FY 2025 Budget to the jurisdictions.

**A. VRE CEO Report and Minutes**

VRE Chief Executive Officer Rich Dalton will provide his report on recent VRE activities. The [VRE CEO Report for September 2023](#) and the [Minutes of the September 15, 2023 VRE Operations Board meeting](#) are attached.

**B. ACTION: Approve [Resolution #2505: Authorize the Referral of the Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Participating and Contributing Jurisdictions](#)**

On the recommendation by the VRE Operations Board, the Commission will be asked to approve [Resolution #2505](#), which will authorize the referral of the preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the jurisdictions for review and comment. The [attached presentation slides from the Operations Board meeting](#) provide an overview of the budget.

A final balanced FY 2025 budget will be submitted in December for the Operations Board's consideration and referral to the Commissions for approval. Projections of both revenues and expenses are still under review by VRE staff and may change materially based on updated ridership trends, macroeconomic conditions, contractual cost drivers, or policy changes. The final FY 2025 budget (which will include an amended FY 2024 budget) will ensure VRE can continue to provide safe and reliable rail service, to meet its commitments to the Commonwealth as part of the TRV program, and to equitably share the costs of service among riders, local jurisdictions, the Commonwealth.

**VRE Preliminary FY 2025 Operating Budget**

VRE's preliminary FY 2025 operating budget totals \$119.9 million, which includes operations, maintenance and existing debt service. This is an increase of \$11.0 million or 10% over the approved FY 2024 operating budget. In addition to continuing VRE's existing weekday rail service, the proposed budget provides for the first-ever operation of VRE weekend service. The preliminary operating budget includes a total jurisdictional subsidy of \$18.3 million and a proposed 5% fare increase as well as other changes to simplify fares. VRE's last broad-based fare increase was 3% in FY 2020. Approximately \$38 million of pandemic relief funding (from the American Rescue Plan Act) is projected to be utilized in the preliminary FY 2025 operating budget.

VRE staff will review and update all expense and revenue assumptions as the budget process moves forward, particularly for potential departmental expense reductions. The attached chart [FY 2025 Preliminary Sources and Uses](#) covers both VRE's operating and capital budgets.

### **Proposed Fare Changes and Public Hearings**

VRE's fares are based on distance traveled, with most riders boarding in the morning at an 'outer' zone (Zones 3 through 9) station and disembarking at an 'inner' zone (Zones 1 and 2) station, and then reversing that trip in the afternoon. In addition to single-ride and day passes, riders can also purchase multi-ride tickets that offer a discounted fare. As described in VRE's Tariff, the 10-ride pass for any given zone pair is priced at 8% less than ten corresponding single-ride tickets. Similarly, the five-day pass is priced at a 20% discount, and the monthly pass is priced at a 34% discount (assuming 42 trips per month).

VRE's last fare increase was in 2018 and implemented in FY 2020. In the five years since that 3% fare increase, inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) has reduced the purchasing power of every dollar of fare revenue by more than 18%. While avoiding fare increases during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was an understandable response, the significant inflation in 2021 and 2022 has many agencies now weighing how best to raise revenue while also not turning off new and returning riders.

In looking at potential fare changes for FY 2025, VRE has considered peer commuter rail experience, feedback from customers, pricing in competing modes, and the overall financial needs of the organization. One theme that has emerged is "simplification," with agencies reducing the number of unique ticket types, eliminating underutilized fare options, and generally working to make the fare buying process quick and easy for the rider. The proposals for FY 2025 below are likely only a first step as more feedback is gathered and additional changes are considered in future years.

- a) **Permanent reduced fare in zones 1-3:** VRE has been temporarily offering a reduced fare for riders making shorter trips that both start and end in zones 1, 2, or 3. This \$5.00 flat one-way fare (with corresponding reduced price multiride tickets) was originally offered as a mitigation for the Metrorail Yellow Line shutdown and then was extended as a promotional effort. Based on positive rider response, the \$5.00 reduced fare would be made permanent.
- b) **Increase base one-way fares by 5%:** For all trips that either start or end outside zones 1-3, the current zone pricing structure would be maintained with all base one-way fares increased by 5% (rounded to the nearest \$0.05). For a passenger currently paying a \$10.00 fare – which is the single-ride price for a trip from Quantico or Manassas into Washington DC and is also approximately the average fare paid across all riders – the cost would increase by \$0.50.
- c) **Eliminate 7-day pass:** The 7-day or weekly pass has historically been the least-used multi-ride VRE product, and given changed travel patterns since the pandemic, its use has fallen even further. For riders who don't travel enough to justify a monthly pass, the

10-trip pass is usually a better and more flexible option than the 7-day pass. Eliminating the 7-day pass will simplify fare purchasing for customers with little loss of value.

- d) **Kids Under 18 Ride Free:** VRE currently allows children 10 and under to ride free with a fare paying adult, while youth riders between 11 and 18 can purchase discounted tickets once they have a reduced fare ID. To simplify administration costs for staff while also encouraging riders on the new weekend service, this preliminary budget proposes that children 18 and under can ride free with a fare paying adult. If approved, the specific policy may be adopted to allow more than one child to ride with a paying parent or guardian, while prohibiting (for example) large groups of unrelated children to ride for free with a single adult.

Regarding weekend fares, the peer experience with pricing varies widely. Some agencies offer no discount relative to weekday service, while others offer discounts or shift to a flat fare (rather than distanced-based) to encourage ridership. Given that many specifics of the proposed Saturday service in FY 2025 remain to be determined, this budget assumes that weekend fares will be the same as weekday fares. However, it is expected that promotional fares of some kind will be in place when the Saturday service is inaugurated, and the information gained from the initial service will inform future recommendations from staff to the Operations Board regarding potentially permanent changes to weekend fares.

VRE staff are also working with Amtrak and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) to bring back the Amtrak Step-Up program, which was suspended during the pandemic. This program allows riders holding a VRE multiride ticket to pay an additional fee and ride certain Amtrak trains within the VRE service area. VRE has received funding through the regional Commuter Choice program to support a reduction in the passenger-facing cost of this program. Prior to the pandemic, the cost to the passenger for an Amtrak Step-Up ticket was \$8.00. The new cost once the program has been reinstated has not been finalized, but it is expected to be substantially lower.

VRE staff plan to host both in-person and online/electronic public hearings to explain the budget proposal and solicit comments on the fare changes and other aspects of the budget. These hearings would be announced in newspapers and in various electronic and social media outlets. The hearings would be the centerpiece of a broader communication effort and public comment period lasting a minimum of 30 days in which VRE would reach out to the public through various channels and request feedback.

### **VRE Preliminary FY 2025 Capital Budget**

VRE's preliminary FY 2025 capital budget includes commitments of \$70.2 million from federal, state, regional and local funding sources towards the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). VRE continues to work closely with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVRTA) to advance capital projects that are critical to the Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) program and to expanding commuter and intercity rail across the Commonwealth. The CIP will be updated during the budget process as project schedules and cost estimates are refined.

In accordance with the Funding Agreement between VRE and VPRA, VRE's \$15 million of annual dedicated Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (CROC) funding in FY 2025 will support \$7.5 million of principal and interest payments on the Series 2022 Bonds and \$7.5 million of contributions to VPRA in support of the Long Bridge project.

The [attached VRE memorandum](#) provides more information about capital funding, as well as summaries of the key budget issues for FY 2025:

- Saturday Service
- Ridership and Fare Revenue
- Jurisdictional Subsidy
- State Assistance for Operating and Capital
- Operating Expenses and Cost Growth
- Pandemic Relief Funds



# CEO REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2023



# OUR MISSION

The Virginia Railway Express, a joint project of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission, will provide safe, cost-effective, accessible, reliable, convenient, and customer responsive commuter-oriented rail passenger service. VRE contributes to the economic vitality of its member jurisdictions as an integral part of a balanced, intermodal regional transportation system.





CEO REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2023

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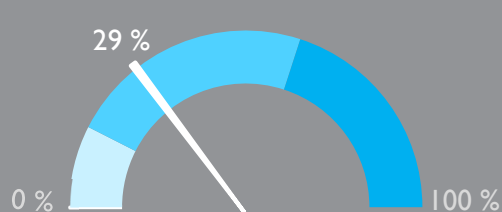
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VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
A better way. A better life.

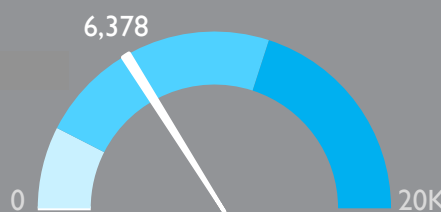


# PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE



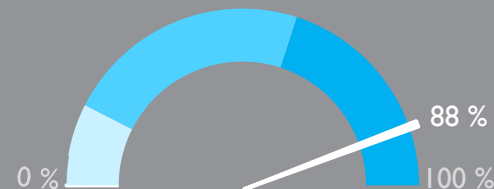
PARKING  
UTILIZATION

The total number of parking spaces used in the VRE system during the month, divided by the total number of parking spaces available.



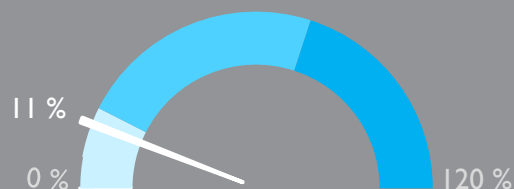
AVERAGE DAILY  
RIDERSHIP

The average number of boardings each operating day inclusive of Amtrak Step-Up boardings and reduced, "S" schedule, service.  
Same month, previous year: 5,125



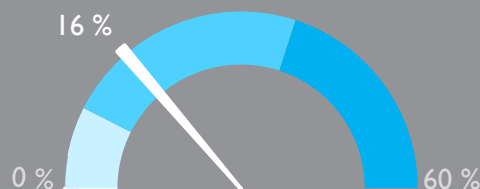
ON-TIME  
PERFORMANCE

Percent of trains arriving at their destination within 5 minutes of the schedule.  
Same month, previous year: 92%



SYSTEM CAPACITY

The percentage of peak hour train seats occupied. The calculation excludes reverse flow and non-peak hour trains.



OPERATING RATIO

*Through June 2023*

Year-to-date operating revenues divided by year-to-date operating expenses, which represents the share of operating costs paid by the riders.

**August 2023**

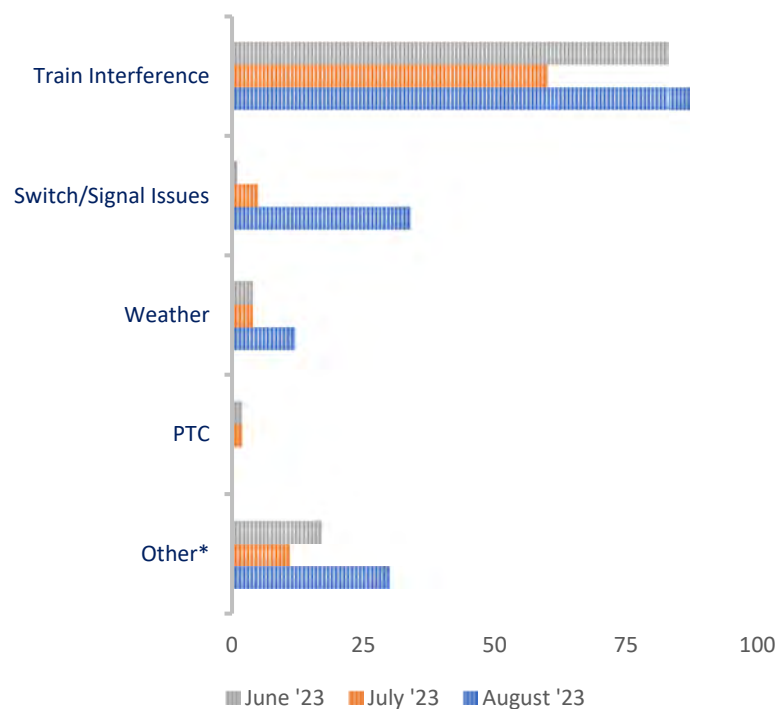


# ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

## OUR RECORD

	August 2023	July 2023	August 2022
Manassas Line	72%	68%	78%
Fredericksburg Line	85%	75%	82%
Systemwide	78%	71%	80%

## PRIMARY REASON FOR DELAY



VRE operated 724 trains in August. The on-time rate for the month was 78 percent.

One hundred fifty-six trains arrived more than 5 minutes late to their final destinations. Of those late trains, 99 were on the Manassas Line (63 percent), and 57 were on the Fredericksburg Line (37 percent).

\*Includes trains that were delayed due to operational testing and passenger handling.

## LATE TRAINS

	System Wide			Fredericksburg Line			Manassas Line		
	June	July	August	June	July	August	June	July	August
Total late trains	82	163	156	34	73	57	48	90	99
Average minutes late	14	19	24	16	19	18	13	20	27
Number over 30 minutes	4	27	33	3	11	10	1	16	28
Heat restrictions	7	12	4	7	12	4	0	0	0



# ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

## VRE SYSTEM



## FREDERICKSBURG LINE



## MANASSAS LINE



# AVERAGE DAILY RIDERSHIP

## VRE SYSTEM



## FREDERICKSBURG LINE



## MANASSAS LINE



## RIDERSHIP UPDATES

Average daily ridership for the month was 6,378.  
There were 23 full-service days.

	August 2023	July 2023	August 2022
Monthly Ridership	146,686	117,958	117,880
Average Daily Ridership	6,378	5,898	5,125
Bicycles on Trains	1,706	1,066	N/A
Full Service Days	23	18	23
"S" Service Days	0	2	0

## SUMMONSES ISSUED

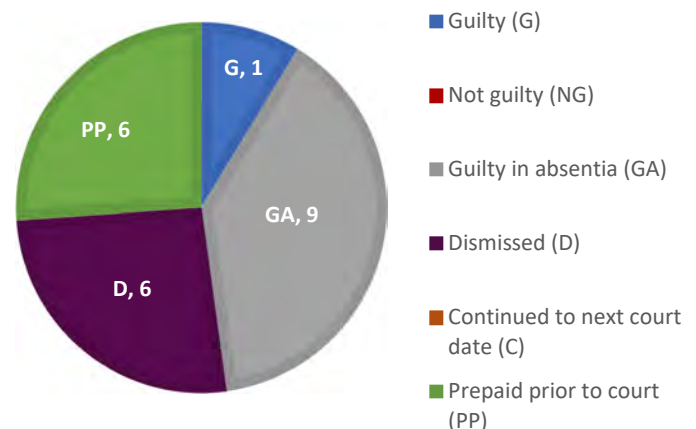
### VRE SYSTEM



## SUMMONSES WAIVED OUTSIDE OF COURT

Reason for Dismissal	Occurrences
Passenger showed proof of a monthly ticket	1
One-time courtesy	4
Per the request of the conductor	0
Defective ticket	0
Per ops manager	0
Unique circumstances	0
Insufficient information	0
Lost and found ticket	0
Other	0
<b>Total Waived</b>	<b>5</b>

