

MINUTES
NVTC COMMISSION MEETING –APRIL 3, 2025
FIRST FLOOR LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 2300 WILSON BLVD.
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The meeting of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission was called to order by Chair Snyder at 7:02 p.m.

Members Present

Canek Aguirre
Walter Alcorn
Sarah Bagley
Juli Briskman
Maureen Coffey
Matt de Ferranti
Adam Ebbin
Paul Krizek
Matt Letourneau
Alfonso Lopez
Dalia Palchik
Catherine Read
Tiffany Robinson (Alternate, Commonwealth of Virginia) *(via electronic participation)*
Saddam Azlan Salim
Paul Smedberg
David Snyder
Daniel Storck
James Walkinshaw

Members Absent

James Bierman, Jr.
Takis Karantonis
David Reid
Mark Sickles

Staff Present

Kate Mattice, Executive Director	Tenley O’Hara
Jason Adle	Aimee Perron Seibert <i>(via electronic participation)</i>
Shannon Bacon	Vikram Sinha
Genoveva Cutrell	Sophie Spiliotopoulos
Andrew D’huyvetter	Melissa Walker
Matt Friedman	Nick Donohue (DMVMoves) <i>(via electronic participation)</i>
Rhonda Gilchrest	Rich Dalton (VRE)
Adam Hager	Steve MacIsaac (VRE)
Xavier Harmony	Dallas Richards (VRE)
Meg Johnston	Nick Ruiz (VRE)
Scott Kalkwarf	Joe Swartz (VRE)
Daniel Knickelbein	
Ann McGrane	

Opening Remarks

Chair Snyder welcomed everyone to the April 3, 2025 NVTC meeting and noted that the meeting is also being livestreamed on YouTube for the public. Board Administrator Rhonda Gilchrest confirmed an in-person quorum.

Chair Snyder stated that Ms. Robinson requested electronic participation under the provision that she resides over 60 miles from the meeting location. Mr. Alcorn moved, with a second by Ms. Bagley, to approve Ms. Robinson's request for electronic participation. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Alcorn, Bagley, Briskman, Coffey, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Krizek, Letourneau, Salim, Smedberg, Snyder, Storck and Walkinshaw. The motion passed. (Ms. Palchik momentarily stepped out of the room and was not present for the vote.)

Ms. Mattice noted that NVTC received one public comment from a Fairfax County resident encouraging the Commission to be more focused on funding transit versus highways. The comment was provided to Commissioners prior to the meeting. Chair Snyder expressed appreciation of the comment and noted that Commissioners, staff, jurisdictional staff and local transit providers are absolutely committed to public transportation for the benefit of the region, citizen, economy and climate.

Minutes of the March 6, 2025 Meeting

Mr. de Ferranti moved, with a second by Mr. Walkinshaw, to approve the Minutes of the March 6, 2025 meeting. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Alcorn, Bagley, Coffey, de Ferranti, Ebbin, Krizek, Palchik, Salim, Smedberg, Snyder, Storck and Walkinshaw. Commissioners Briskman and Letourneau abstained. The motion passed.

Ms. Read arrived at 7:06 p.m. and joined the meeting.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Chair Snyder asked Virginia WMATA Board Members Paul Smedberg and Matt Letourneau to give their WMATA Board Report.

Report from the WMATA Board Members. Mr. Smedberg reported on recent ridership data. On March 27, WMATA had its first million-trip day since 2020 with over 600,000 trips on rail and over 400,000 on bus. On top of that, WMATA hit over 700,000 rail trips this past Saturday which was the second busiest Saturday in the system's history and busiest day since 2019. WMATA has also seen 47 consecutive months of year-over-year ridership growth.

