

Combined
Blue Items/Handouts/
Presentations
for
October 1, 2026
NVTC Meeting

Commuter Choice Updates

October 1, 2026





FY 2026 Commuter Choice Annual Report



FY 2026 Annual Report – By the Numbers

Each weekday in FY 2026, Commuter Choice projects **saved travelers a total of**



2,340 hours
of travel time



220,000 miles
of vehicle travel



\$31,000
in fuel expenditures

*Across 10 years, Commuter Choice's **\$218,000,000** investment in transit and other transportation projects has improved travel and overall quality of life for Northern Virginians.*

2.5M

hours of travel
time savings



254.7M

fewer vehicle
miles traveled

369

automobile
crashes avoided



77%

greenhouse gas
emission reduction
relative to
single-occupancy
vehicle trips



14.5M

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



\$89.3M

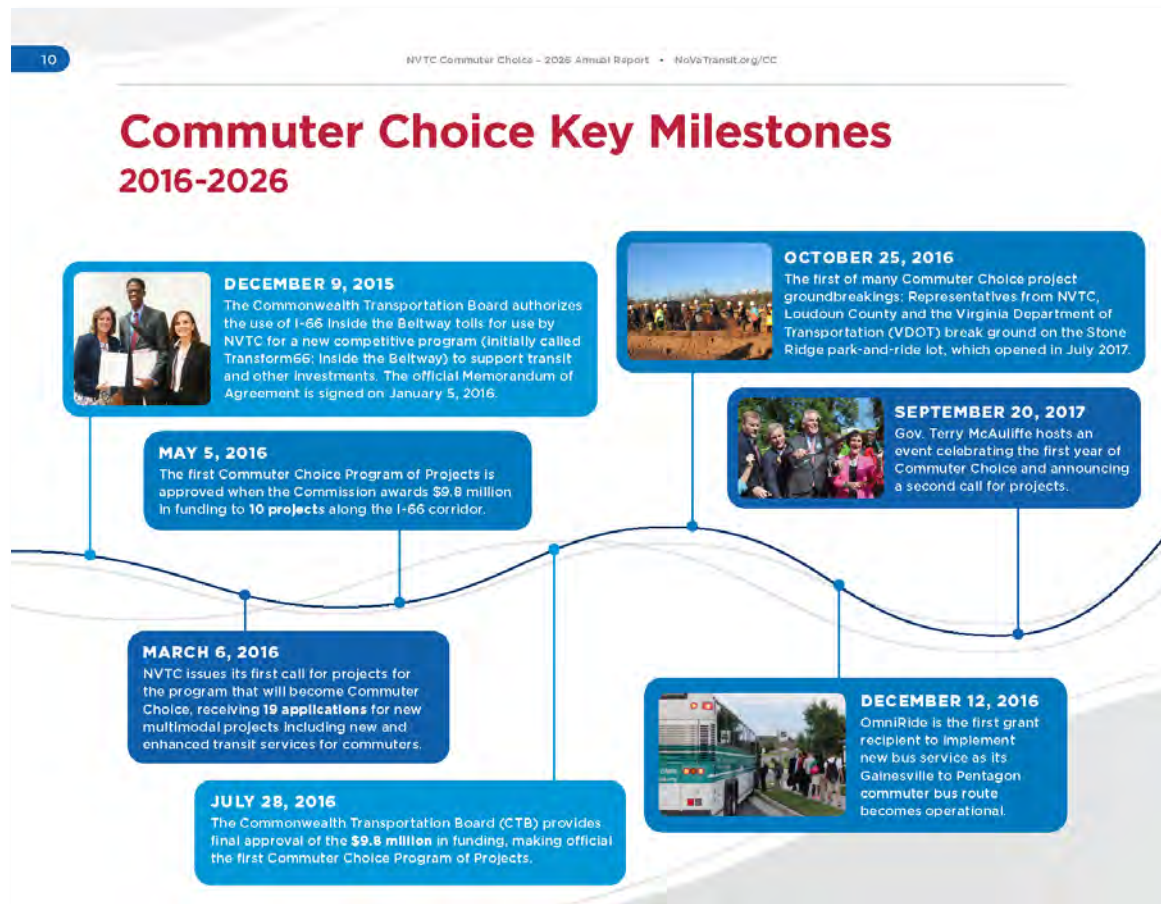
in regional economic
benefit from reduced
travel delay



\$33.9M

in fuel cost savings
for commuters

FY 2026 Annual Report – 10 Years of Commuter Choice



11

NVTC Commuter Choice – 2026 Annual Report • [NvtaTransit.org/CC](https://www.nvta.org/cc)

A novel idea was born 10 years ago: reinvest money collected from tolls on Northern Virginia's most traffic-congested highways into projects that provide people with more ways to travel and move more efficiently. Since 2016, Commuter Choice has done just that - provide transportation options and help reduce congestion on the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors.