## MONTHLY SUMMONSES COURT ACTION

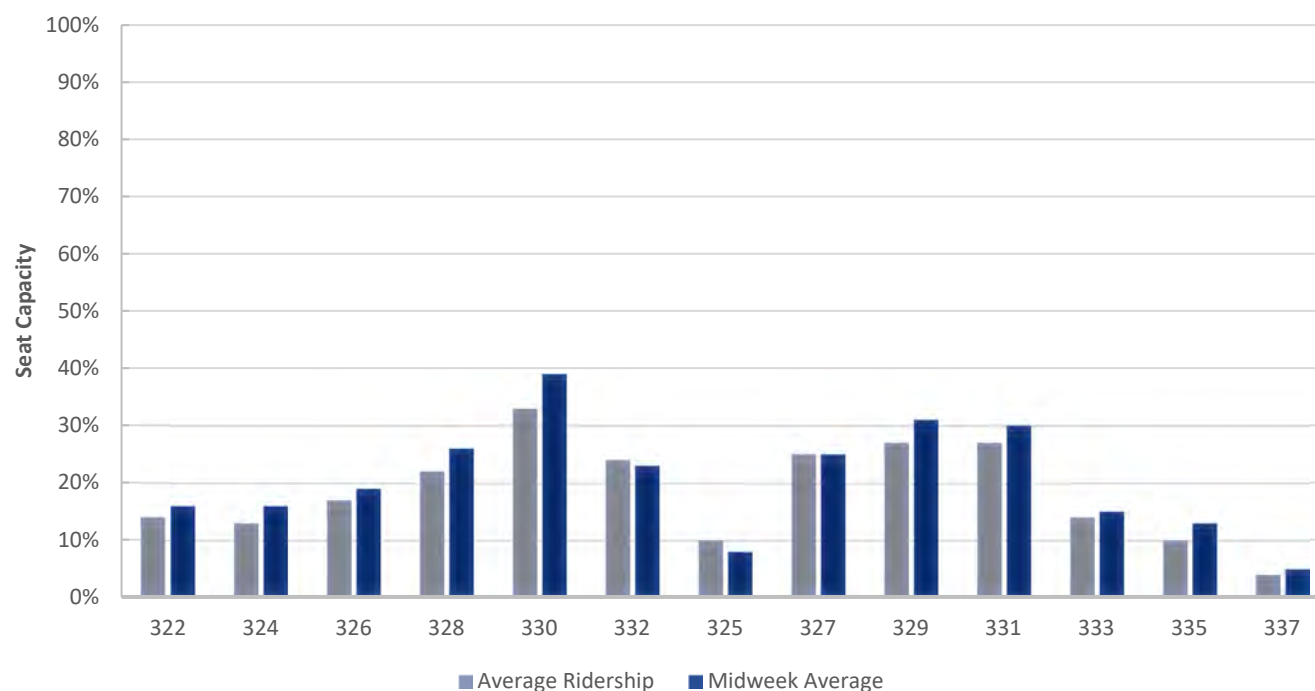


# TRAIN UTILIZATION

## FREDERICKSBURG LINE

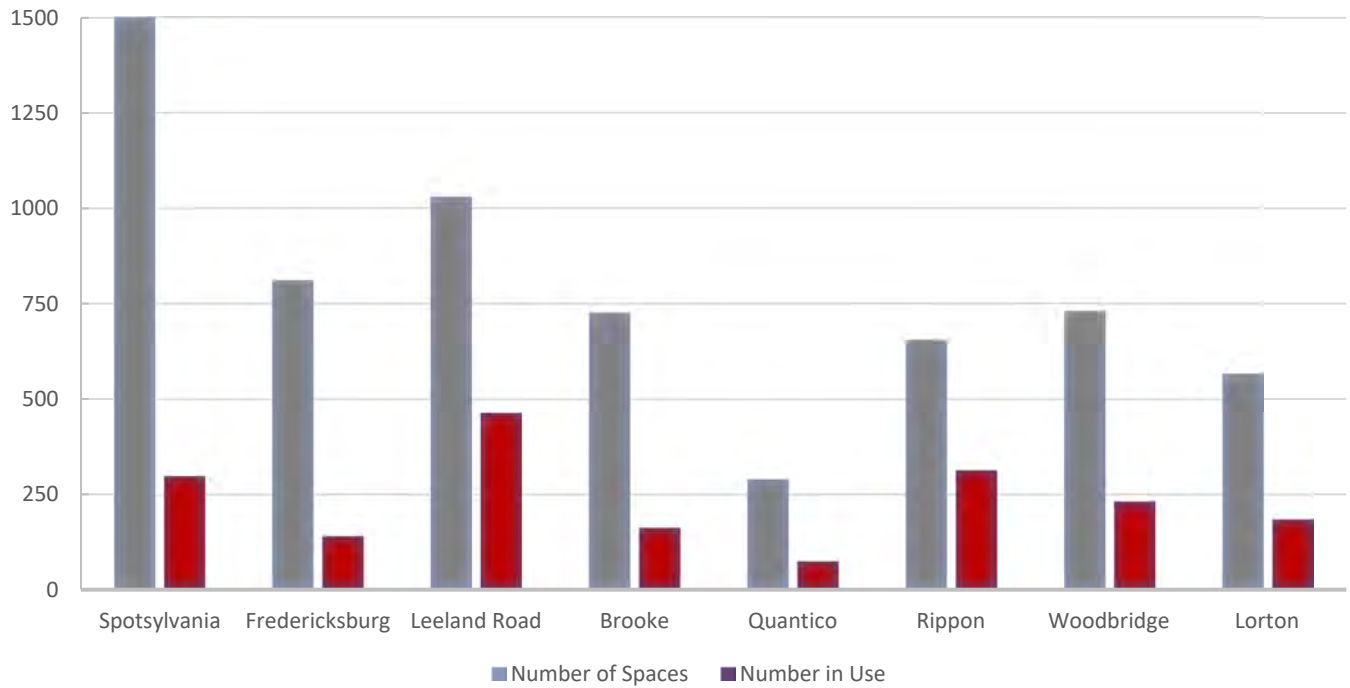


## MANASSAS LINE

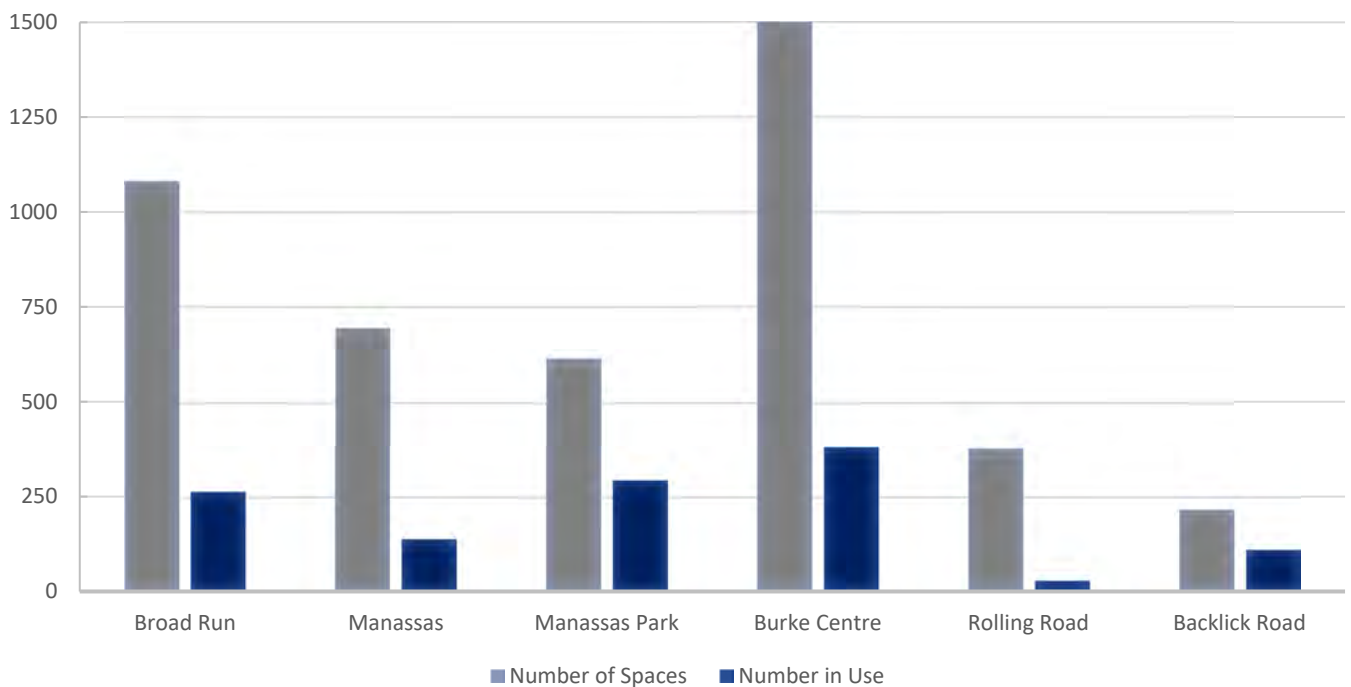


## PARKING UTILIZATION

### FREDERICKSBURG LINE



### MANASSAS LINE





# FACILITIES UPDATE

The following is a status update of VRE facilities projects.

Completed projects:

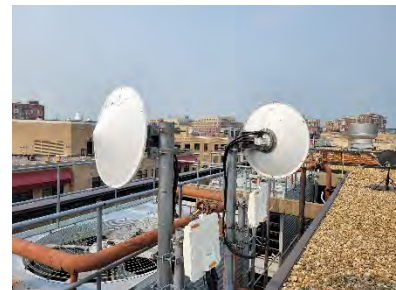
1. Painting of L'Enfant station
2. Replacement of VRE parking lot entrance signs at Broad Run station



*New sign at Broad Run station*

Projects scheduled to be completed this quarter:

1. Replacement of existing lighting with LED lighting on west platform at Woodbridge station
2. Installation of bird control netting at Rolling Road station
3. Replacement of electrical cabinet at Rolling Road station
4. Replacement/installation of pathfinder signage for Franconia-Springfield, Lorton, Woodbridge, Rippon, Quantico, Backlick Road, Rolling Road, Burke Centre, Manassas Park, Manassas and Broad Run stations
5. Installation of 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline signage on station inter-track fences, pending availability of CSX protection
6. Installation of No Trespassing signage at Rippon, Spotsylvania and Broad Run station parking lots
7. Installation of electric meter for two-way radio antenna system in Old Town Alexandria



*Two-way radio antennas in Old Town*

Projects scheduled to be initiated this quarter:

1. Minor repairs to concrete platform at Alexandria station
2. Replacement of lighting inverter on west platform at Woodbridge station
3. Replacement of LED lighting at Woodbridge station parking garage
4. Replacement of windscreen plexiglass panels at Lorton and Woodbridge stations
5. Improvements to various elements of Quantico station building
6. Replacement of existing lighting with LED lighting at Manassas station parking garage
7. Sealcoating and restriping of parking lots at Brooke and Broad Run stations
8. Repairs to steel railings at Brooke, Backlick Road, Burke Centre and Manassas Park stations

Ongoing projects:

1. Minor structural concrete repairs at Woodbridge station parking garage
2. Modernization of east elevator at Woodbridge station
3. Procurement of construction contract for L'Enfant station waiting area project, pending permit issuance
4. Replacement of parking lot entrance signs at various stations

## UPCOMING PROCUREMENTS

1. Modernization of VRE Woodbridge station east elevator
2. Construction Management Services for Alexandria Station improvements
3. Construction of Alexandria Station improvements
4. Broad Run and Crossroads security camera system power and network infrastructure upgrade
5. Locomotive master controllers
6. Variable messaging system replacement
7. Facility security services
8. Window gaskets for VRE railcars
9. Central diagnostic cloud services for VRE locomotives

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Project Name	Project Description	Current Phase	Budget	Project Notes
Alexandria Station Improvements	Passenger safety will be improved by replacing an at-grade pedestrian track crossing with elevators to connect the two platforms. The elevators and the current and proposed stairs, will connect to the existing tunnel between the two platforms. Adjustments to platform elevation will eliminate the need for step-boxes to access VRE and Amtrak trains. The center platform will be widened and lengthened to accommodate trains on both tracks.	Final Design	\$ 37,288,433.00	Coordinating potential minor adjustments to CSXT 60% track plans and 30% bridge plans in the vicinity of VRE platforms. Upon resolution, VRE plans to be updated. (August/September)
Broad Run Expansion	To accommodate forecasted ridership growth and increase service reliability, improvements are needed at both the Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) and station. An enlarged MSF can store longer trains and additional equipment. That requires shifting the existing platform and adding a pedestrian tunnel between the platform and existing and proposed parking lots. A second, 600-space lot and third main track will be constructed.	Final Design	\$ 139,381,862.00	Reviewing 60% design package. Stakeholder coordination continues as final design efforts advance. (August/September)
Brooke Station Improvements	Design and construction of a platform extension up to 700 feet to accommodate full-length VRE trains.	Development	\$ 9,461,455.00	VRE has reengaged this project and returned it to the CIP budget for future years. Project schedule updates pending input from various stakeholders. (August/September)
Crystal City Station Improvements	Improved station access and service reliability will result from a new station. The platform at the relocated station will allow for the simultaneous boarding of two full-length trains. The station's design will accommodate a future pedestrian/bicycle connection between the station and the airport.	Development	\$ 68,900,900.00	VRE advancing station design to 60%. Coordination ongoing with JBG, Amtrak, CSXT and VPRA. (August/September)
Franconia-Springfield Station Improvements	Extended platforms will be able to accommodate eight-car trains, eliminating the need for passengers near the rear to move to a different railcar when disembarking. Enhanced passenger safety and reduced station dwell times will result. The longer platforms will increase operational flexibility and capacity. The design will allow for a future third mainline track.	Final Design	\$ 25,351,100.00	Survey and soil borings performed. Data to be analyzed and used to advance design. Concurrently working through the Section 106 process. (August/September)

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Project Name	Project Description	Current Phase	Budget	Project Notes
Fredericksburg Station Rehabilitation	The rehabilitation of platforms, stairs and bridges will improve passenger safety and better accommodate the boarding and disembarking of riders from VRE and Amtrak trains. New stairs will allow passengers to move between the platform and a parking lot without crossing the street at grade level. New signage, sidewalks, lighting and paint are included, as is installation of a low-clearance warning sign to a bridge that has experienced numerous vehicle strikes.	Construction	\$ 11,480,622.00	Concrete repair/coatings ongoing. Sandblasting/painting at station ongoing. Demo/formwork of existing east platform progressing. (August/September)
HQ Office Renovations	The project will improve employee safety and security and maximize workspace efficiency at VRE Headquarters, and will include modifications to kitchen, supply room, mail room, bathroom/shower, office and cubicle areas in the north and south wings. The east wing will be modified to include additional offices.	Construction	\$ 250,000.00	Researching available systems for review with upper management. Planning glass wall-enclosed work/meeting spaces adjacent to communications room. (August/September)
Leeland Road Parking Improvements	This project will expand the surface parking lot at the Leeland Road station by approximately 225 spaces to accommodate future demand.	Development	\$ 12,044,433.00	The project is funded through Virginia SMART SCALE. Funding is allocated for FY20 and 22. A funding agreement is pending. (August/September)
Leeland Road Station Improvements	Design and construction of a platform extension to accommodate full-length VRE trains.	Development	\$ 10,361,037.00	VRE has reengaged this project and returned it to the CIP budget for future years. Project schedule updates pending input from various stakeholders. (August/September)
L'Enfant Station Waiting Area	The existing platform at the L'Enfant station experiences overcrowding during the evening service period. The proposed project will create an additional paved area behind the existing platform, currently landscaped with shrubs and grass, for riders to wait for trains or to bypass riders waiting on the platform.	Final Design	\$ 350,000.00	Consultant forwarded soil boring report to District DOEE as requested for additional soil borings prior to permit issuance. (August/September)
L'Enfant Track and Station Improvements	Expansion of the VRE L'Enfant Station to provide two platform edges and serve full-length trains. Add a new mainline track between LE and VA interlockings.	Development	\$ 110,857,683.00	Review of proposals underway. (August/September)

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CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Project Name	Project Description	Current Phase	Budget	Project Notes
Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade (LOU) Facility	Featuring 33,000 square feet of maintenance space, the LOU will allow VRE to cost-effectively maintain rolling stock, as well as systems and components, in a state of good repair. It will optimize maintenance and reduce costs by allowing the in-house replacement of items before they fail. The LOU will house two tracks that can hold up to four cars at one time and be equipped with a drop table and wheel truing machine. To maintain storage capacity within Crossroads Yard three new tracks are being constructed to provide enhanced flexibility to our operations crews for train movements and storage.	Construction	\$ 52,783,632.00	Final Certificate of Occupancy for was received from Spotsylvania County on 8/15/23. (September) Received a temporary certificate of occupancy from the county on 7/24/23. Need to finalize payment of building permit amendments through consultant before final will be issued. (August)
Manassas Park Parking Expansion	A new garage will nearly double the 600 spaces currently available in the existing surface lot. A pedestrian bridge will provide grade-separated access to the existing platform and lot. The VRE station and garage are an integral part of the City Center Redevelopment District, the proposed transit-accessible high-density mixed-use town center of Manassas Park.	Construction	\$ 34,662,764.00	Notice to proceed (NTP) issued June 19. (August/September)
Manassas Station Improvements	The project expands the VRE Manassas Station platform to serve full length trains and enhances pedestrian access to the station. Alternatives to increase the platform length to enable boarding and alighting from all passenger cars will be evaluated.	Development	\$ 9,125,000.00	This project is funded with I-66 OTB funding. Initiation of project planning pending completion of a Force Account Addendum with Norfolk Southern Railway. (August/September)
New York Avenue Midday Storage Facility	This new facility will store trains currently located in Amtrak's Ivy City coach yard, as Amtrak now has need for the storage tracks. The New York Avenue site, which is proximate to Washington Union Station, will be able to accommodate additional VRE trains.	Development	\$ 137,362,557.00	8/25/23 MOU meeting with Amtrak has been rescheduled for 9/15/23 (September) Meeting scheduled with Amtrak on 8/25/23 to review MOU. Agreements still need to be finalized before final design efforts can begin. (August)
Potomac Shores Station	This new station, in a master-planned community in Prince William County, is being funded, designed, and constructed by the developer of Potomac Shores in consultation with VRE and other stakeholders. The station will be just a short walk from the town center. A new side platform will be constructed which is designed to be converted into an island platform in the future when the 3rd track is added to corridor operations.	Final Design	\$ -	Biddle Real Estate Ventures held groundbreaking ceremony for station parking garage in May. (August/September)