Mr. Letourneau reported some good news regarding the WMATA FY 2026 budget. In response to the regional economic outlook, the general manager's recommended budget includes a \$19 million drop in total jurisdictional subsidy without impacting service due to

additional bus savings from efficient scheduling and reduced deadhead time, lower station staffing during late nights and weekends where there are currently multiple staff, deferring the extension of 50% of Yellow Line trains to Greenbelt until December, and additional technology and modernization enhancements. The WMATA Board is anticipated to consider adoption of the FY 2026 Operating Budget and FY 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Program next week.

Mr. Lopez arrived at 7:09 p.m. and joined the discussion.

Mr. Letourneau also stated that the WMATA Board approved a banning policy last week. Under the policy, someone who commits a sex offense or assault will be banned from using the Metro systems for 45 days for a first offense, 90 days for a second, and a full year for a third offense. The policy will go into effect beginning June 2, 2025. Mr. Smedberg explained that this policy is meant to keep repeat and egregious offenders off the system so they can't cause harm to employees and customers.

Mr. Krizek stepped out of the room at 7:11 p.m. and returned at 7:13 p.m.

Mr. Smedberg gave an update on the status of automatic train operation (ATO). He also spoke to the Continuing Resolution (CR) going through Congress right now. Senator Schumer has presented a bill to address the District of Columbia's budget issue as the proposed CR would require a \$1 billion cut to the District's budget over a six-month period. He stated that this does not impact WMATA as the District is required by the WMATA Compact to fund Metro. Hopefully the House will address this bill soon.

Chair Snyder announced that WMATA General Manager/CEO Randy Clarke and WMATA Board Chair Valerie Santos will be joining the Commission at the May 1 meeting.

Report from the Chairs of the WMATA Committee / Legislative and Policy Committee

Chair Snyder asked Legislative and Policy Committee Chair Canek Aguirre to give the report. Mr. Aguirre stated that while the committees did not meet last month, this update covers a lot of territory, including a report from NVTC's legislative liaison to provide a General Assembly update on the Reconvened Session and Governor Youngkin's vetoes and actions on the budget. DMVMoves Facilitator Nick Donohue will provide the Commission with an update on the last Task Force meeting and the direction of that regional body of work. Senator Ebbin, the chair of the SJ 28 Joint Subcommittee, will then provide a look ahead for the year for the work of that Joint Subcommittee of the General Assembly. And lastly, the executive director will review some potential changes to how statewide transit operating and capital funding are allocated and provide a federal update.

General Assembly Update. Legislative Liaison Aimee Perron Seibert reported that there were no transportation related legislation debated during the Reconvened Session on April 2. The governor made no changes to the WMATA budget item.

Chair Snyder thanked legislators for their work for NVTC and the entire region. Delegate Krizek stated that there were some victories in the budget. The House voted to override five amendments in the budget, so they will have to watch what the governor does. Delegate Lopez stated that depending on the repercussions on what's happening at the federal level and how it impacts the regional economy, the Commonwealth may have to revisit the budget to fund gaps in areas such as unemployment insurance and education funding. The anticipated timeframe to revisit this would be around September. Chair Snyder asked legislators to let NVTC know if there is anything the Commission can do to assist.

NVTC and Regional Work Towards Long-Term Sustainable Transit Funding. Mr. Aguirre reported that NVTC continues to track and participate in efforts to secure long-term sustainable transit funding for WMATA, VRE and the local transit agencies. After the legislative break, both DMVMoves and the SJ 28 Joint Subcommittee either have restarted or will restart their meetings. This is going to be an active year for both efforts, with their respective boards and subcommittees taking action later this year. He reminded the Commission that in January the Commission adopted a resolution on NVTC's Guiding Principles for Future Transit Funding, which will guide staff's positioning and engagement with these efforts.

Mr. Aguirre noted that the DMVMoves Task Force met on Monday, March 24 to discuss updates to WMATA's funding needs, estimated local transit needs and DMVMoves funding goals. DMVMoves is a joint effort between the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) and WMATA that seeks to establish a vision for transit in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, find cost savings and efficiencies for transit, and determine the regionwide transit funding needed to make that vision a reality. SJ 28, on the other hand, is a Virginia General Assembly-led effort that primarily focuses on how to generate revenue to solve Virginia's portion of the transit funding need.