FY 2026 Annual Report – Current Projects

31 current projects
(in operation or under construction)
as of June 30, 2026

By project type:

- **Bus Service: 23**
- **Bus Capital: 1**
- **Access to Transit: 2**
- **Rail Capital: 2**
- **Park-and-Ride: 1**
- **Transportation Demand Management: 2**

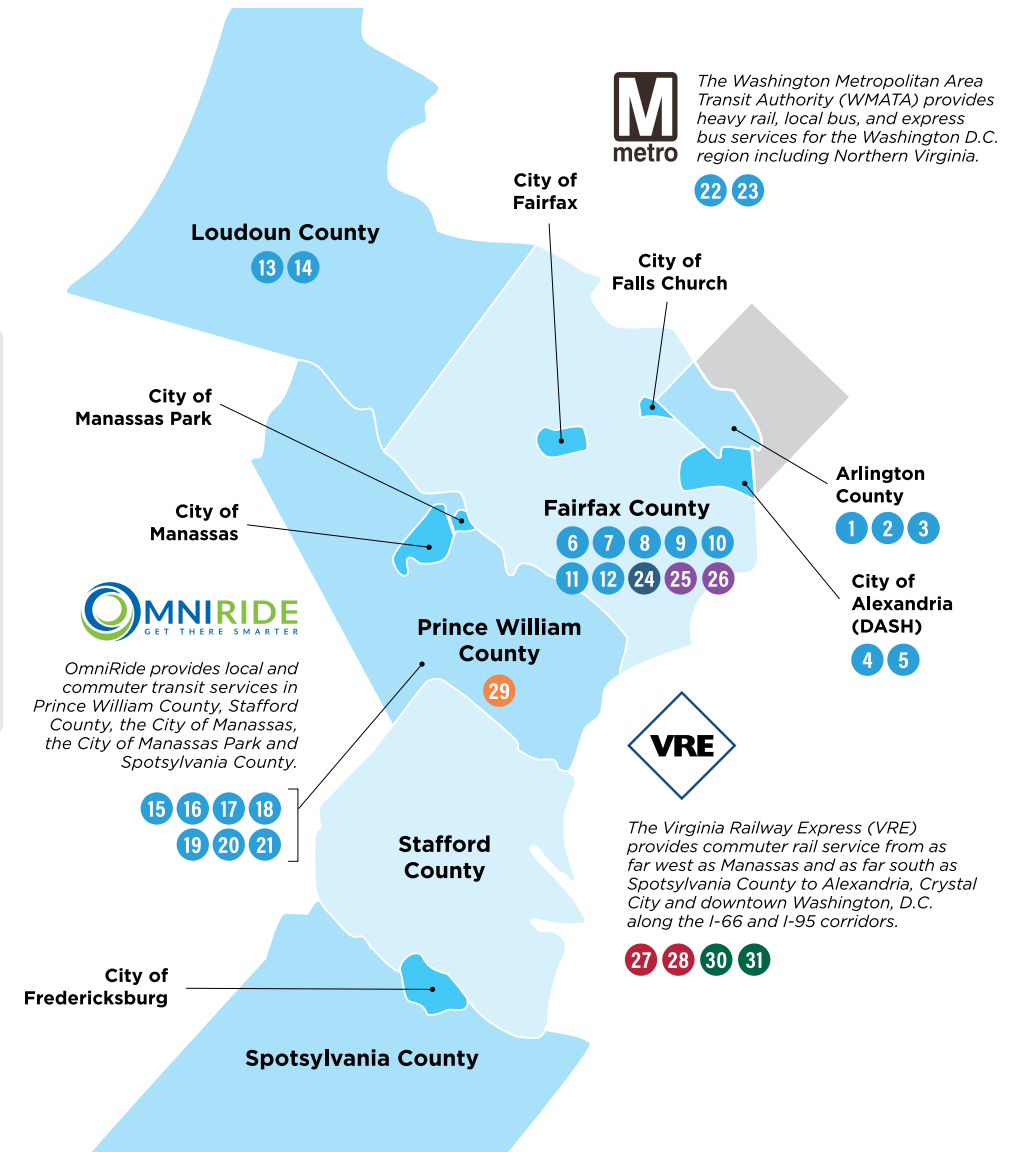
Current Projects

as of June 30, 2026

Project Type

- Bus Service
- Bus Capital
- Access to Transit
- Rail Capital
- Park-and-Ride
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