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CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Project Name	Project Description	Current Phase	Budget		Project Notes
Quantico Station Improvements	Service and safety will be enhanced through the construction of a new center platform, ADA-compliant pedestrian bridges, existing platform extension, and third track. These improvements will allow the station to accommodate additional passengers and more frequent and longer trains and operations flexibility with three boardable platform edges.	Construction	\$	25,573,060.00	Ballast retainer wall complete. Tower/ped bridge/utilities completion on going. (August/September)
Real-Time Multimodal Traveler Information System	The passenger experience will be enhanced through the provision of real-time train arrivals. Software upgrades are required to provide these real-time data feeds and integrate them with VRE Mobile and other third-party apps and websites, as well as on display screens at VRE stations and other locations along the I-66 corridor.	Development	\$	3,481,000.00	Scope of work with procurement. Drawings to be complete by 3/31/23. Contractor updating DIV specs. (August/September)
Security Cameras	Safety and security will be improved through the modernization and expansion of VRE's security camera system. New cameras will be placed at 22 locations.	Final Design	\$	1,939,305.00	Operations Board approved contract with Genesys Impact, LLC of Washington, D.C. on July 21 (August/September)
Variable Messaging System Replacement	The effectiveness of VREoperations will be enhanced through the installation of new variable message signs (VMS) throughout the rail system. The new VMS system will allow VRE to communicate multi-modal transit data and general transit feed specification data to VDOT for use in its VMS system.	Final Design	\$	1,000,000.00	Scope of work with procurement. Drawings to be complete by 3/31/23. Contractor updating DIV specs. (August/September)
Woodbridge Station Improvements	Expanded platforms will allow passengers to access trains from all station tracks.	Development	\$	2,740,618.00	The scope and schedule for this project is being coordinated with the commonwealth's Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, post-Phase 2 project. (August/September)

For more information about VRE capital projects, visit <https://projects.vre.org/list>

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## VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

1500 KING STREET, SUITE 202 • ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 • 703.684.1001

[VRE.ORG](http://VRE.ORG)





## MINUTES

### VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

September 15, 2023

14700 Potomac Mills Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192

#### **Members Present**

\*Sarah Bagley (NVTC)  
 \*Andrea Bailey (PRTC) \*\*  
 \*Meg Bohmke (PRTC) ‡  
 \*Margaret Franklin (PRTC)  
 \*Monica Gary (PRTC)  
 \*Lori Hayes (PRTC)  
 \*Takis Karantonis (NVTC)  
 \*Matt Kelly (PRTC)  
 \*Jeanine Lawson (PRTC) \*\*  
 \*Michael McLaughlin (VPRA)  
 \*Alanna Mensing (PRTC)  
 \*Daniel G. Storck (NVTC) \*\*  
 \*James Walkinshaw (NVTC)

#### **Jurisdiction**

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

#### **Members Absent**

Ralph Smith (PRTC)

City of Manassas

#### **Alternates Present**

#### **Alternates Absent**

Canek Aguirre (NVTC)  
 Victor Angry (PRTC)  
 Deborah Frazier (PRTC)  
 Libby Garvey (NVTC)  
 Jason Graham (PRTC)  
 Jeffrey C. McKay (NVTC)  
 Darryl Moore (PRTC)  
 Pam Sebesky (PRTC)  
 Emily Stock (DRPT)  
 Ann Wheeler (PRTC)  
 Pamela Yeung (PRTC)

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

\*Voting Member

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

‡ Participated remotely via Webex in accordance with the Electronic Participation Policy

### **Staff and General Public**

Sara Allred – Fairfax County  
Alexander Buchanan – VRE  
Karen Finucan Clarkson – VRE  
Holly Cockrell - VRE

Rich Dalton – VRE  
John Duque – VRE  
John Kerins - Keolis  
Lezlie Lamb – VRE  
Steve MacIsaac – VRE Chief Counsel  
Auke Mahar-Peirsma – Cardinal Infrastructure  
Kenesha Maratta – VRE

Kate Mattice - NVTC  
Will Montgomery – VRE  
Kristin Nutter - VRE  
Dallas Richards – VRE  
Nick Ruiz – VRE  
Mark Schnauffer - VPRA  
Bob Schneider - PRTC  
Mark Schofield – VRE  
Alex Sugatan - VRE  
Joe Swartz – VRE

Chair Walkinshaw called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.; the roll call followed.

Chair Walkinshaw informed the Members that Vice Chair Bohmke had requested to participate remotely from Hilton Head, SC due to being out of town on vacation. Ms. Gary moved, with a second by Mr. Kelly, to approve Vice Chair Bohmke's remote participation. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### **Safety Moment – 3**

CEO, Rich Dalton briefed attendees on safety procedures and assigned specific tasks to qualified staff members in case of an emergency.

### **Approval of the Agenda - 4**

Mr. Karantonis moved, with a second by Ms. Gary, to approve the agenda as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### **Approval of the Minutes of the July 21, 2023 VRE Operations Board Meeting – 5**

Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Ms. Franklin, to approve the Minutes from July 21, 2023. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### **Chair's Comments – 6**

Chair Walkinshaw welcomed everyone to the September VRE Operations Board meeting. The Chair announced there will be a closed session following the Spending Authority Report and reminded Members the Legislative Committee would hold its meeting following the regular meeting.

The Chair invited Board Members and members of the public to attend Clifton Day on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. VRE trains will operate between the Manassas and Rolling Road stations with stops at Manassas Park, Clifton, and Burke Centre. The ride to Clifton is free; but the return trip is \$5.

[Ms. Bailey and Ms. Lawson arrived at 9:12 a.m.]

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report – 7**



Mr. Dalton briefed the Operations Board on the following items of interest:

- Rail Safety Week
- Performance
- Ridership
- New Staff

### **Public Comment Time – 8**

The Chair opened the floor for public comments. There were no speakers and no written comments had been submitted.

### **Action Items – 9**

#### **Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Construction Management Services for the Alexandria Station Improvements Project – 9A**

Mr. Kelly moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey, to authorize the CEO to issue a Request for Proposals for construction management services for the Alexandria Station Improvements Project.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

#### **Authorization to Execute a Contract for Engineering and Environmental Services for VRE L’Enfant Track and Station Improvements – 9B**

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Mr. Karantonis, to authorize the CEO to execute a contract with Vanasses Hangen Brustlin, Inc. for engineering and environmental services for VRE L’Enfant Track and Station Improvements. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

#### **Authorization to Execute a Sole Source Contract for Locomotive HVAC Replacements – 9C**

Ms. Gary moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey, to authorize the CEO to execute a sole source contract with Wabtec Components, LLC, DBA Motive Equipment, Inc. for locomotive HVAC replacements. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

#### **Referral of Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions and Authorization for Public Hearings on Proposed Fare Changes – 9D**

Following a presentation by VRE Finance staff, Mr. Kelly moved, with a second by Ms. Gary, to refer the Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions and to authorize the CEO to hold public hearings for proposed fare changes. The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

### **Information Items – 10**

#### **Spending Authority Report – 10A**

September’s Spending Authority report outlined purchases greater than \$50,000 but less than \$200,000 made in July and August.

[Mr. Storck left the meeting at 10:54 a.m.]

### **Closed Session – 11**

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Sections 2.2-3711.A(7) and (8) of the Code of Virginia), Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by, Ms. Bailey that the VRE Operations Board convene a closed meeting for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff concerning probable litigation where discussion in public could adversely affect the negotiating and litigating posture of the Board, and for consultation with legal counsel concerning a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, and Walkinshaw.

The closed session convened at 10:54 a.m.

The closed session concluded at 11:33 a.m. and Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Ms. Bailey that the VRE Operations Board certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge and with no individual member dissenting, at the just concluded closed session:

1. Only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed; and,
2. Only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, Storck, and Walkinshaw.

Ms. Bailey moved, with a second by Ms. Gary, to authorize the CEO to execute a contract amendment with Archer Western Construction, LLC of Herndon, Virginia, for construction of Quantico Station Improvements in an amount up to \$1,432,478. This will increase the authorization for this contract from \$18,380,263 up to a total amount not to exceed \$19,812,741.

The vote in favor was cast by Members Bagley, Bailey, Bohmke, Franklin, Gary, Hayes, Karantonis, Kelly, Lawson, McLaughlin, Mensing, and Walkinshaw.

### **Members Time – 11**

Approved this 20<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023

---

James Walkinshaw  
Chair

---

Ralph Smith  
Secretary

CERTIFICATION

This certification hereby acknowledges the minutes for the September 15, 2023 Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Meeting have been recorded to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie M. Lamb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leslie" being more prominent.

Leslie M. Lamb



## RESOLUTION #2505

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the Referral of the Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Participating and Contributing Jurisdictions

**WHEREAS:** The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Master Agreement requires the VRE Operations Board submit to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) (the "Commissions") a preliminary fiscal year budget by September 30 each year;

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Chief Executive Officer has provided the VRE Operations Board with the preliminary FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget;

**WHEREAS:** The preliminary FY 2025 budget proposes a total jurisdictional subsidy of \$18,300,780 and proposes a 5% increase in passenger fares effective the first week of July 2024 along with other changes to improve and simplify the fare structure;

**WHEREAS:** In accordance with VRE's Public Participation Policy, VRE must hold public hearings to solicit comments from riders and the public on the proposed fare changes included in the preliminary FY 2025 budget;

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Operations Board has referred the preliminary FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions for their consideration;

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Operations Board recommends the Commission forward the budget to the participating and contributing jurisdictions for further formal review and comment;

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Operations Board has authorized the VRE CEO to solicit comment through public hearings related to the proposed 5% fare increase and other associated fare changes and to report the public comments received back to the Operations board for consideration;

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Operations Board has directed the VRE CEO to consider and address comments by the jurisdictions and to present a final recommended budget to the VRE Operations Board at the December 2023 meeting for consideration and referral to the Commissions for adoption in January 2024; and

**WHEREAS:** The VRE Operations Board recommends the following action.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission hereby authorizes the preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget be forwarded to the participating and contributing jurisdictions for their formal review and comment.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NVTC directs the VRE Operations Board to forward a final recommended budget to the Commissions for consideration for adoption in January 2024.

Approved this 5th day of October 2023.

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Dalia Palchik  
Chair

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David F. Snyder  
Secretary-Treasurer



# REFERRAL OF THE PRELIMINARY FY 2025 CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET TO THE COMMISSIONS AND AUTHORIZATION FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED FARE CHANGES

## Recommendation:

The VRE Operations Board is asked to authorize the CEO to refer the preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the commissions for their consideration, so the Commissions can, in turn, refer their preliminary budget recommendations to the jurisdictions for review and comment. The Operations Board is also asked to authorize the VRE CEO to hold public hearings to solicit comments from riders and the public, in accordance with the Public Participation Policy, on proposed fare changes included in the preliminary FY 2025 budget.

## Summary:

VRE's preliminary FY 2025 operating budget totals \$119.9 million, which includes operations, maintenance, and existing debt service. This is an increase of \$11.0 million or 10 percent over the approved FY 2024 operating budget. In addition to continuing VRE's existing weekday rail service, the proposed budget provides for the first-ever operation of VRE weekend service. The preliminary operating budget includes a total jurisdictional subsidy of \$18.3 million and a proposed 5 percent fare increase as well as other changes to simplify fares. VRE's last broad-based fare increase was 3 percent in FY 2020.



**James Walkinshaw**  
VRE Operations Board Chair  
Fairfax County



**Rich Dalton**  
VRE CEO



# FY 2025 Budget Timeline

- July 2023: Budget Key Issues
- September 2023: Preliminary Budget presented to Board for referral to Commissions
- October/November 2023: Budget updates and in-depth review
- December 2023: Recommended Budget presented to Board for referral to Commissions
- January 2024: Commissions adopt budget and forward to jurisdictions
- Spring 2024: Individual jurisdictional budget processes and appropriation of VRE subsidy

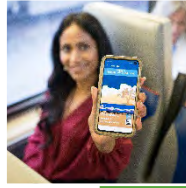


# FY 2025 Operating Budget



## Service

- New Saturday Service
- Enhancements to Existing Service



## Fares

- Raise Revenue
- Simplify for Riders
- Competitive with Other Modes
- Weekend Concepts



## Balanced Budget

- Ridership and Fare Revenue
- Jurisdictional Subsidy
- State Funding
- Operating Expenses
- Pandemic Relief Funds



# IMPROVING AND EXPANDING SERVICE

- Original expansion concepts for both weekday and weekend included in agreements with VPRA
- But priorities can evolve with travel market changes and capital project timelines
- All changes subject to final approval of host railroads and other key stakeholders
- Parallel efforts within VRE between finance and operations



# SATURDAY SERVICE CONCEPT

- Three round-trip trains on each line with service northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon/evening
- Total increase in service (train miles) of about 8 percent
- Question: how to deliver cost-effectively?
- Answer: reposition existing resources
  - ✓ Weekday longer trains (7 or 8 cars) become 6-car consists
  - ✓ Requires one fewer conductor
  - ✓ Shift those employee hours to Saturdays





# ADDITIONAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS



- Eliminate one reverse-flow MSS train and use that slot to fill the morning schedule gap (6:16 am to 7:21 am at Broad Run)
  - ✓ Expect to generate net new riders, not just shift existing riders
- Changes to midday storage at Ivy City and L'Enfant to improve reliability
- Minimal cost impact – more effective within existing constraints

# CHANGES IN TICKET-BUYING BEHAVIOR

Share of Revenue by Ticket Type

Ticket Type	FY 2005	FY 2019	FY 2024 (July)
Single-Ride & Day Pass	6%	8%	21%
Ten-Trip	47%	23%	34%
Weekly (5- or 7-Day)	7%	3%	1%
Monthly/31-Day	41%	65%	44%
Amtrak Step-Up	0%	1%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>





# CONTEXT FOR CHANGING PASSENGER FARES

- Cumulative inflation of close to 20% since last fare increase
- Monthly federal transit benefit 15% higher (\$260 to \$300) and likely to increase again
- Continued high cost to drive downtown and park despite changes to travel patterns
- Customers say clearly that fares are part of their decision, but service quality factors – speed, reliability, convenience – are more important



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*Public input not limited to fares – want feedback on service, budget, and future plans*

## September

- Notification through multiple channels (14 days)

## October

- In-person and remote meetings
- Recorded content
- 30-day public comment period

## November

- Compilation of public feedback
- Review with Operations Board

# PROPOSED FARE CHANGES

Proposed Change	Expected Impact
1. Make Zone 1-3 promotional \$5.00 fare permanent (with associated multiride fares)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competitive option for shorter trips</li><li>• Zero to slight positive on revenue</li></ul>
2. Increase base fares by 5%, keep existing discount structure for multiride tickets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional revenue of ~\$1 million</li><li>• Loss of ~100 daily riders</li></ul>
3. Eliminate 7-day pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simplified choices for riders</li><li>• Shift to 10-trip or monthly</li><li>• Minimal revenue impact</li></ul>
4. Allow children 18 and under to ride free, eliminate Youth discount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Few youth travelers currently on weekdays</li><li>• Make weekend travel by families more attractive</li></ul>