Mr. Aguirre then introduced Nick Donohue, who is a Principal at Capitol Transportation Consulting and the facilitator for DMVMoves, to provide a more in-depth briefing on the Task Force's progress to date.

DMVMoves. Mr. Donohue explained that DMVMoves is focused on understanding the funding challenges and needs of WMATA, VRE and the other regional transit operators in order to have world-class transit service in this region. Much of WMATA's capital program over the past decades used fixed revenue sources, which haven't kept up with inflation and haven't grown over time. Inflation continues to erode the value of dedicated funding and Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) funding. WMATA will soon reach debt capacity, significantly decreasing capital funding after FY 2028, which will force WMATA to address infrastructure issues only as they arise, rather than proactively. Therefore, it is important to reinvest and modernize the existing system. This will ensure the existing system is safe, reliable, efficient and effective; continue reinvestment to sustain and improve the performance and state of good repair of the system; reduce and manage state of good repair backlog; continue to optimize service, making it more efficient and cost-effective; and implement rail automation and advanced signaling. There is also the concept of additional Frequent Bus and Bus Priority, which will deliver fast, frequent, reliable, safe service; invest

in infrastructure to make service more cost-effective; operate same frequency with fewer buses and/or reinvest in increasing service; provide more connections to economic opportunity; and grow ridership.

Mr. Donohue stated that as of March 2025, revenue growth and modernization efforts that produce cost efficiencies are significantly improving WMATA's budget outlook. WMATA currently predicts that the \$140 million FY 2028 deficit that was identified last spring has been eliminated. Continued regional economic uncertainty and other external factors may impact that outlook. If WMATA has predictability about funding levels and timing, it can develop reliable long-term investment plans. However, this becomes difficult when funding is highly restricted, subject to appropriations, or otherwise uncertain.

Mr. Donohue stated that at the direction from the Task Force, they looked at ways WMATA can leverage its existing system more effectively, increase capacity and make the system as efficient and cost-effective as possible. He noted that rail optimization and bus priority improves efficiency and he provided some examples.

Mr. Donohue stated that since December, working groups have met monthly to develop action plans that will help advance key recommendations, while weighing costs and benefits. These action plans, set for completion by June, aim to enhance customer experience region-wide and deliver cost efficiencies for transit agencies. DMVMoves is also looking at what has been done in the past and if there are issues that need to be revisited. Transparency and accountability are also important. DMVMoves is also looking at local transit needs to see if there are any gaps. They also plan to do more work with VRE and MARC.

Chair Snyder expressed his appreciation for Mr. Donohue's commitment. He stated that it is important that long term sustainable funding for WMATA and the other systems is being solved regionally. He expressed appreciation of the work of MWCOG and WMATA as well as the role of several of NVTC Commissioners on DMVMoves (Matt de Ferranti, Paul Smedberg, Mark Sickles, plus former Commissioner Jeff McKay).

Chair Snyder noted that NVTC has laid out its initial position on these efforts through a resolution passed early this year, which include a number of important policy priorities and positions. To highlight, NVTC wants to make sure that the outcome of this process provides adequate growth in revenues to meet current and future operating and capital needs for WMATA, VRE and local transit operators in Northern Virginia. NVTC wants the funding solution to build upon (or perhaps even reduce) the existing burden on local and regional revenue sources. Commissioners feel strongly that NVTC continues to be a model for distributing existing and any future revenues for WMATA, VRE and the local systems, continuing the decades-long role of NVTC in managing these transit funds. There needs to be a strong, continued federal funding support of transit – whether directly or through federal employee transit benefits. Virginia needs to come up with its own revenue solution to match Virginia's transit funding needs. NVTC looks to SJ 28 and its legislative colleagues to help solve this for Virginia.