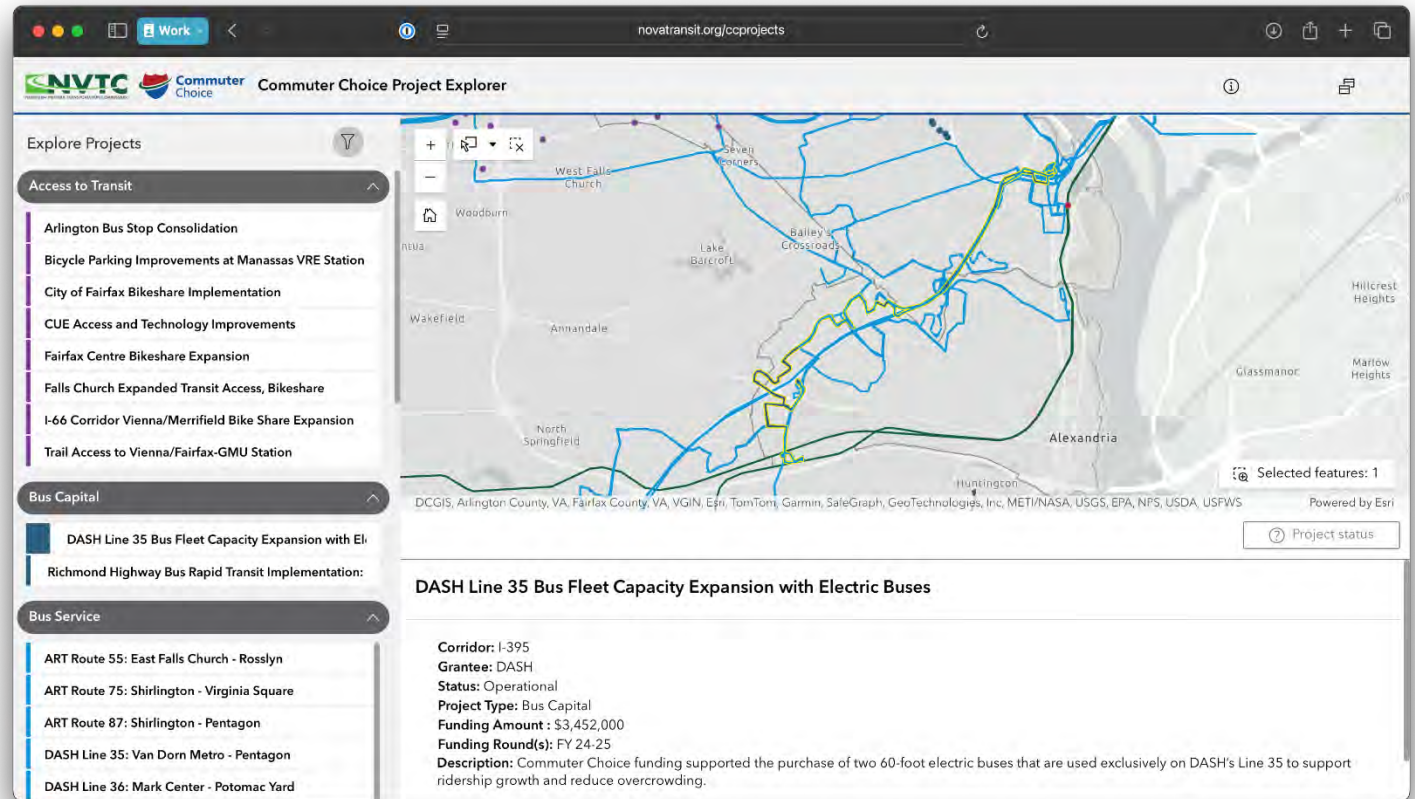
Visit [NoVaTransit.org/CCProjects](https://www.NoVaTransit.org/CCProjects) (or scan the QR code below) for an interactive map and descriptions of Commuter Choice funded projects.