# AMTRAK STEP-UP PROGRAM

- Originally designed to provide additional capacity in peak periods and flexibility for riders
- Step-up charge had reached \$8.00 prior to the suspension of the program during the pandemic
- When program returns, will only be available on VRE Mobile so that Amtrak has rider names
- VRE has received a Commuter Choice grant to support the program
- Expect that customer charge will be in the range of \$1.00 to \$3.00 to start



# CONSIDERATIONS FOR WEEKEND FARES

- For now, assuming that adult fares will be the same as weekdays, but anticipate revisiting as we learn more
- Expect that there will be promotional fares when Saturday service is inaugurated
- Peer approaches vary widely:
  - Same fares
  - Discounted fares
  - Flat fare (same for all distances)
  - Weekend day passes





# FY25 RIDERSHIP & REVENUE

- **FY 2024 Approved Budget:**

- Average daily ridership (ADR) of 10,000/day and average fare of \$11.50
- \$29 million in fare revenue

- **FY2023 Actuals:**

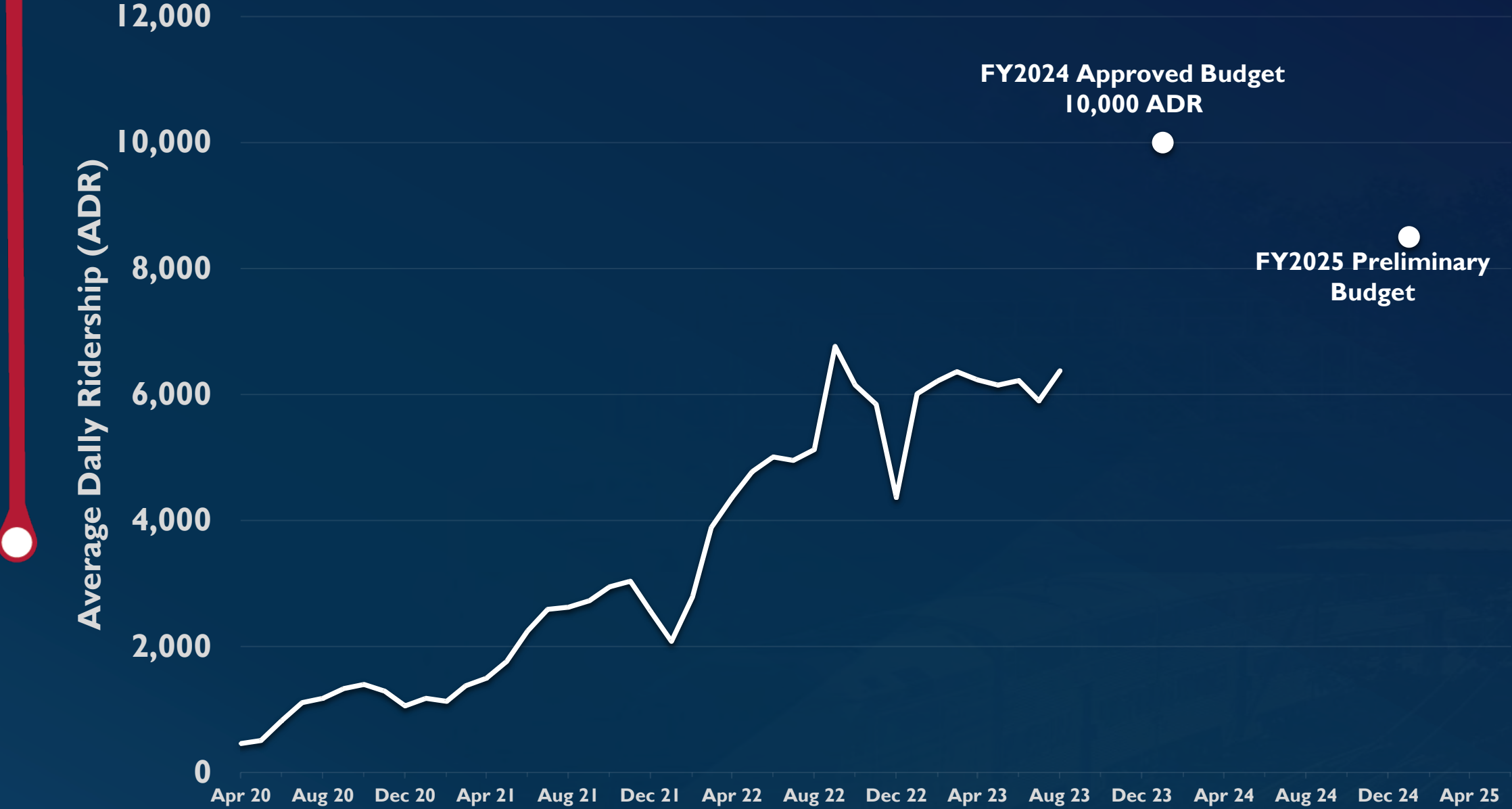
- ADR of 5,866 and average fare of ~\$10.20 in June 2023
- Will need to amend FY 2024 to reflect slower ridership return and changing ticket-buying behavior

- **FY 2025 Preliminary:**

- ADR projected at 8,500 for weekdays and 1,000 for Saturdays
- Average fare of \$10.50, inclusive of proposed fare increase
- \$23 million in fare revenue



# Average Daily Ridership (ADR) by Month





# IMPACTS TO FARE REVENUE

**+100 ADR →  
+\$260,000 Fare Revenue**

**+\$0.10 Average Fare →  
+\$210,000 Fare Revenue**





# FY 2025 STAFFING

## Ongoing process:

- **Preliminary budget includes 3 new FTE positions:**
  - Facilities Maintenance
  - IT support
  - Administration support
- **Preliminary Budget is the “ask” stage, evaluation of request and departmental review with senior management occurs in October**

Fiscal Year	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Total FTE's	49	49	50	50	55	56	56	56	59

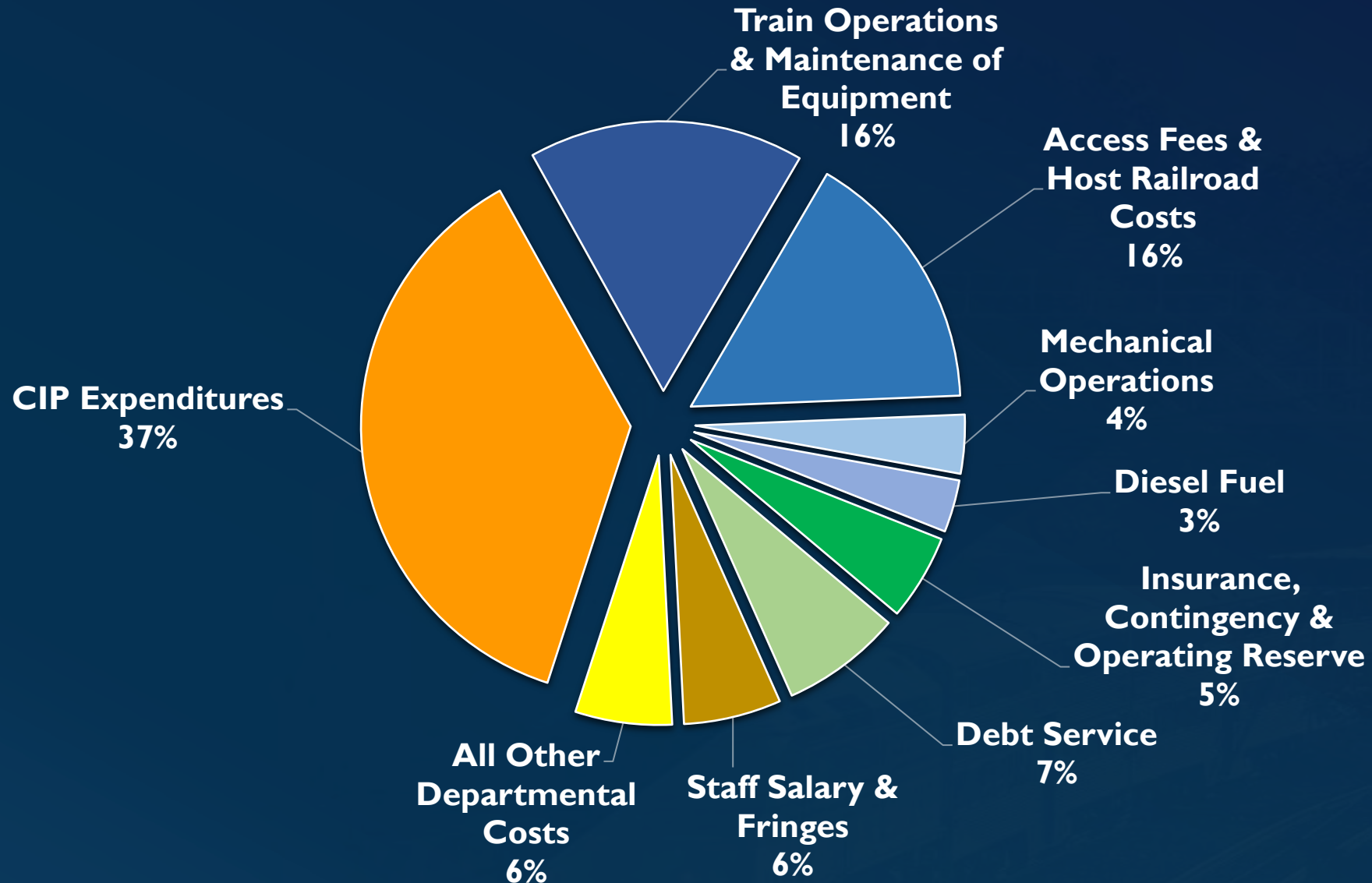
*Note: Total includes CEO and CLO Commission Contract Positions*



# FY25 EXPENSE DRIVERS

- **Costs reflect early estimates of Saturday service implementation**
  - Final budget will also reflect operating efficiencies and weekday service opportunities for cost reductions not yet fully represented
- **Major contracts with Keolis/host railroads/Amtrak services driven by inflation metrics (CPI and AAR):**
  - Preliminary budget for escalations is 4%, reflecting reduced inflationary pressures and contractual minimums
  - Amtrak services impacted by railroad union labor agreements
- **Diesel fuel:** \$3.25/gallon and ~1.83 million gallons
- **Insurance:** annual increases and expanded coverages (e.g., cyber)
- **Salary and fringes:** 4% annual increase and 3 FTE additions
- **Nothing yet deferred or eliminated**

# FY 2025 USE OF FUNDS (THE BIG PICTURE)



# PRELIMINARY FY2025 EXPENSE GROWTH

Budget Cost Area	\$ Increase	% Increase
Keolis Train Operations	\$ 1,528,500	8%
Keolis Maint. Of Equipment	\$ 1,160,500	12%
Amtrak Services	\$ 1,526,000	32%
Host Railroad Access Fees	\$ 2,683,000	13%
Diesel Fuel	\$ 771,000	15%
Insurance	\$ 400,000	5%
Salary & Fringes	\$ 1,170,000	12%
All Other Department Costs	\$ 1,760,168	10%
<b>Total Preliminary Increase</b>	<b>\$ 10,999,168</b>	





# JURISDICTIONAL SUBSIDY

Fiscal Year	Subsidy Amount	Change
2014	\$16,428,800	0%
2015	\$16,428,800	0%
2016	\$16,428,800	0%
2017	\$17,250,240	5%
2018	\$17,250,240	0%
2019	\$17,767,748	3%
2020	\$17,767,748	0%
2021	\$18,300,780	3%
2022	\$4,756,658	-74%
2023	\$13,544,122	185%
2024	\$16,000,000	18%
2025	\$18,300,780	14%

- Preliminary subsidy returns to \$18.3 million
- Subsidy would be ~\$22 million if it had growth with inflation since 2021





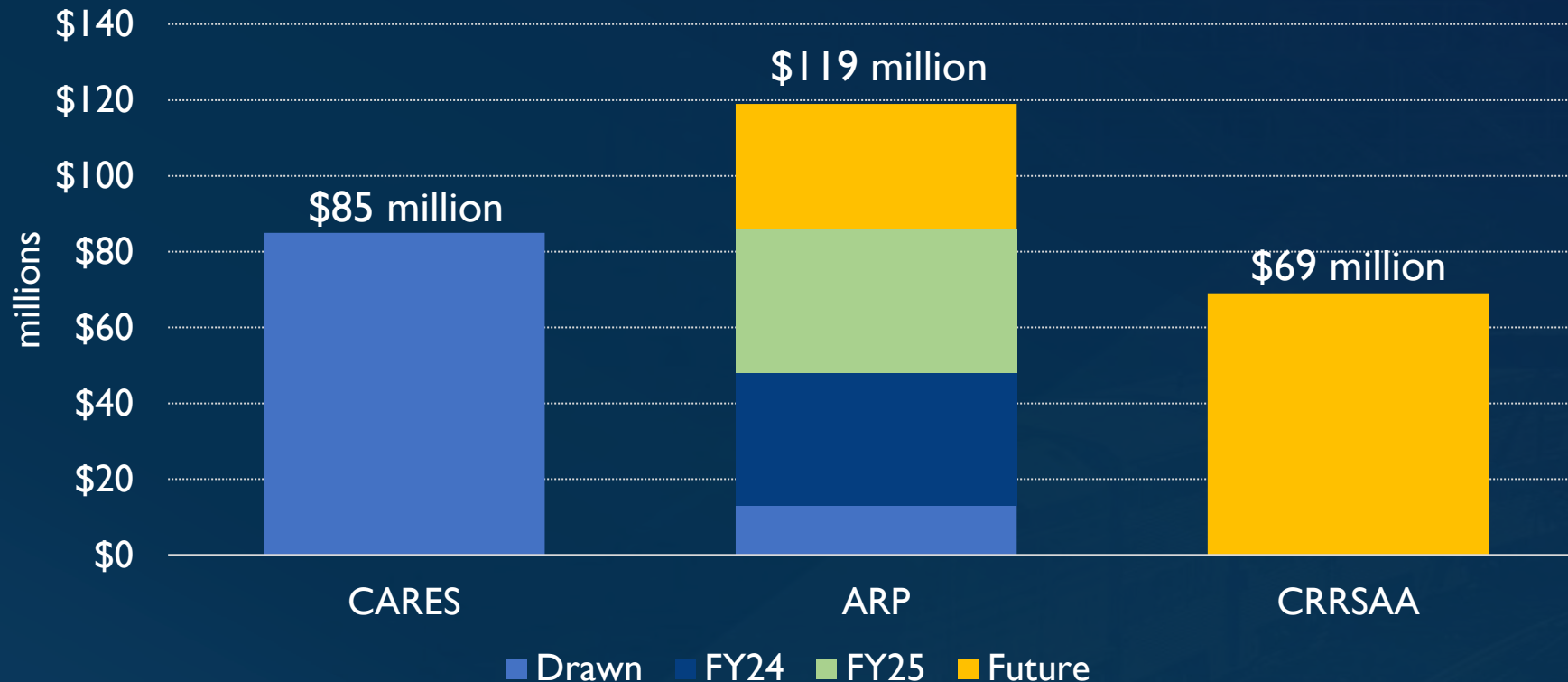
# COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

- FY 2024 is final year in the MERIT program
- In FY 2025 VRE will receive up to 3.5% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (MTF)
- Dedicated amount covers both operating subsidy and capital grant matching
- FY 2025 Preliminary Projections:
  - \$16 million total
  - \$7.9 million to operations
  - \$8.1 million to capital
- Amounts may change as capital program review proceeds in Oct/Nov and additional information is received on MTF funding



# USE OF PANDEMIC RELIEF FUNDS

- Spending rate is downstream of ridership return and our policy decisions on subsidy, fares, etc.
- Likely to use more funds in FY 2024 than originally budgeted as ridership return has been below projections



# *QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION*



[VRE.ORG](https://vre.org)



## FY 2025 Preliminary Sources and Uses

LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR FY 2025		
	Daily Trains	Avg. Daily Riders
Weekdays	32	8,500
Saturdays	12	1,000

Access and Lease Fees	
Amtrak	9,527,000
NS	3,868,000
CSX	10,627,000
Total	24,022,000