Chair Snyder again thanked Mr. Donohue for facilitating this important effort. There are a lot of uncertainties with the regional economy, so having a thoughtful regional dialog on securing future investments in transit is so important.

Mr. Smedberg asked Mr. Donohue to provide some information about the working groups. Mr. Donohue explained that the DMVMoves Task Force is co-chaired by Paul Smedberg and Charles Allen (District of Columbia Council). The Task Force is supported by two advisory groups: the Community Partners Advisory Group, chaired by Greater Washington Board of Trade President/CEO Jack McDougle, and the Government Partners Advisory Group, chaired by Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill.

Mr. Aguirre thanked Mr. Donohue for his leadership in this effort. He expressed a concern about local bus consolidation. He stated that local bus systems reflect local government public transit priorities and there is a reason why there are local systems. He heard that at the last DMVMoves meeting, Senator Surovell pressed MWCOG to examine consolidating bus systems. Mr. Aguirre expressed his opinion that spending time discussing eliminating local bus systems (instead of looking at improving coordination) is a distraction to the bigger issue of sustainable funding. The region's local bus systems already complement the WMATA regional system. Cities and counties have created local bus systems that can and do provide local services that meet local needs. He noted that DMVMoves has higher priorities than consolidation that need to be discussed.

Mr. Donohue responded that there was a discussion at the last Task Force meeting. MWCOG Executive Director Clark Mercer noted at that meeting that DMVMoves from the outset told regional bus operators that the focus would be on coordination to work together to create a more seamless and integrated customer experience. Examples include way finding, clearer signage and coordinated information. Mr. Smedberg stated that there was a lot of talk about purchasing, training, safety, etc., which are ways to improve coordination and efficiencies. There doesn't need to be 13 different purchasing programs. People need to come to the table in good faith and be open to these opportunities. Mr. Donohue stated that it is important to identify the hurdles and work together to find solutions. Some solutions will take time.

Mr. Aguirre agreed that purchasing as a region does save money. However, some localities are farther along in some areas. The City of Alexandria currently has the largest electric bus fleet in the Commonwealth and won't necessarily be able to wait for other jurisdictions to catch up in procurement. Hopefully, at some point the region will reach a level of standardization that will allow coordinated procurement. Ms. Bagley agreed and noted that there are other opportunities for coordination, such as on-route charging.

Ms. Bagley stated that VRE is updating its System Plan to account for the generational changes being made by Transforming Rail in Virginia. It is vital to ensure VRE has the funding to take advantage of these changes. She asked Mr. Donohue to speak to how VRE's funding discussion fits into the work being done. Mr. Donohue stated that although WMATA's budget is larger than the other operators', other operators' services are also extremely important. He reviewed some of DMVMoves early work regarding VRE but noted that they plan to revisit

and refine the work in light of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's purchase of the Manassas Line.

Mr. Letourneau expressed his opinion that the current model isn't sustainable for several reasons. The region is not making efficient use of the total volume of transit money that is available to the region because it is too split. So, it may not be that the region agrees to one bus operator, but it may be important to look at one maintenance provider or one fleet type. There needs to be a realization that the region needs to come up with a funding source, since the federal government may feel differently about funding transit compared to the previous administration. It will be important to drive value to the maximum extent possible of the total amount of transit funding that is available. This may mean doing things differently or with some discomfort.

Mr. de Ferranti observed that this conversation is an example of the great ongoing policy work that is and needs to keep occurring at DMVMoves. The District's fiscal situation as it relates to Congress is also a component of the discussion.

Mr. Alcorn stated that it's not just the Commonwealth, but local governments are also paying more after the rebaselining. It gets to the heart of how transit is being paid for currently. For local governments there is a heavy dependence on property taxes. In the long run, he questioned if it makes sense for transit to be competing for funding with schools, police, fire and rescue, or other local services. He also stated that revenues generated in the NVTC district (or even, statewide) for WMATA should come to NVTC – like they do now - to provide for/maintain accountability to the Northern Virginia localities. This system has worked for decades. As DMVMoves continues to work through the regional solution, Mr. Alcorn expressed his hope that it doesn't seek to create a new or different system – or, importantly, doesn't skip the level of accountability to Northern Virginia taxpayers, that they already have with NVTC. It is important to ensure WMATA and the other systems can be held accountable for the revenues generated here in Virginia.