Commuter Choice Project Explorer

Up-to-date information on active transit operating and all capital projects funded by Commuter Choice is available on the Project Explorer

- Project status
- Total funding amount
- Funding rounds



<https://novatransit.org/ccprojects>



**BUS
STOP**

PRINCE WILLIAM
METRO DIRECT

Commuter Choice Policy & Scoring Criteria Changes



Summary of Proposed Policy and Scoring Changes

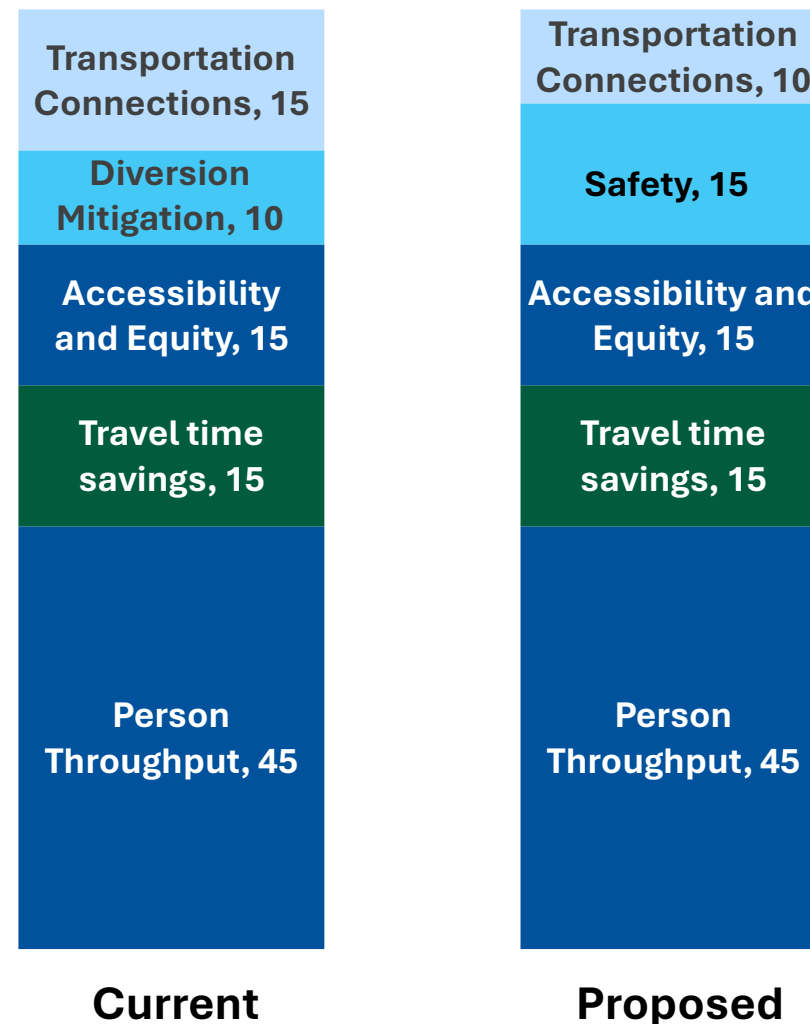
Policy Change

Changes maximum funding allocated to one project from a flat \$20M to 50% of available funding