USES OF FUNDS	SOURCES OF FUNDS														
							-----STATE-----			-----FEDERAL-----					
	FARE INCOME	INTEREST	MISC	LOCAL CONTRIBUTION	OTHER SOURCES	NVTA FUNDING	STATE CROC FUNDING	STATE OPERATING	STATE CAPITAL	STATE STP	5307/5337	PANDEMIC RELIEF FUNDS	OTHER	TOTAL	
	106,072,727	23,010,000	3,750,000	200,000	12,827,376	-	-	-	7,909,397	20,178,480	-	520,000	37,677,474	-	106,072,727
	152,000			152,000											152,000
	7,495,000			-			7,495,000								7,495,000
	1,931,357			77,254					309,017		1,545,086				1,931,357
	99,072			99,072											99,072
	4,190,231			167,609					670,437		3,352,185				4,190,231
	13,867,660	-	-	-	495,936	-	-	7,495,000	-	979,454	-	4,897,271	-	-	13,867,660
	119,940,387	23,010,000	3,750,000	200,000	13,323,311	-	-	7,495,000	7,909,397	21,157,934	-	5,417,271	37,677,474	-	119,940,387
	10,000,000			400,000						1,600,000		8,000,000			10,000,000
	3,956,901			158,276						633,104		3,165,521			3,956,901
	2,494,928			99,797						399,188		1,995,942			2,494,928
	1,046,281			41,851						167,405		837,025			1,046,281
	105,000			4,200						16,800		84,000			105,000
	31,833,607			1,273,344						5,093,377		25,466,885			31,833,607
	7,505,000			-			7,505,000	-		-		-			7,505,000
	3,000,000			3,000,000											3,000,000
	59,941,717	-	-	-	4,977,469	-	-	7,505,000	-	7,909,875	-	39,549,373	-	-	59,941,717
	7,900,000			-		7,900,000									7,900,000
	1,500,000			-					1,500,000						1,500,000
	903,640			-					180,728				722,912		903,640
	10,303,640	-	-	-	-	-	7,900,000	-	-	1,680,728	-	-	-	722,912	10,303,640
	190,185,744	23,010,000	3,750,000	200,000	18,300,780	-	7,900,000	15,000,000	7,909,397	30,748,537	-	44,966,644	37,677,474	722,912	190,185,744

	Soft Capital Projects	Funding	Program	Federal Amt.	State Amt.
Debt Service 11 Cabcars	5337	1,931,357		1,545,086	309,017
Access lease funding (0%/84%)	Full 84% State	24,022,000		-	20,178,480
Local only Debt Service VRA - 60 Railcars		99,072		-	-
Fed/State/Local Debt Service VRA - 60 Railcars	5337	2,444,301		1,955,441	391,088
Fed/State/Local Debt Service VRA - 60 Railcars	5307	1,745,930		1,396,744	279,349
Grant & Project Management	5307	650,000		520,000	-
Subtotal		30,892,660			21,157,934
Capital Projects/Earmarks		70,245,357		40,272,285	9,590,603
Capital Program		101,138,017		45,689,556	30,748,537





VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS  
OPERATIONS BOARD

**Agenda Item 9-D**  
**Action Item**

**To: Chair Walkinshaw and the VRE Operations Board**

**From: Rich Dalton**

**Date: September 15, 2023**

**Re: Referral of Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions and Authorization for Public Hearings on Proposed Fare Changes**

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**Recommendation:**

The VRE Operations Board is asked to authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to refer the preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions for their consideration, so the Commissions can, in turn, refer their preliminary budget recommendations to the jurisdictions for review and comment. The Operations Board is also asked to authorize the VRE CEO to hold public hearings to solicit comments from riders and the public, in accordance with the Public Participation Policy, on proposed fare changes included in the preliminary FY 2025 budget.

**Summary:**

VRE's preliminary FY 2025 operating budget totals \$119.9 million, which includes operations, maintenance, and existing debt service. This is an increase of \$11.0 million or 10% over the approved FY 2024 operating budget. In addition to continuing VRE's existing weekday rail service, the proposed budget provides for the first-ever operation of VRE weekend service. The preliminary operating budget includes a total jurisdictional subsidy of \$18.3 million and a proposed 5% fare increase as well as other changes to simplify fares. VRE's last broad-based fare increase was 3% in FY 2020. Approximately \$38 million of pandemic relief funding (from the American Rescue Plan Act) is projected to be utilized in the preliminary FY 2025 operating budget. Staff will review and update all expense and revenue assumptions as the budget process moves forward, particularly for potential departmental expense reductions.



Northern Virginia  
Transportation Commission  
2300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 230  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-524-3322



Virginia Railway Express  
1500 King Street, Suite 202  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703-684-1001  
VRE.org



Potomac and Rappahannock  
Transportation Commission  
14700 Potomac Mills Road  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-580-6121

VRE's preliminary FY 2025 capital budget includes commitments of \$70.2 million from federal, state, regional, and local funding sources towards the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). VRE continues to work closely with the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTa) to advance capital projects that are critical to the Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) program and to expanding commuter and intercity rail across the Commonwealth. The CIP will be updated during the budget process as project schedules and cost estimates are refined. In accordance with the Funding Agreement between VRE and VPRA, VRE's \$15 million of annual dedicated Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (CROC) funding in FY 2025 will support \$7.5 million of principal and interest payments on the Series 2022 Bonds and \$7.5 million of contributions to VPRA in support of the Long Bridge project.

A final balanced FY 2025 budget will be submitted in December for the Operations Board's consideration and referral to the Commissions for approval. Projections of both revenues and expenses are still under review by VRE staff and may change materially based on updated ridership trends, macroeconomic conditions, contractual cost drivers, or policy changes. The final FY 2025 budget (which will include an amended FY 2024 budget) will ensure VRE can continue to provide safe and reliable rail service, to meet its commitments to the Commonwealth as part of the TRV program, and to equitably share the costs of service among riders, local jurisdictions, the Commonwealth.

#### **Background:**

In accordance with the VRE Master Agreement, which outlines the process for annual budget approval, the preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget is attached for the Operations Board's review.

As noted during the July 2023 Operations Board meeting, VRE faces a range of "key issues" in FY 2025, most of which relate to balancing the continued recovery of ridership following the COVID-19 pandemic with VRE's commitments to short-term and long-term expansions of service as part of TRV. This includes resuming regular changes to passenger fares and jurisdictional subsidy as the cost of providing service increases; expanding from VRE's traditional commuter market to offer weekend service; continuing to expand marketing and advertising efforts to grow VRE's customer base; and balancing the budget through a combination of passenger fares, jurisdictional contributions, new state dedicated funds, and remaining pandemic relief funds.

#### **Key Operating Budget Assumptions:**

VRE's preliminary operating budget totals \$119.9 million. This includes \$106.1 million for operations and maintenance (as compared to \$95.2 million in the approved FY 2024 budget) and \$13.8 million for debt service and operating reserve, which includes a capital lease for 11 railcars, the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) financing for 60 railcars, and the Series 2022 CROC-backed revenue bonds. As noted above, both revenues and expenses continue to be reviewed and may change materially before adoption of the final budget. The key assumptions used in preparing the preliminary operating budget are summarized below.

## 1. Saturday Service

Based on positive feedback from initial discussions with the Operations Board and key stakeholders (including Keolis and the host railroads), VRE is planning for the introduction of Saturday service in FY 2025. The plan envisions three round trips on each line (Fredericksburg and Manassas), or a total of 12 one-way trains on Saturdays, as compared to the current schedule of 32 weekday trains. While many important capital projects are already underway, this will be the first major operational step toward realizing the promise of TRV. VRE staff are working closely with the key stakeholders to determine how best to deploy resources – both people and equipment – to provide the new service at a minimum cost.

The preliminary expense budget includes an order-of-magnitude estimate of the cost of additional Saturday service, but this figure will be refined in the coming months through additional service planning and discussions with VRE's partners. ***Saturday service or other service-related changes are subject to final approval of our host railroads and other stakeholders. We are including this initiative in the preliminary budget and working in parallel with our host railroads and other stakeholders to determine if we can make this a reality sooner rather than later.***

## 2. Ridership and Fare Revenue

While the pandemic emergency is over, a post-pandemic equilibrium for mass transit – particularly in the Washington DC region – has not yet been reached. For the third year in a row, projecting annual ridership is challenging and subject to significant uncertainty. Return-to-work initiatives for federal agencies appear to be ramping up for the fall of 2023, but their timing and ultimate impact are not yet known.

The impact of the pandemic on telework is clear in VRE's own survey data. Between 2012 and 2019, the average number of days of telework per week for VRE riders increased steadily, doubling from 0.3 to 0.6. In 2023, the average is now 1.7 days. Even as late as 2019, 60% of VRE riders reported working zero telework days per week, but that figure is down to only 32% in 2023, and 29% of riders reported having three or four days of telework each week.

Ridership is expected to continue to recover as some employees who are currently entirely remote (and thus not a part of VRE surveys at all) return at least partially to the office, while others currently only in the office one or two days per week start going in more frequently. But while the ultimate magnitude of the shift is unknown, clearly a shift has occurred that appears likely to particularly impact commute travel on Mondays and Fridays, and all transportation providers are in the process of adapting to these new patterns.

The preliminary FY 2025 budget assumes an average daily ridership of 8,500 on weekdays and 1,000 on Saturdays. These figures will continue to be refined as ridership results from September through November are incorporated, and an amended ridership figure for FY 2024 will also be part of the final budget adoption in December. At these ridership levels, and assuming the fare changes outlined below, projected passenger revenue in FY 2025 is \$23.0 million.

As projected, the average fare per trip has continued to decline from its pandemic-era highs as riders have “right-sized” their ticket buying for their new commuting patterns. Before accounting for any of the proposed fare changes, the average fare appears likely to settle slightly above the pre-pandemic value, which is what was expected given ticket-buying behavior and the proportional shift toward longer trips among the riders that have returned.

### **3. Jurisdictional Subsidy**

Using federal pandemic funds (from the CARES Act and then the American Rescue Plan Act), VRE has been able to provide relief the past three years (FY 2022-24) for local jurisdictions on their VRE subsidy. In FY 2021 (which was approved prior to the onset of the pandemic in March 2020), the total jurisdictional subsidy was \$18.3 million. In FY 2022 the total subsidy was reduced to \$4.8 million, and then has incrementally increased to \$13.5 million in FY 2023 and \$16.0 million in FY 2024. The preliminary FY 2025 budget includes a staff recommendation to return the total jurisdictional contribution to \$18.3 million. The preliminary FY 2025 budget does not include a projected allocation of the subsidy to each jurisdiction. In early October, VRE will conduct the annual Master Agreement Survey, and the results of the survey will be used to determine the allocation of the subsidy.

### **4. State Assistance for Operating and Capital**

FY 2024 is the final year that VRE will participate in the Commonwealth’s Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) program. Beginning in FY 2025, VRE will instead receive up to 3.5% of the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (MTF). This dedicated amount will replace both the operating subsidy and the capital grant matching that VRE previously received through DRPT. This funding is separate from the track access fee reimbursement VRE receives through VPRA and from any previous grant agreements that VRE has with DRPT or VPRA. VRE is still eligible to apply for Smart Scale funding and other discretionary programs at the state level.

Based on prior projections of the total MTF funding available, VRE expects to receive approximately \$16 million in assistance in FY 2025. The preliminary budget has this funding allocated as \$7.9 million to operations and \$8.1 million as a match for capital. This projection will be updated with any new information received prior to December on MTF funding levels or performance-based impacts to VRE’s dedicated funding percentage.

### **5. Operating Expenses and Cost Growth**

After two years of significantly elevated inflation, projections for annual cost growth in most of the core areas of VRE’s preliminary operating budget are back in the range of 2-4 percent. This includes certain key items such as diesel fuel (projected at \$3.25/gallon), existing employee salaries (projected to increase by 4 percent), and host railroad track access fees (projected to increase by 4 percent).

The preliminary budget also includes planning-level estimates for the costs for three new full-time employee positions that are needed as VRE’s operating and capital programs continue to

grow. These positions would support facilities maintenance (including the recently opened Lifecycle Overhaul and Upgrade facility) as well as IT and administrative support. In constructing this preliminary budget, department heads have submitted plans for FY 2025 with nothing being deferred or having to “go without” relative to expenses. As noted above, as the budget process continues during the Fall, expense reductions will be identified as deferrals and eliminations are found, contingencies are reduced, and updated information on contract escalations is received.

## **6. Pandemic Relief Funds**

VRE has fully obligated all three tranches of its pandemic relief funding. CARES Act funds were spent first, with all \$86 million of CARES Act funding fully utilized as of the first quarter of FY 2023. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds are being drawn down now, with approximately \$13 million of \$119 million drawn as of the end of FY 2023. Finally, once the ARP funds are expended, approximately \$70 million of CRRSAA funds remain available. Based on the approved FY 2024 budget, approximately \$32 million of ARP funds will be drawn in FY 2024. However, this figure will be updated as part of the Amended FY 2024 budget process as ridership and revenue results for the first half of the year come in, and the overall “spend down” profile for the pandemic relief funds will be updated at the same time.

### **Proposed Fare Changes and Public Hearings:**

VRE’s fares are based on distance traveled, with most riders boarding in the morning at an ‘outer’ zone (Zones 3 through 9) station and disembarking at an ‘inner’ zone (Zones 1 and 2) station, and then reversing that trip in the afternoon. In addition to single-ride and day passes, riders can also purchase multi-ride tickets that offer a discounted fare. As described in VRE’s Tariff, the 10-ride pass for any given zone pair is priced at 8% less than ten corresponding single-ride tickets. Similarly, the five-day pass is priced at a 20% discount, and the monthly pass is priced at a 34% discount (assuming 42 trips per month).

VRE’s last fare increase was proposed in 2018 and implemented in FY 2020. In the five years since that 3% fare increase, inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) has reduced the purchasing power of every dollar of fare revenue by more than 18 percent. While avoiding fare increases during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was an understandable response, the significant inflation in 2021 and 2022 has many agencies now weighing how best to raise revenue while also not turning off new and returning riders.

In looking at potential fare changes for FY 2025, VRE has considered peer commuter rail experience, feedback from customers, pricing in competing modes, and the overall financial needs of the organization. One theme that has emerged is “simplification,” with agencies reducing the number of unique ticket types, eliminating underutilized fare options, and generally working to make the fare buying process quick and easy for the rider. The proposals for FY 2025 below are likely only a first step as more feedback is gathered and additional changes are considered in future years.



- a) **Permanent reduced fare in zones 1-3:** VRE has been temporarily offering a reduced fare for riders making shorter trips that both start and end in zones 1, 2, or 3. This \$5.00 flat one-way fare (with corresponding reduced price multiride tickets) was originally offered as a mitigation for the Metrorail Yellow Line shutdown and then was extended as a promotional effort. Based on positive rider response, the \$5.00 reduced fare would be made permanent.
- b) **Increase base one-way fares by 5%:** For all trips that either start or end outside zones 1-3, the current zone pricing structure would be maintained with all base one-way fares increased by 5% (rounded to the nearest \$0.05). For a passenger currently paying a \$10.00 fare – which is the single-ride price for a trip from Quantico or Manassas into Washington DC and is also approximately the average fare paid across all riders – the cost would increase by \$0.50.
- c) **Eliminate 7-day pass:** The 7-day or weekly pass has historically been the least-used multiride VRE product, and given changed travel patterns since the pandemic, its use has fallen even further. For riders who don't travel enough to justify a monthly pass, the 10-trip pass is usually a better and more flexible option than the 7-day pass. Eliminating the 7-day pass will simplify fare purchasing for customers with little loss of value.
- d) **Kids Under 18 Ride Free:** VRE currently allows children 10 and under to ride free with a fare paying adult, while youth riders between 11 and 18 can purchase discounted tickets once they have a reduced fare ID. To simplify administration costs for staff while also encouraging riders on the new weekend service, this preliminary budget proposes that children 18 and under can ride free with a fare paying adult. If approved, the specific policy may be adopted to allow more than one child to ride with a paying parent or guardian, while prohibiting (for example) large groups of unrelated children to ride for free with a single adult.

The peer experience with pricing of weekend service varies widely. Some agencies offer no discount relative to weekday service, while others offer discounts or shift to a flat fare (rather than distanced-based) to encourage ridership. Given that many specifics of the proposed Saturday service in FY 2025 remain to be determined, this budget assumes that weekend fares will be the same as weekday fares. However, it is expected that promotional fares of some kind will be in place when the Saturday service is inaugurated, and the information gained from the initial service will inform future recommendations from staff to the Operations Board regarding potentially permanent changes to weekend fares.