Mr. Donohue stated that accountability is very important. Mr. Smedberg acknowledged Mr. Donohue's thoughtful strategic approach to finding solutions.

Mr. Alcorn stepped out of the room at 8:06 p.m.

Chair Snyder expressed interest in knowing how federal tariffs will potentially impact the long-term plan for transit.

[SJ 28 Joint Subcommittee](#). SJ 28 Chair Ebbin stated that this will be a big year for the SJ 28 Joint Subcommittee. The next Joint Subcommittee meeting will be at 2:00 p.m. on April 22 at the offices of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). This meeting will pick up from last fall and provide a refresher on how existing transit funding works, the funding challenges faced by transit agencies, and will begin the discussion at a high level of what a funding solution might look like in Virginia. NVTC staff continue to work closely with DMVMoves and focus on a Virginia solution at the SJ 28 Joint Subcommittee. Looking ahead, there will be three more SJ 28 meetings in 2025. In June, the Joint Subcommittee will review

an updated series of revenue estimates for 15 potential sources. In September, the focus will be on a refined set of transit needs before developing a recommendation at the final meeting in November. Mr. Ebbin stated that he looks forward to continuing to engage with the Commission over the course of the year and keeping everyone well informed of the subcommittee's work reaching a recommendation for a long-term funding solution in Virginia.

Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC). Ms. Mattice reported that at a meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) Rail and Transit Subcommittee on March 18, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) proposed a reexamination of its Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) transit capital and operating formula program. This statewide MERIT transit capital and operating formula program supports transit providers across the Commonwealth, and it includes local transit agencies in Northern Virginia like Fairfax Connector and ART. MERIT does not include VRE and WMATA, as these agencies receive state funding in a different way.

Both Mr. Smedberg and Mr. Ebbin left the meeting at 8:10 p.m. and did not return. Mr. Alcorn returned to the discussion at 8:11 p.m.

Ms. Mattice stated that she is a member of the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) representing the Virginia Transit Association (VTA). The goal of preparing any policy changes for CTB consideration in December and would apply to FY 2028 DRPT funding. Ms. Mattice invited DRPT Director Robinson to speak to the desired outcomes of the process.

DRPT Director Robinson stated that DRPT is working on this effort with its consultants, Kimley-Horn. They plan to bring back recommendations to TSDAC in a few months. Virginia Code requires this review. She stated that no matter what policy gets approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, there is already a plan for a full year of education and working with partners before implementation.

Federal Update. Ms. Mattice reported that on March 15, President Trump signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) that funds the federal government through the rest of FY 2025. The CR, together with Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) advance appropriations, provides \$20.9 billion for public transit in FY 2025, an increase of \$82 million (0.4%) from FY 2024 levels. The CR also contains the full annual \$150 million in federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) funding for WMATA.

Ms. Mattice stated that President Trump's nominee to lead the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), testified at his confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs on March 27. Marc Molinaro is a former Congressman from outside New York City, and his nomination to lead FTA has been endorsed by a wide range of organizations including the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and the AFL-CIO.

Ms. Mattice stated that she will be attending the American Public Transportation Association Mobility Conference where she will be participating in the association's

legislative steering committee meeting. She hopes to report back to the Commission on the key items discussed as APTA looks to share the next surface transportation authorization that must be completed in the next 18 months (or extension of the IJJA). She is mindful of the importance of federal investments and regulations affecting all transit systems' activities.

