

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**NVTC Suite #230 Conference Room**  
**2300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia**  
**Public Streaming via YouTube**  
**September 18, 2025**

Program Advisory Committee Members Present:

Dalia Palchik  
Juli Briskman

Program Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Sarah Bagley  
Maureen Coffey  
David Snyder

NVTC Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, Executive Director  
Jason Adle  
Shannon Bacon  
Andrew D’huyvetter  
Adam Hager  
Daniel Knickelbein  
Ann McGrane  
Tenley O’Hara  
Sophie Spiliotopoulos  
Melissa Walker  
Owen Williams  
Brent Riddle (Fairfax County)  
Kirk Dand (Arlington County)  
Randy Minchew (Commonwealth Transportation Board)

Program Advisory Committee Chair Palchik called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. She stated that the meeting is being streamed live via NVTC’s YouTube channel. She noted that they did not have a quorum, but it was agreed to go ahead and have staff give their presentations. Chair Palchik noted that the meeting is not a formal Program Advisory Committee meeting, but since staff followed the public meeting requirements, they can continue to meet in their role as Commissioners.

Chair Palchik stated that acceptance of the Meeting Summary of April 24, 2025 Joint Program Advisory Committee/Joint Commission Working Group meeting will be requested at the next meeting when a quorum is present.

## Transit Ridership Update

Chair Palchik introduced Deputy Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane who explained that the presentation by Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos would highlight the strength of transit in Northern Virginia ahead of the 2026 Legislative Session.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos stated that the NoVaTransit Data Dashboard, NVTC's resource that provides information on current and historical performance of transit in Northern Virginia, has been updated to improve transparency and usability of the dashboard. The updated dashboard is now live on the NVTC website.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos proceeded to the presentation, noting that overall, transit ridership in Northern Virginia is strong. From January to July 2025, there were 706,000 weekly bus riders on Northern Virginia transit services, 1.3 million weekly Metrorail riders in Virginia, 47,000 weekly VRE riders – all of which culminate in 15% year-over-year ridership increase. For comparison, the rest of the Commonwealth showed an 11% year-over-year ridership increase.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos stated that in June 2025, Virginia Metrobus routes and local bus services exceeded the average ridership from 2019. Many agency-level initiatives played a part in these increases. Several local agencies have restructured or redesigned their bus networks. Other agencies provided service enhancements. Finally, many local agencies have rolled out free and reduced fare programs to reduce financial barriers to accessing transit. These agency initiatives and others have contributed to ridership increases across all agencies.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos also noted that on long-haul commuter routes and VRE, federal Return to Office mandates and similar trends have resulted in a doubling of ridership on commuter bus services between January and March 2025 and 76% higher ridership on VRE over the past six months. Long-term investments such as the Long Bridge Replacement and upgrades along the Manassas Line will provide the infrastructure necessary to support future growth.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos stated that WMATA has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve their system, such as the implementation of the Better Bus Network on June 29, 2025, optimization of rail service with more peak service, deployment of the Tap.Ride.Go. payment (the ability to pay with a credit or debit card or linked smart device) on the rail system, and the return of Automatic Train Operation (ATO) across the entire network. In terms of safety, enhanced enforcement measures, including but not limited to a new banning policy, have resulted in a decrease in serious crime by 40% and a decrease in rail fare evasion by 82%. Taken together, these initiatives led WMATA to exceed customer satisfaction targets for all modes. Chair Palchik noted that WMATA won the 2025 Outstanding Public Transportation System award from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

Ms. Spiliotopoulos stated that ridership within the WMATA network is continuing to increase, with 24 million trips taking place on bus and rail each month between March and June 2025. One trend to note is that weekend ridership at Virginia Metrorail stations in 2025

is 30% higher compared to 2019. Ridership is also increasing compared to peer systems. WMATA has seen a change in ridership of 93% from FY 2022 to FY 2025. This contrasts with peers who have seen increases between 24% to 52% in the same period.

Ms. Spiliotopoulos concluded her presentation by noting that these successes have been because agencies have been able to maintain service levels. However, funding uncertainty puts these ridership gains both for local agencies and WMATA at risk – particularly with state aid in decline. The SJ 28 initiative will work to find a long-term funding solution for the local agencies, while DMVMoves will work to find a long-term funding solution for both the local agencies and WMATA as part of its work. NVTC plans to elevate the success of transit in Northern Virginia ahead of the next General Assembly Session.

Ms. Briskman provided an update on microtransit pilot services being launched in Loudoun County. She asked if there was a way to calculate how much time commuters are saving by using transit and how much CO2 emissions are being prevented from transit use.

Chair Palchik introduced incoming Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) Urban At-Large Member Randy Minchew, who provided an overview of his history and experience.

#### Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Update

Chair Palchik then introduced Envision Route 7 Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha who provided an update on Envision Route 7.

Mr. Sinha reviewed the Route 7 corridor and the current Metrobus F20 service, as well as the existing capital projects that will ultimately support BRT on Route 7. Over \$518 million in capital project funding will be invested in the corridor to deliver on Envision Route 7 BRT. He then gave an overview of the project task and outreach phases, highlighting the specific tasks for the Phase 4-2 project, two distinct outreach phases, and two distinct analysis tasks for Falls Church and Alexandria.

Mr. Sinha explained the upcoming “Building Understanding” outreach phase, which includes high-level goals for the outreach and the key questions that would be asked of the public and of key stakeholders around the project. This phase aims to increase awareness and understanding of the project and BRT service in general, collect feedback to inform decisions for the Alexandria southern terminus analysis task, and empower stakeholders to become advocates and champions for the project. The outreach will include several pop-up events at key locations along the corridor, as well as bus stop chats. There will also be an open house event at the Culmore Library on October 15 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Sinha concluded by providing a more in-depth overview of bus service on Route 7 and NVTC’s role in the Route 7 corridor. The Phase 4-2 study aims to advance jurisdictional decision-making on BRT route and bus treatments but will not make bus operation decisions and is not looking to remove bus routes. As part of this project, NVTC is convening staff from the jurisdictions, VDOT, regional agencies and transit agencies along the corridor to ensure the community is served and to explore broader opportunities to collaborate along the corridor on service and infrastructure improvements. He stated that NVTC has rolled out a

public-facing map to allow viewers to see the location of bus priority infrastructure in the region. This map was enabled by the efforts of jurisdictional staff sharing data on the location and details of bus priority infrastructure. The map includes details on bus priority lanes, transit signal priority, and other similar infrastructure. It is available on NVTC's website.

Chair Palchik asked how soon implementation activity on the project would be, highlighting that there may be concerns about engaging in something without a clear timeline. Mr. Sinha responded that NVTC staff acknowledge the phased nature of the project and have been working with and supporting jurisdictional and transit agency staff towards advancing components of the project. NVTC staff have been actively working with Fairfax County staff to facilitate work on the project. There are also active conversations with WMATA about putting forward an I-66 Commuter Choice application for a peak-period, limited-stop service similar to the ultimate Envision Route 7 BRT service.

Director of Programs and Policy Andrew D'huyvetter also provided additional context noting that the project includes significant coordination with the main owners of the right of way (VDOT). The Envision Route 7 team will be coming to the Fairfax County Transportation Committee later in the fall to brief the committee on the project and provide updates specific to the Fairfax County portion of the project.

#### Other Business

Ms. Palchik announced that the next PAC meeting has yet to be scheduled but will occur sometime in 2026.

Ms. Palchik adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m.