VRE staff are also working with Amtrak and VPRA to bring back the Amtrak Step-Up program, which was suspended during the pandemic. This program allows riders holding a VRE multiride ticket to pay an additional fee and ride certain Amtrak trains within the VRE service area. VRE has received funding through the regional Commuter Choice program to support a reduction in the passenger-facing cost of this program. Prior to the pandemic, the cost to the passenger for an Amtrak Step-Up ticket was \$8.00. The new cost once the program has been reinstated has not been finalized, but it is expected to be substantially lower.

As part of this preliminary budget, VRE is requesting authorization to hold public hearings on the proposed fare increase, in accordance with VRE's Public Participation Policy. Staff would host both in-person and online/electronic meetings to explain the budget proposal and solicit comments on the fare changes and other aspects of the budget. These hearings would be announced in newspapers and in various electronic and social media outlets. The hearings would be the centerpiece of a broader communication effort and public comment period lasting a minimum of 30 days in which VRE would reach out to the public through various channels and request feedback.

### **Capital Funding:**

The major capital funding that is expected to be obligated in FY 2025 includes:

- *Federal formula funds:* Federal funding allocations are behind by one year relative to VRE's fiscal year, so the federal funding allocated Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 will be available to be obligated and spent beginning in VRE's FY 2025. As a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), formula funding for transit agencies was increased significantly. Based on previous year funding allocations to the Section 5307 (Urbanized Area) and Section 5337 (State of Good Repair) programs, the amended FY 2023 and FY2024 VRE budgets will each include approximately \$42.4 million of federal formula funding.

As in previous years, VRE's formula funds will be committed to debt service, asset management programs, and key CIP projects such as the L'Enfant Station and Fourth Track. Staff continues to look at options for utilizing currently unprogrammed funding, including station expansions that also have a replacement component. Some portion of the funding is also likely to be needed on existing projects where cost estimates have increased.

- *State capital match:* While previously executed grant agreements remain in place (e.g., for debt service), VRE will now provide the "state" match for capital grants from the 3.5% dedicated allocation from the MTF. As noted above, the preliminary budget assumes that approximately \$8.1 million of that dedicated funding will be allocated towards capital match in FY 2025.
- *Discretionary state and regional funding:* The FY 2025 budget is expected to obligate previously allocated NVT, VPRA, and CMAQ funds for station projects at Crystal City, L'Enfant, and Woodbridge, respectively.
- *Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (CROC) Fund:* VRE completed the issuance of the 30-year CROC-backed Series 2022 Bonds in June 2022, and the proceeds of that issuance were transferred to VPRA to assist in the purchase of the CSX right-of-way. Of the annual \$15 million in CROC funds that VRE receives, \$7.5 million is now committed each year to debt service on those bonds. The remaining \$7.5 million each year, in accordance with the terms

of the Funding Agreement with VRPA, will support pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) capital contributions to key projects in the VRE service area – primarily Long Bridge, but also potentially the Alexandria Fourth Track and the Franconia-Springfield Bypass.

**Virginia Railway Express  
Operations Board Resolution**

**9D-09-2023**

**Referral of Preliminary FY 2025 VRE Operating and Capital Budget to the  
Commissions and Authorization for Public Hearings on Proposed Fare Changes**

**WHEREAS**, the VRE Master Agreement requires the VRE Operations Board submit to the Commissions a preliminary fiscal year budget by September 30 each year; and,

**WHEREAS**, the VRE Chief Executive Officer has provided the VRE Operations Board with the preliminary FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget; and,

**WHEREAS**, the preliminary FY 2025 budget proposes a total jurisdictional subsidy of \$18,300,780 and proposes a five percent increase in passenger fares effective the first week of July 2024 along with other changes to improve and simplify the fare structure; and,

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with VRE's Public Participation Policy, VRE must hold public hearings to solicit comments from riders and the public on the proposed fare changes included in the preliminary FY 2025 budget;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the VRE Operations Board refers the preliminary FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budget to the Commissions for their consideration; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the VRE Operations Board recommends the budget be forwarded to the jurisdictions for further formal review and comment; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the VRE Operations Board does hereby authorize the Chief Executive Officer to solicit comment through public hearings related to the proposed five percent fare increase and other associated fare changes and to report the public comments received back to the Operations Board for consideration; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, VRE staff is directed to consider and address comments by the jurisdictions and to present a final recommended budget to the VRE Operations Board at the December 2023 meeting for consideration and referral to the Commissions for adoption in January 2024.

Approved this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023

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James Walkinshaw  
Chair

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Ralph Smith  
Secretary

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

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At the October meeting, DRPT Director Jen DeBruhl will give her report. The monthly DRPT Report, which provides updates on DRPT programs and initiatives, is attached.





## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Jennifer B. DeBruhl  
Director

DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
600 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 2102  
RICHMOND, VA 23219-2416

(804) 786-4440  
FAX (804) 225-3752  
Virginia Relay Center  
800-828-1120 (TDD)

TO: Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners

FROM: Jennifer DeBruhl, Director

DATE: September 26, 2023

SUBJECT: Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Update

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) met on September 20 in Richmond. At the [action meeting](#), the CTB approved [policy changes](#) to the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), a new [VRE funding policy](#), and changes to the [WMATA funding policy](#). The CTB also approved adding \$6.3 million in state match for four new projects to the FY 2024-2029 Six Year Improvement Plan ([SYIP](#)) that were recently awarded \$67.6 million in federal discretionary program funds. Transit systems in the NVTC area that received new federal funding are Alexandria DASH and Loudoun County Transit.

At the [workshop](#), DRPT [presented](#) its annual recommendation on WMATA compliance with [Virginia Code](#) and the [CTB Policy](#) and Guidelines for Implementation of Funding and Governance Reforms in combination with a five year look back on dedicated funding. Since 2018, the first year that Virginia provided dedicated funding to WMATA, \$2.7 billion in funding from the region has been invested to reduce WMATA's capital backlog. The Commonwealth provided \$735 million in dedicated funding between FY 2019 and 2023. The CTB is expected to adopt a resolution certifying WMATA compliance for FY 2023 at its October meeting. Compliance for FY 2024 will be based on the CTB policy adopted at the September 2023 action meeting.

DRPT is accepting applications for the TRIP program through October 24. Per the CTB policy changes noted above, improvements to passenger amenities and public safety projects are now eligible for TRIP funding in addition to traditional regional connectivity and zero and reduced fare projects. Application forms and guidance documents are on [DRPT's website](#). DRPT will also host a webinar about this funding opportunity on September 28. Advance [registration](#) is required, and attendance is strongly encouraged for all interested parties.

DRPT's FY 2025 application process for all of [our grant programs](#) opens on December 1. DRPT is launching a new grant application software, Webgrants, to replace our current Online Grant Administration ([OLGA](#)) system. DRPT will be hosting mandatory Webgrants training sessions for all our partners in October. Between November 15 and December 1, DRPT plans to place a freeze on reimbursement requests in OLGA. On December 1, Webgrants will go live and every public transportation and rail partner agency will be required to register an authorized user and also include an updated W-9. **New applications and reimbursement requests cannot be submitted until registration is complete.** The application period closes on February 1, 2024.

Finally, DRPT is currently recruiting for a [Senior Grants Financial Analyst](#) based in our Richmond office.

**TO:** Chair Palchik and NVTC Commissioners  
**FROM:** Kate Mattice  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director Report

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**A. Executive Director Newsletter**

NVTC's Executive Director Newsletter provides updates on specific NVTC projects and programs and highlights items of interest at the federal and state levels and among jurisdictional and regional partners.

The October 2023 Executive Director Newsletter will be provided to Commissioners at the Commission meeting and posted online at <https://novatransit.org/news-and-media/newsletter/>.

**B. NVTC Financial Report**

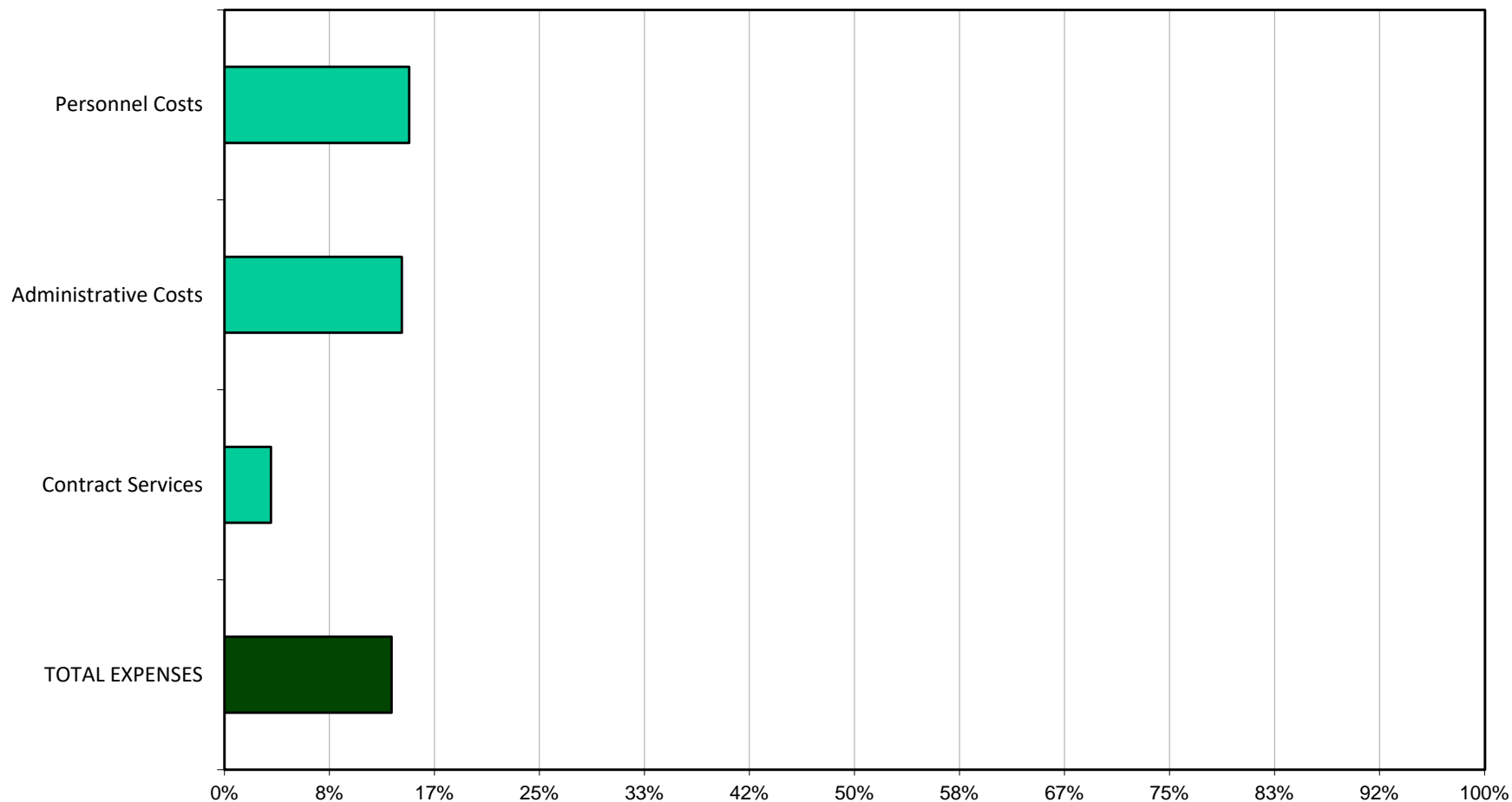
The [August 2023 Financial Report](#) is provided as information.

# Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

Financial Reports  
August 2023

# PERCENTAGE OF FY 2024 NVTC ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET USED

August 2023  
(TARGET 16.7% OR LESS)



**Note: Refer to pages 2 and 3 for details**

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**G&A BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT**  
**August 2023**

	<b><u>Current Month</u></b>	<b><u>Year To Date</u></b>	<b><u>Annual Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Balance Available</u></b>	<b><u>Balance %</u></b>
<b><u>Personnel Costs</u></b>					
Salaries and Wages	\$ 181,093.36	\$ 380,993.27	\$ 2,644,000.00	\$ 2,263,006.73	85.6%
Temporary Employee Services	-	-	-	-	
Total Personnel Costs	<u>181,093.36</u>	<u>380,993.27</u>	<u>2,644,000.00</u>	<u>2,263,006.73</u>	<u>85.6%</u>
<b><u>Benefits</u></b>					
Employer's Contributions:					
FICA	18,805.83	32,603.88	180,700.00	148,096.12	82.0%
Group Health Insurance	13,869.95	28,535.20	205,900.00	177,364.80	86.1%
Retirement	14,167.00	28,334.00	170,000.00	141,666.00	83.3%
Workmans & Unemployment Compensation	183.86	371.82	6,000.00	5,628.18	93.8%
Life Insurance	343.51	412.61	6,800.00	6,387.39	93.9%
Long Term Disability Insurance	1,096.68	2,193.36	15,000.00	12,806.64	85.4%
Total Benefit Costs	<u>48,466.83</u>	<u>92,450.87</u>	<u>584,400.00</u>	<u>491,949.13</u>	<u>84.2%</u>
<b><u>Administrative Costs</u></b>					
Commissioners Per Diem	350.00	1,550.00	14,000.00	12,450.00	88.9%
<i>Rents:</i>	<i>33,578.35</i>	<i>67,224.42</i>	<i>433,000.00</i>	<i>365,775.58</i>	<i>84.5%</i>
Office Rent	33,009.15	65,870.72	408,800.00	342,929.28	83.9%
Parking & Transit Benefits	569.20	1,353.70	24,200.00	22,846.30	94.4%
<i>Insurance:</i>	<i>467.35</i>	<i>934.70</i>	<i>8,000.00</i>	<i>7,065.30</i>	<i>88.3%</i>
Public Official Bonds	-	-	2,500.00	2,500.00	100.0%
Liability and Property	467.35	934.70	5,500.00	4,565.30	83.0%
<i>Travel:</i>	<i>3,953.06</i>	<i>7,253.28</i>	<i>64,800.00</i>	<i>57,546.72</i>	<i>88.8%</i>
Conference / Professional Development	3,592.74	5,895.86	47,100.00	41,204.14	87.5%
Non-Local Travel	-	-	2,500.00	2,500.00	100.0%
Local Travel, Meetings and Related Expenses	360.32	1,357.42	15,200.00	13,842.58	91.1%



**NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**G&A BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT**  
**August 2023**

	<b>Current Month</b>	<b>Year To Date</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Balance Available</b>	<b>Balance %</b>
<i>Communication:</i>	1,440.14	2,948.66	17,800.00	14,851.34	83.4%
Postage	-	-	1,400.00	1,400.00	100.0%
Telephone and Data	1,440.14	2,948.66	16,400.00	13,451.34	82.0%
<i>Publications &amp; Supplies</i>	1,115.82	2,776.62	29,500.00	26,723.38	90.6%
Office Supplies	242.67	314.69	2,500.00	2,185.31	87.4%
Duplication and Paper	806.00	1,732.48	9,500.00	7,767.52	81.8%
Public Engagement	67.15	729.45	17,500.00	16,770.55	95.8%
<i>Operations:</i>	2,929.94	5,452.58	59,700.00	54,247.42	90.9%
Furniture and Equipment (Capital)	-	-	25,500.00	25,500.00	100.0%
Repairs and Maintenance	53.05	106.10	1,000.00	893.90	89.4%
Computer Operations	2,876.89	5,346.48	33,200.00	27,853.52	83.9%
<i>Other General and Administrative:</i>	1,011.20	1,686.45	11,100.00	9,413.55	84.8%
Memberships	385.67	471.34	1,600.00	1,128.66	70.5%
Fees and Miscellaneous	625.53	1,215.11	8,000.00	6,784.89	84.8%
Advertising (Personnel/Procurement)	-	-	1,500.00	1,500.00	100.0%
Total Administrative Costs	<u>44,845.86</u>	<u>89,826.71</u>	<u>637,900.00</u>	<u>548,073.29</u>	<u>85.9%</u>
<u>Contracting Services</u>					
Auditing	-	-	25,850.00	25,850.00	100.0%
Contract Services and Support					
Commuter Choice	2,202.80	2,202.80	152,500.00	150,297.20	98.6%
Research Support	-	-	200,000.00	200,000.00	100.0%
Other Technical	6,134.84	12,269.01	120,000.00	107,730.99	89.8%
Legal	<u>2,500.00</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>30,000.00</u>	<u>25,000.00</u>	<u>83.3%</u>
Total Contract Services	10,837.64	19,471.81	528,350.00	508,878.19	96.3%
 Total Gross G&A Expenses	<u><u>\$ 285,243.69</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 582,742.66</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 4,394,650.00</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 3,811,907.34</u></u>	<u><u>86.7%</u></u>