Report from the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee

Chair Snyder asked Program Advisory Committee Chair Dalia Palchik to give her report. Ms. Palchik stated that there is one action being requested to authorize the executive director to execute the contract award for Envision Route 7 BRT Phase 4.2 Mobility Analysis. Staff will also give a presentation on microtransit in response to a request from the Commission last month. Lastly, there will be a brief update on the I-395/95 Commuter Choice program. She then turned it over to Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha to provide some good news about Envision Route 7.

Envision Route 7 BRT Project. Mr. Sinha announced that NVTC's FY 2023 Federal Community Project Grant (sponsored by Congressmembers Don Beyer and Gerry Connolly) was awarded last week. As a reminder, the Commission in December authorized staff to issue an RFP and, after an evaluation process, staff have selected Kimley-Horn. The Commission is now being asked to act on the contract award. The primary area of study for this next phase of work is in Fairfax County between Seven Corners and the Mark Center area. The effort will collect traffic data and understand the operational impacts of running a BRT along the corridor. The study will also resolve the southern terminus of the BRT alignment in Alexandria and complete the analysis for Falls Church on how to optimize the use of limited right of way. The work will kick off later this year, and NVTC staff will keep Commissioners apprised of study progress and outreach opportunities at future Commission meetings and provide more substantive updates at the June 18 Program Advisory Committee meeting.

Ms. Palchik moved, with a second by Ms. Bagley, to authorize the executive director to execute the contract award with Kimley-Horn for the Route 7 Phase 4.2 Mobility Analysis. The vote in favor was cast by Commissioners Aguirre, Alcorn, Bagley, Briskman, Coffey, de Ferranti, Krizek, Letourneau, Lopez, Palchik, Read, Salim, Snyder, Storck and Walkinshaw. Since Mr. Smedberg left earlier in the meeting, a roll call vote followed for Ms. Robinson who was participating electronically and she voted in the affirmative. The motion passed.

Microtransit 101. Ms. Palchik stated that at the last Commission meeting, Chair Snyder asked for an overview of the type of public transit that is call "microtransit." She invited Senior Program Manager, Dr. Xavier Harmony to give the microtransit presentation, covering what microtransit is, how it works, where it exists or is being considered in Northern Virginia, and key policy considerations.

Dr. Harmony stated that the definition of "microtransit" can vary on who is asked. Microtransit characteristics include:

- On-demand
- Typically reserved with an app
- Typically smaller vehicles
- Flexible route structures and schedules
- Often serve a zone
- Riders are grouped with other riders traveling in the zone
- Typically public-private partnerships (e.g., Via, RideCo) but can vary

Dr. Harmony explained that microtransit isn't new and it's a modern form of "demand response" transit. Paratransit is another form of demand response required by federal law to serve people with disabilities. Virginia funding for microtransit comes primarily from DRPT grant programs. Other funding sources used in Virginia include local sources, FTA Integrated Mobility Innovation Grant, and the federal American Rescue Plan Act. He provided some examples of different microtransit initiatives in Northern Virginia.

Dr. Harmony reviewed cost considerations. Labor is the largest part of transit operational costs, making up about 70% of the cost but labor costs can be lower per vehicle for microtransit. He noted that this may not mean it is cheaper to operate. Microtransit is only more cost effective if service productivity is low. It is important to consider what goals are trying to be achieved. Microtransit, for example, is better for serving coverage service goals, which are often considered the opposite to ridership goals when planning transit services. It is also important to consider how success is measured. Using ridership as an evaluation metric can be misleading. Instead, metrics that capture the accessibility, safety or customer satisfaction impacts of microtransit may be more appropriate.

Dr. Harmony reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of microtransit. He concluded by reviewing the policy considerations:

1. Identify bigger picture mobility program goals to understand why microtransit may be more suitable than other transportation alternatives
2. Evaluate how microtransit fares integrate into larger fare systems
3. Consider how to manage microtransit costs
4. Explore options to balance supply and demand
 - Possible tools include pricing strategies and trip capping
 - ADA/paratransit requirements can add complexity.
5. Consider how to mitigate potential equity concerns
 - Technology gaps
 - ADA accessible vehicles need to be enforced

Ms. Briskman asked a few questions in light of Loudoun County starting a pilot microtransit service. Dr. Harmony provided some information about service coverage. The benefit of a pilot program will help determine if microtransit is a good fit. He hasn't seen any data on the pros and cons of using a specific type of vehicle, such as a van. Training requirements for drivers would also be different. He suggested Loudoun County staff reach out to OmniRide staff on their experience with their microtransit service.

Mr. Walkinshaw asked at what point does it make sense to provide a voucher system so a customer could use a rideshare or taxi instead of establishing a microtransit service. Dr. Harmony agreed that it should be a jurisdictional decision of what works best and the most cost efficient.

Chair Snyder stated that this issue is a relatively unexplored area and there could be efficiencies and cost savings, so he asked staff to provide an update at a future meeting about new research and projects.

I-395/95 Commuter Choice Update. Ms. Palchik stated that the written staff report provides an update on the FY 2026-2027 I-395/95 Commuter Choice program. The report contains the list of technical evaluation scores for eligible projects that have applied. The public comment period is open through April 11, and all comments received will be shared with members of the Joint Commission Working Group (JCWG) at the all-virtual meeting scheduled for April 24 when they will review the draft staff-recommended Program of Projects. In addition to the public comment period, a virtual public hearing will be held immediately prior to the Joint PAC/JCWG meeting on April 24 to provide members of the public with an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Program of Projects under consideration for funding. The virtual public hearing will start at 4:00 p.m. and the public will be able to register ahead of time. The draft recommended Program of Projects will be presented to both Commissions at their May meetings with action at their June meetings.

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Chair Snyder asked VRE CEO Rich Dalton to give his report followed by the VRE Commission Orientation and System Plan Update.

VRE CEO Report. Mr. Dalton encouraged Commissioners to read his written CEO Report. He reported that for the month of March, ridership increased 105% with on-time performance hovering around 85%. April is also seeing strong ridership. In response to a question from Mr. de Ferranti, Mr. Dalton stated ridership is increasing due to the return-to-office mandates.

Mr. Letourneau left the room at 8:51 p.m. and returned at 8:54 p.m.

VRE Commission Orientation and System Plan Update. Mr. Dalton reviewed VRE's mission statement, structure, governance documents and the Plan of Delegation. The Commissions (NVTC and PRTC) retain authority over the following:

- Annual VRE budget, six-year financial plan, and Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Amendments to the VRE Master Agreement
- Amendments to insurance plans and agreements
- Operating access agreements with freight railroads, Amtrak and VPRA
- Hiring and termination of VRE CEO and General Counsel, and employment agreement amendments

- State, regional and federal grant applications
- State and federal legislative agendas
- VRE strategic plan
- VRE-related debt
- Alternate construction methods and public-private partnership (P3) projects
- Sale, purchase or lease of real and personal property in the commissions' names
- Personnel plan and policies
- Service expansion and reduction
- New VRE commuter rail stations
- All actions reserved to the Commissions by the VRE Master Agreement and those not expressly delegated to the Operations Board

Mr. Dalton stated that VRE is currently updating the Plan of Delegation to clarify some topics. Approval will come to the Commissions in the near future. He also reviewed the composition of the Operations Board, as well as staff and contract operators.

Mr. Dalton asked VRE Chief Engineer Dallas Richards and Planning Program Manager Nick Ruiz to give a presentation on the Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV) program and draft VRE System Plan 2050. Mr. Richards reported that TRV is a \$4 billion statewide rail initiative, which was created by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) in 2020. TRV also has numerous stakeholders and numerous capital projects, such as the new Long Bridge. One of the biggest elements of the TRV program was the purchase of the railroad right-of-way.

Mr. Letourneau left the meeting at 8:59 p.m. and did not return.