NVTC  
RECEIPTS and DISBURSEMENTS  
August 2023

August 2023			Virginia LGIP				
Date	Payer / Payee	Purpose	Wells Fargo Checking	Wells Fargo Savings	NVTC G&A / Project	Commuter Choice	Trusts
RECEIPTS							
1	DMV	Motor Vehicle Fuels Sales tax					\$ 2,467,164.75
1	DMV	CROC			1,250,000.00		
3	DRPT	Grant receipt - fellows program			18,163.00		
3	DRPT	Grant receipt - Regional marketing campaign			126,877.00		
3	DRPT	Capital grant receipt - VRE			979,672.00		
7	DRPT	Capital grant receipt - Arlington					3,058,047.00
8	PRTC	Local contribution - Regional marketing campaign		20,000.00			
8	PRTC	Local contribution - Regional fare collection		906.66			
8	Arlington	Local contribution - Regional marketing campaign		20,000.00			
8	Loudoun	Local contribution - Regional fare collection		441.40			
10	DRPT	Technical assistance - Zero emission bus			47,983.00		
14	DRPT	Operating assistance - VRE			1,684,388.00		
14	DRPT	Operating assistance - City of Fairfax					384,979.00
15	DRPT	Technical assistance - Envision Route 7			84,387.00		
22	DRPT	Capital assistance - VRE			784,000.00		
23	NVTC	Commuter choice reimbursement			131,603.00		
24	DRPT	Capital and operating assistance - WMATA					17,543,393.00
25	DRPT	Interest - I-395/95 Commuter Choice				8,831.03	68,209.00
30	VRE	Local contribution - Regional marketing campaign		20,000.00			
31	Banks	Investment earnings		99.66	1,450.27	350,030.93	1,807,006.30
TOTAL RECEIPTS			-	61,447.72	5,108,523.27	358,861.96	25,328,799.05

**NVTC**  
**RECEIPTS and DISBURSEMENTS**  
**August 2023**

August 2023

			Virginia LGIP				
Date	Payer / Payee	Purpose	Wells Fargo Checking	Wells Fargo Savings	NVTC G&A / Project	Commuter Choice	Trusts
DISBURSEMENTS							
1-31	Various	G&A expenses	(369,214.28)				
1	VRE	CROC			(1,250,000.00)		
3	VRE	Grant revenue			(979,672.00)		
14	VRE	Grant revenue			(1,684,388.00)		
16	WTOP	Regional marketing campaign	(37,900.00)				
16	WAMU	Regional marketing campaign	(17,000.00)				
16	Iheart Media	Regional marketing campaign	(25,799.20)				
16	Kimley-Horn	Consulting - WMATA funding and reform	(45,234.53)				
16	Stantec	Consulting - NTD project	(28,880.36)				
22	VRE	Grant revenue			(784,000.00)		
23	NVTC	Administrative expense reimb. - Commuter Choice				(131,603.00)	
31	Alpha Media	Regional marketing campaign	(17,922.83)				
31	Kimley-Horn	Consulting - Commuter Choice program	(2,202.80)				
31	Kittelson & Assoc.	Consulting - Envision Route 7	(37,205.61)				
31	Banks	Service charges		(73.40)			
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS			(581,359.61)	(73.40)	(4,698,060.00)	(131,603.00)	-
TRANSFERS							
11	Transfer	From LGIP to checking	90,000.00		(90,000.00)		
17	Transfer	From LGIP to checking	255,000.00		(255,000.00)		
25	Transfer	From LGIP to checking	90,000.00		(90,000.00)		
17	Transfer	From LGIP to LGIP (NTD project)			28,880.36		(28,880.36)
31	Transfer	From LGIP to LGIP (G&A contribution)			2,000,000.00		(2,000,000.00)
NET TRANSFERS			435,000.00	-	1,593,880.36	-	(2,028,880.36)
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) FOR MONTH			\$ (146,359.61)	\$ 61,374.32	\$ 2,004,343.63	\$ 227,258.96	\$ 23,299,918.69

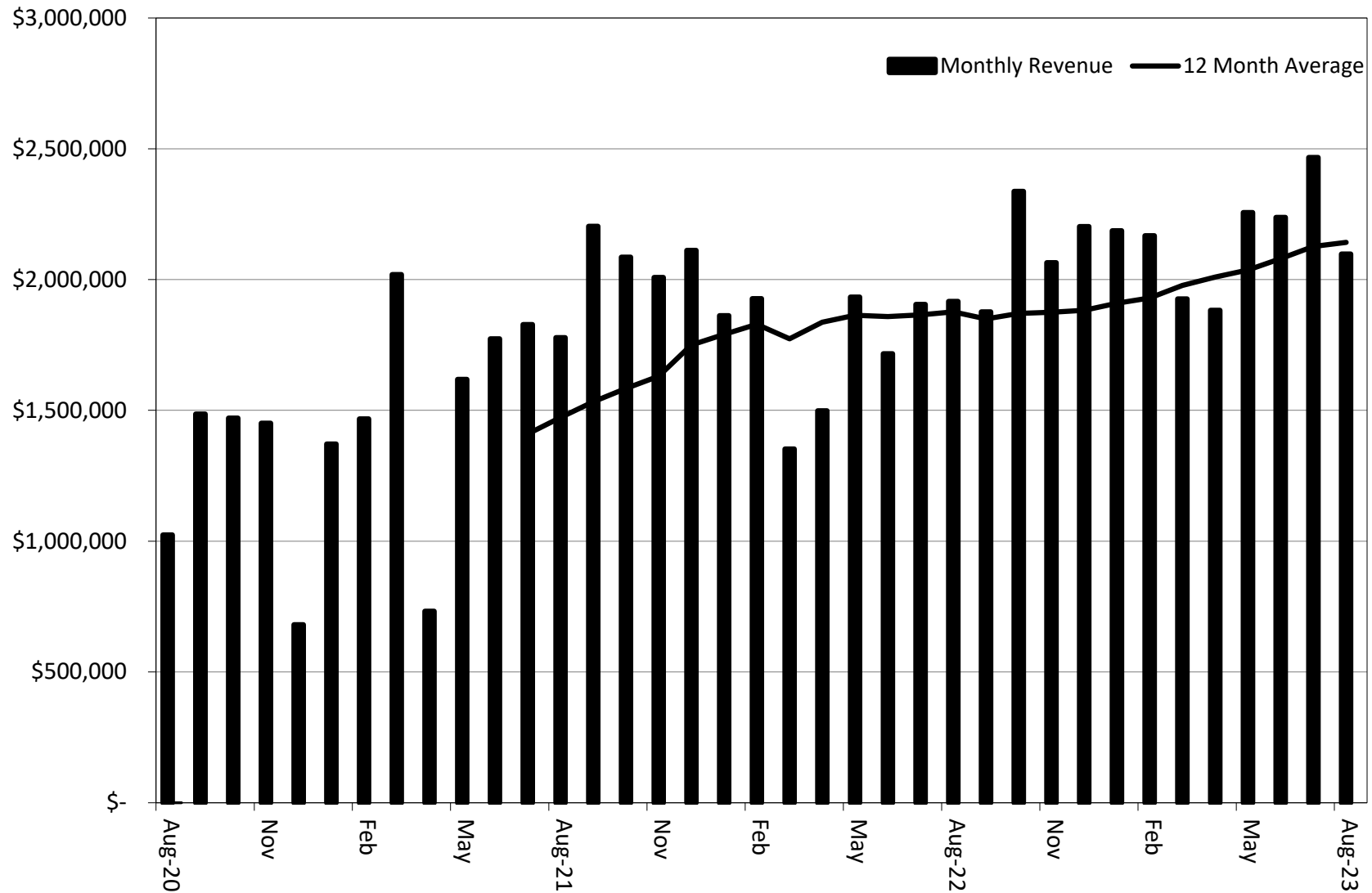
**NVTC  
INVESTMENT REPORT  
August 2023**

Type	Rate	Balance 7/31/2023	Increase (Decrease)	Balance 8/31/2023	Balance			
					NVTC G&A/Project	Commuter Choice	Jurisdictions Trust Fund	Loudoun Gas Tax Trust Fund
<b><u>Cash Deposits</u></b>								
Wells Fargo: NVTC Checking	N/A	\$ 154,375.66	\$ (146,359.61)	\$ 8,016.05	\$ 8,016.05	\$ -	\$ -	
Wells Fargo: NVTC Savings	1.090%	76,031.48	61,374.32	137,405.80	137,405.80	-	-	
<b><u>Investments</u></b>								
Bank of America: Virginia Local Government Investment Pool	5.573%	457,792,166.57	25,531,521.28	483,323,687.85	2,169,633.22	76,081,747.41	343,467,751.96	61,604,555.26
		<u>\$ 458,022,573.71</u>	<u>\$ 25,446,535.99</u>	<u>\$ 483,469,109.70</u>	<u>\$ 2,315,055.07</u>	<u>\$ 76,081,747.41</u>	<u>\$ 343,467,751.96</u>	<u>\$ 61,604,555.26</u>

# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE

## ALL JURISDICTIONS

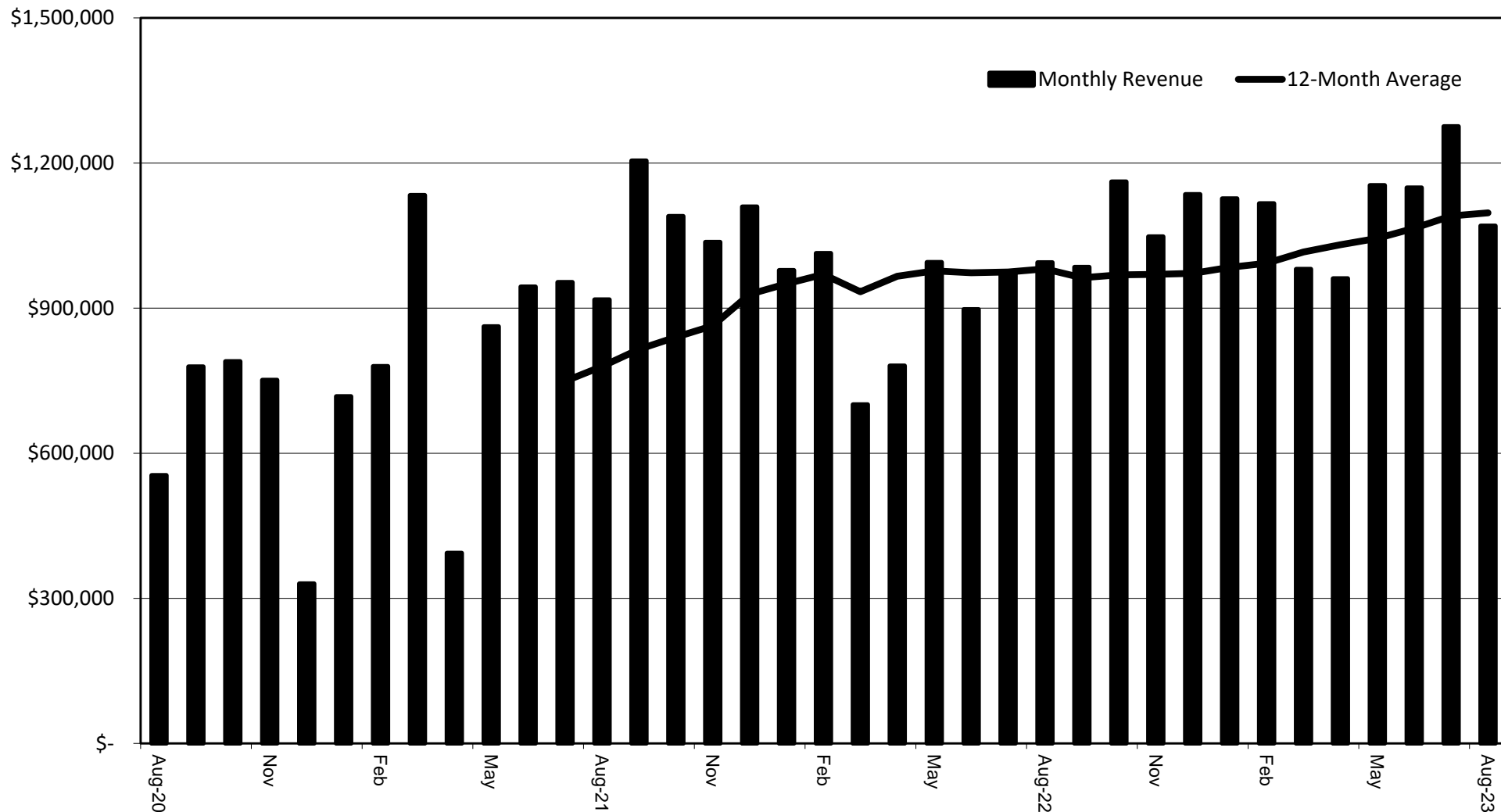
### FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.



# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE FAIRFAX COUNTY FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024

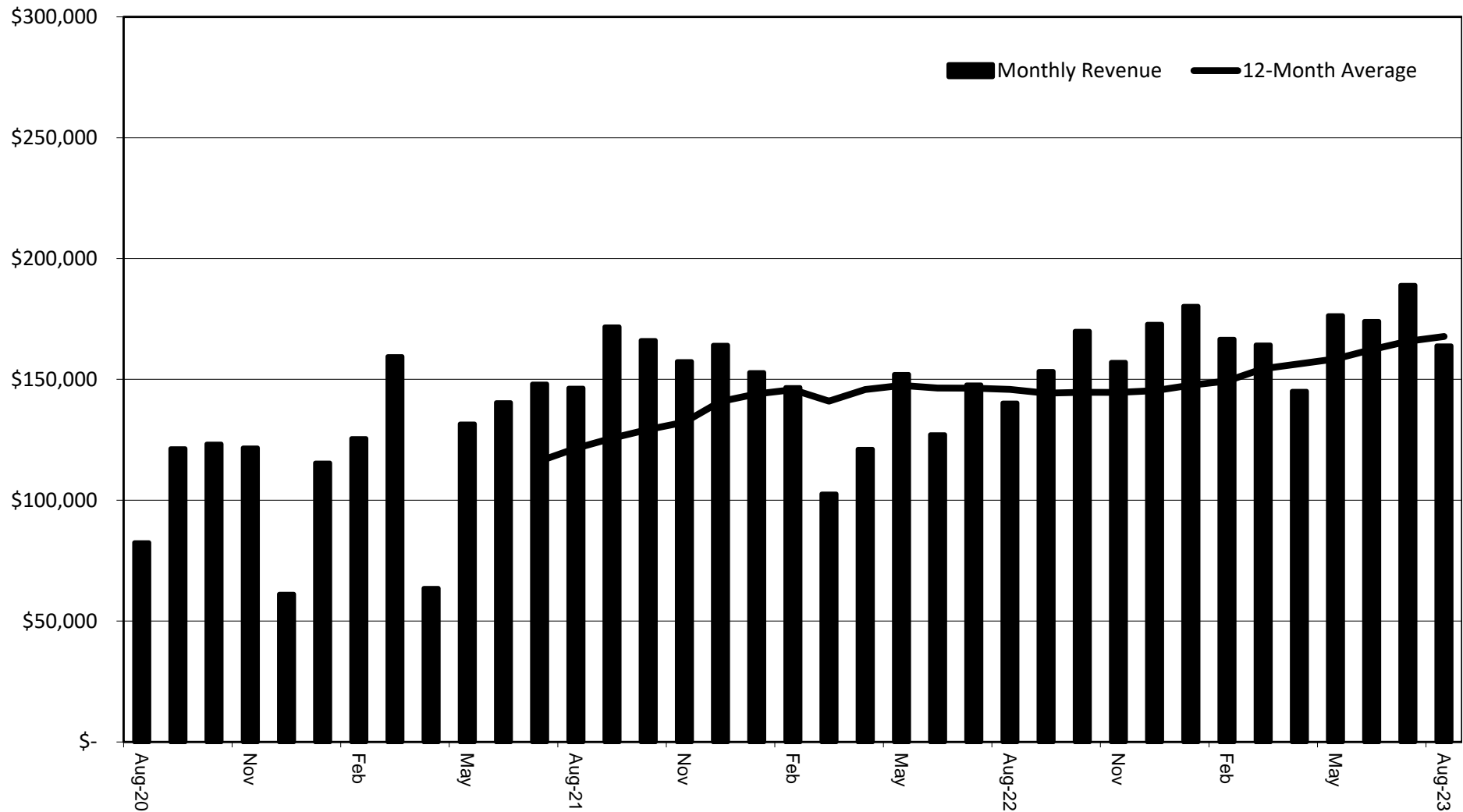


Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.

# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE

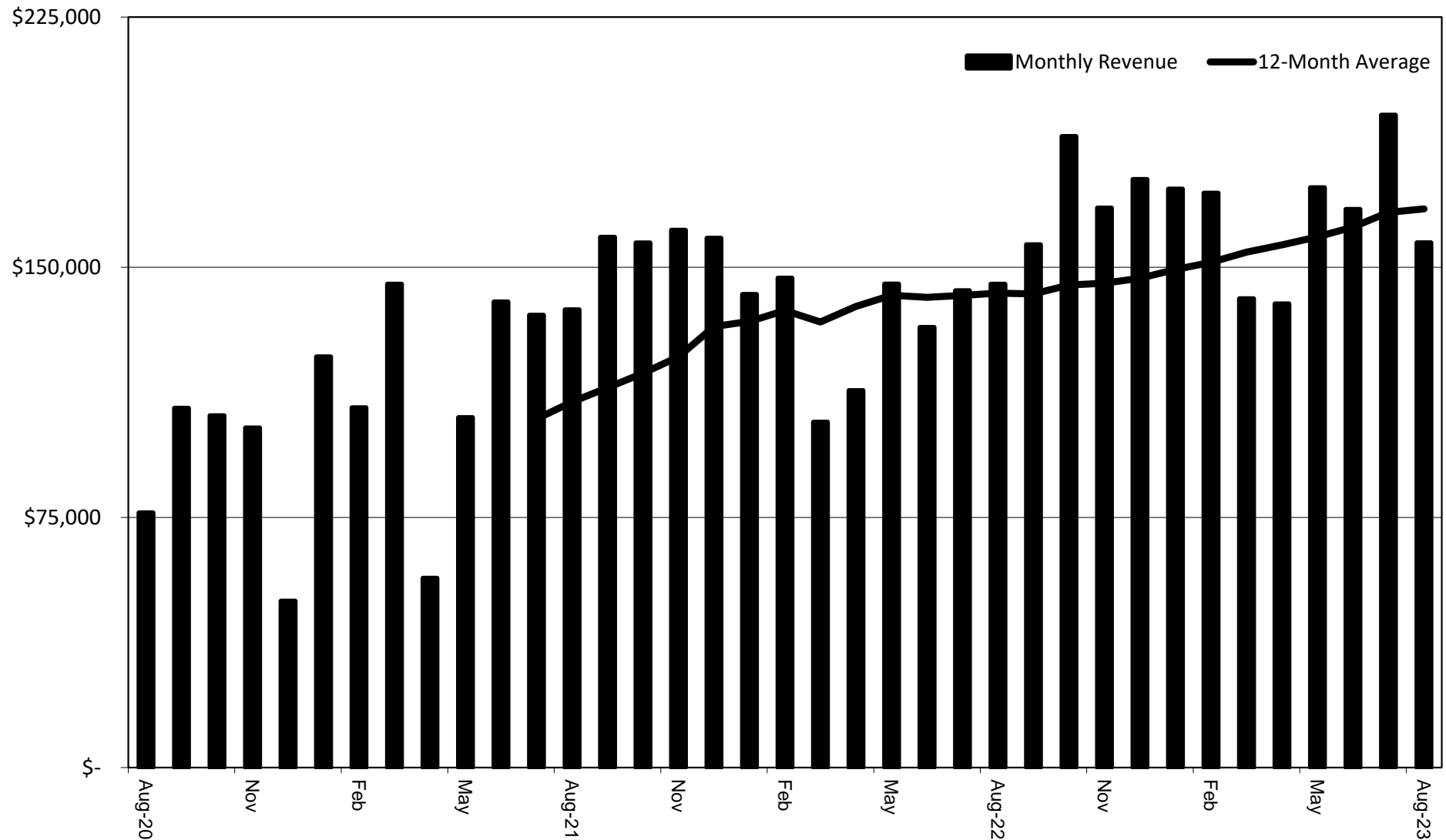
## CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

### FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



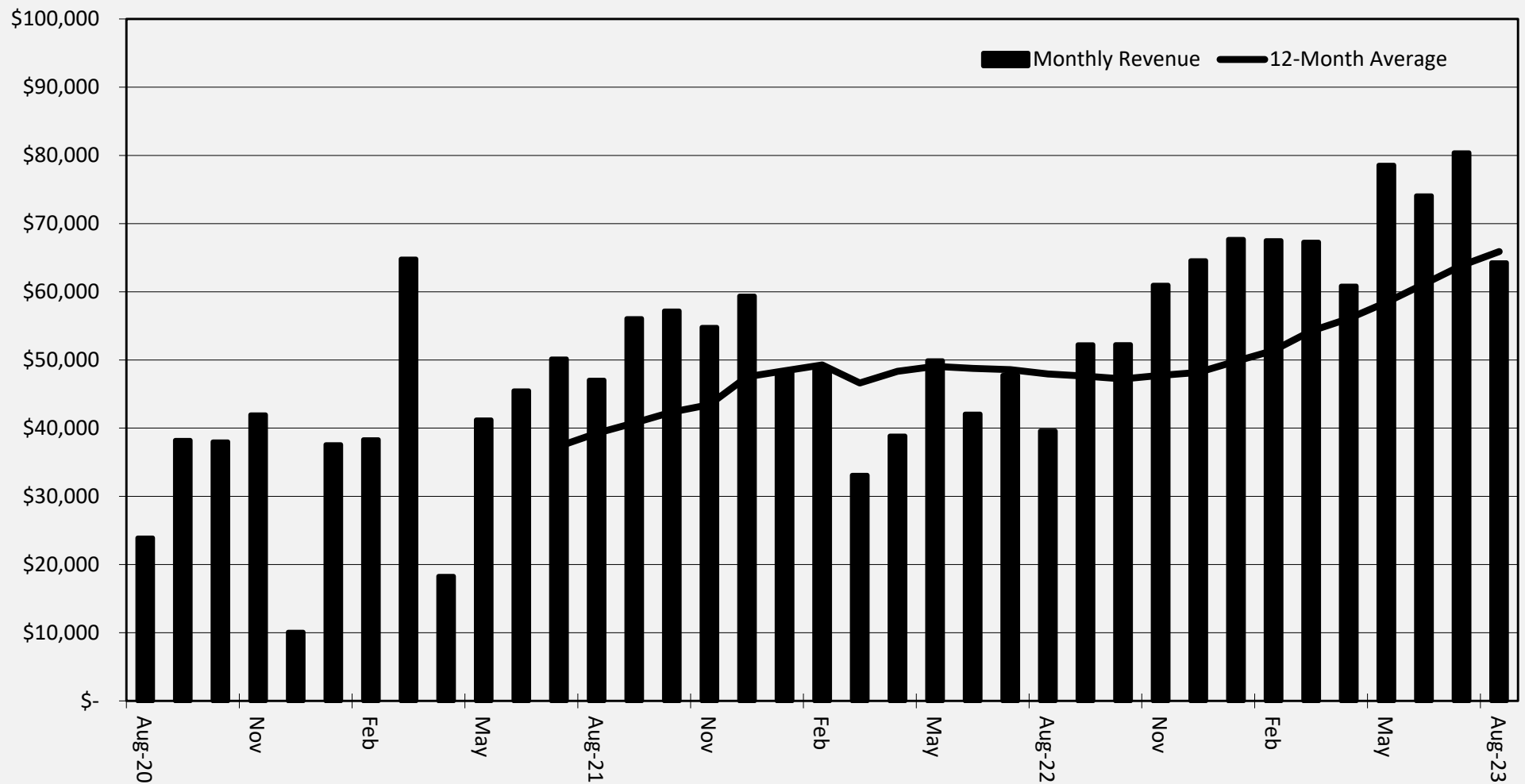
*Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.*

# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE ARLINGTON COUNTY FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



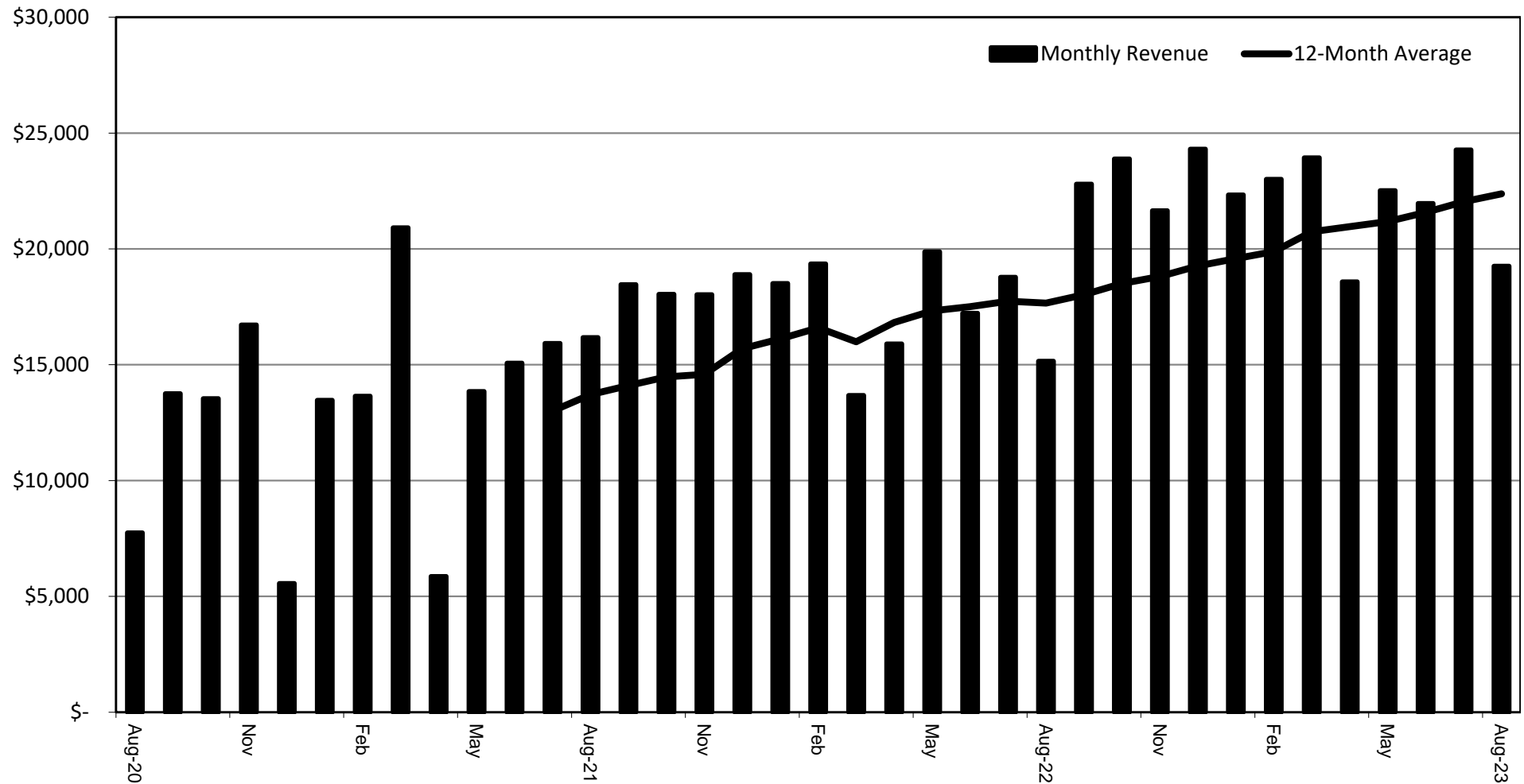
Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.

# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE CITY OF FAIRFAX FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.

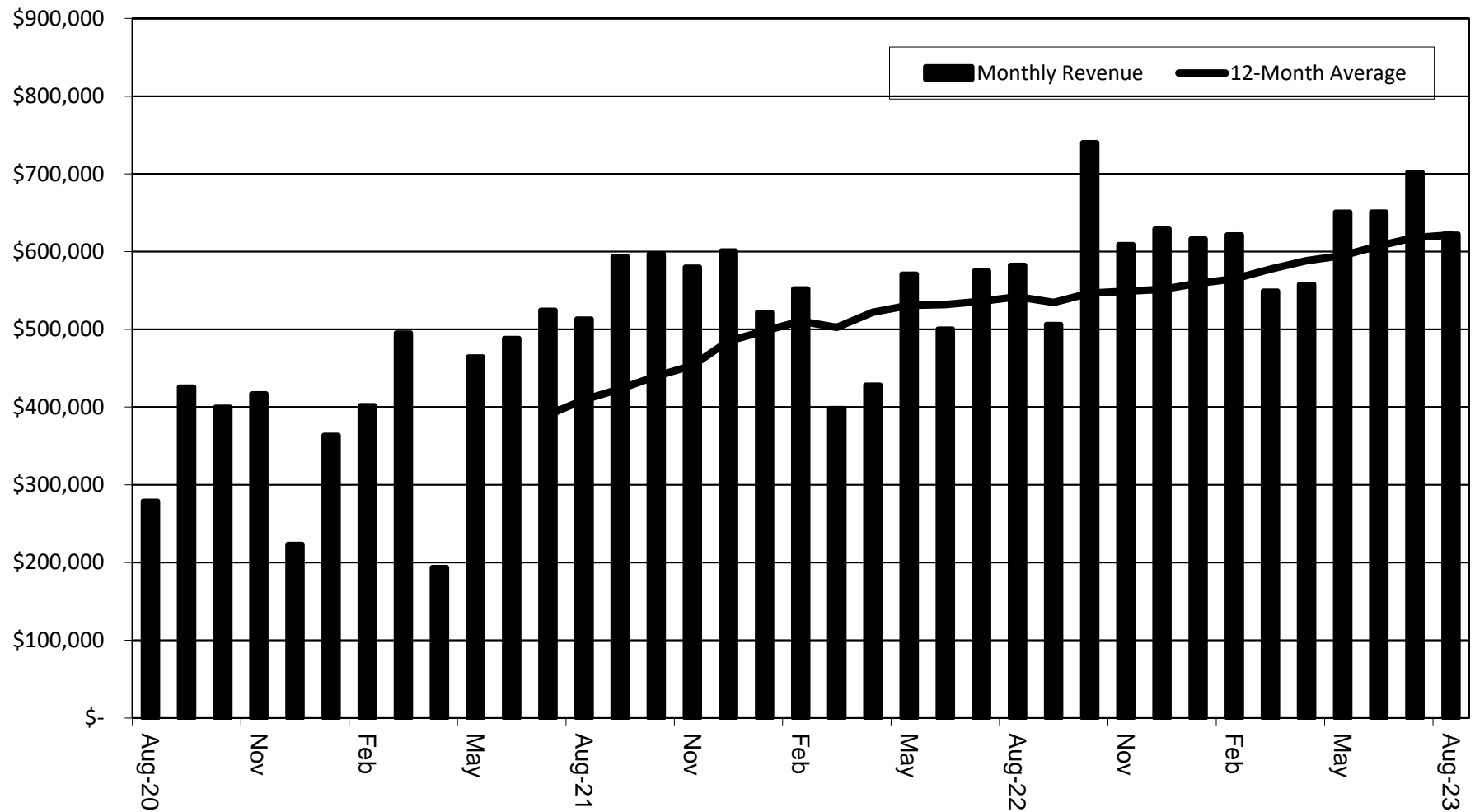
# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



*Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier .*



# NVTC MONTHLY GAS TAX REVENUE LOUDOUN COUNTY FISCAL YEARS 2021-2024



*Note: Taxes shown as received by NVTC in a particular month are generated from sales two months earlier.*