Mr. Richards observed that the stated benefits of TRV are capacity (infrastructure and right-of-way create additional capacity and improve fluidity between modes), quality (expands high-quality, modern service with more frequent, more reliable and more convenient service) and choice (more choice in moving people and goods efficiently while accommodating growing demands).

Mr. Ruiz stated that once the System Plan 2050 is approved, the region won't have to wait until 2050 to realize many of these improvements. In the short-term, VRE will move forward to expand service through the end of this decade, consistent with Transforming Rail in Virginia (TRV), with a service and investment plan that includes running up to 63% more daily roundtrips on weekdays, full weekend service and running trains both directions each day. He also reviewed the personal and societal benefits of increased VRE service. By 2050, VRE will be the region's transit "spine" where VRE will be able to service multiple connections.

Ms. Bagley stated that she has heard this presentation multiple times but just realized that with this vision for the future VRE will become a passenger rail service. This discussion relates to the DMVMoves conversation as VRE is the connection into the regional transit system. VRE has a vital role to play in the larger transit conversation. Mr. Krizek agreed and stated that it is exciting that a person will be able to go from Culpepper to Spotsylvania using VRE. He asked if this work is predicated on any population growth. Mr. Ruiz stated that analysis shows that jurisdictions such as Spotsylvania County, Stafford County and western

Prince William County are projected to grow significantly more than inner jurisdictions such as Arlington County and the City of Alexandria.

Mr. Alcorn stated that he needs a lot more data on this before the Commission takes action on the System Plan. Just because a jurisdiction is growing rapidly doesn't mean that people will ride the trains. The investment in operating and capital need to be worth it. He likes VRE's vision but there needs to be a deep dive into this issue. Chair Snyder observed that there is an element where parts of the Commonwealth will be connected in a way that they aren't connected now except by car. This would be a comprehensive rail system that serves the entire Commonwealth and the east coast of the United States. There will be meaningful options. Mr. Alcorn agreed but stated that it is important to look deeply at the assumptions taking into account the fiscal cliff in future subsidies. Mr. Krizek asked how this plan compares to Virginia's neighboring states. Mr. Ruiz stated that at the national level, commuter rail is looking at ways to reinvent itself beyond providing service for the traditional 9-to-5 workday. Mr. Dalton stated that MARC is doing something similar and VRE has been collaborating with them. From a statewide rail perspective, VRE is connected to the state rail vision. Ms. Bagley stated that the presentations at the Operations Board meetings are way more detailed and she assured Commissioners that the System Plan will be thoroughly vetted at the Operations Board level before it comes back to NVTC. She would like to think that future users will be making different calculations based on such things as vehicle costs and climate impacts.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation

DRPT Director Robinson encouraged Commissioners to read her written report. She reported that the Draft Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) for FY 2026-2031 will be presented at the April 15 Commonwealth Transportation Board workshop in Richmond. The Northern Virginia public hearing on the draft SYIP is currently planned for May 8 at 5:00 p.m. at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office in Fairfax.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Mattice encouraged Commissioners to read her Executive Director Newsletter, which highlights some of NVTC's recent efforts and events. She then reviewed upcoming meetings and events:

- Joint Program Advisory Committee/Joint Commission Working Group will meet virtually on April 24 at 4:30 p.m.
- Next Commission Meeting is May 1 at 7:00 p.m. (Executive Committee at 6:00 p.m.)
- Joint WMATA Committee/Legislative and Policy Committee will meet on May 29 at 6:00 p.m. This is now an all-virtual meeting.

Ms. Mattice introduced three new staff members: Grant and Procurement Manager Meg Johnston, Program Analyst Jason Adle and Program Analyst Shannon Bacon.

Ms. Mattice stated that the February 2025 Financial Reports are provided in the meeting materials. There were no comments or questions.

Adjournment

Ms. Bagley moved, with a second by Ms. Palchik, to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous and Chair Snyder adjourned the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Approved this 1st day of May 2025.

David F. Snyder
Chair

Matthew F. Letourneau
Secretary-Treasurer