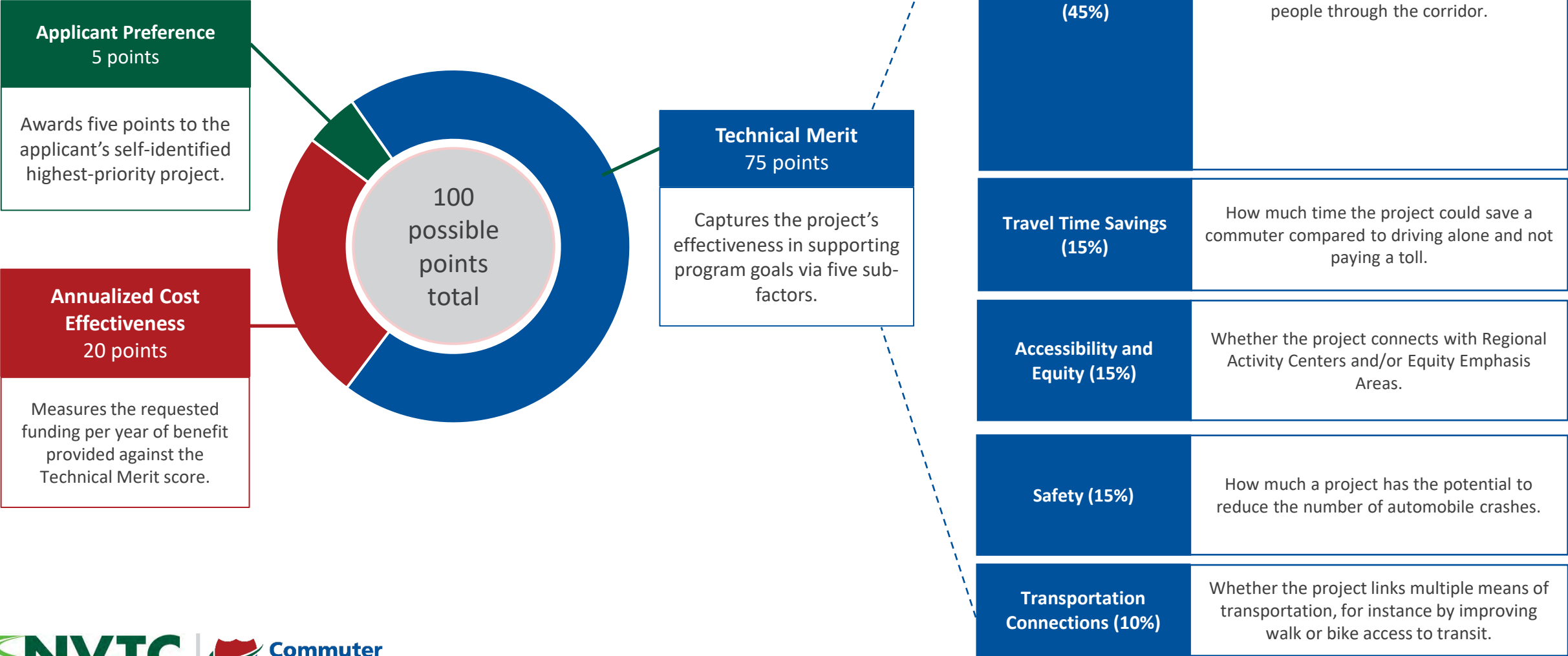
Scoring Changes

1. Distinguish between accessibility and equity locations
2. Remove diversion mitigation criterion and create new safety criterion worth 15 points
3. Change weighting of transportation connections from 15 to 10 points

Technical Merit Scoring Changes



Updated Evaluation Criteria





I-395/95 FY 2028-2029 Call for Projects

I-395/95 FY 2028-2029 Funding Cycle

\$45-50 million
available for new projects

Significant demand for funding is expected and the Commissions will likely need to consider trade-offs when programming funding.

Numerous transit service enhancements will be seeking continued funding support and additional applications for capital funding are anticipated.

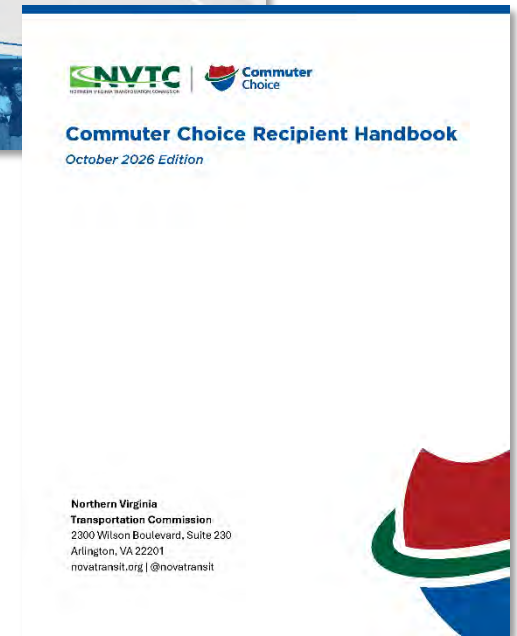


Timeline



Requested Actions

- ACTION ITEM 2C
 - Authorize the Executive Director to Submit the NVTC Commuter Choice Program FY 2026 Annual Report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board
- ACTION ITEM 2D
 - Accept Proposed Changes to the Commuter Choice Policy and Scoring Criteria
- ACTION ITEM 2E
 - Authorize the Executive Director to Issue the I-395/95 FY 2028-2029 Call for Projects and to Hold a Public Hearing on Behalf of the Commission



Thank you!



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Commuter
Choice

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Envision Route 7 Updates

October 1, 2026



Route 7 Connects Northern Virginia

The Route 7 Project Corridor

- ★ Key transportation corridor
- 🚌 40+ buses serve some portion of the corridor
- 🏠 57K people live along this route
- 🚫 12% don't own a car



As the region grows, buses are a more efficient use of roadway space

Phase 4-0

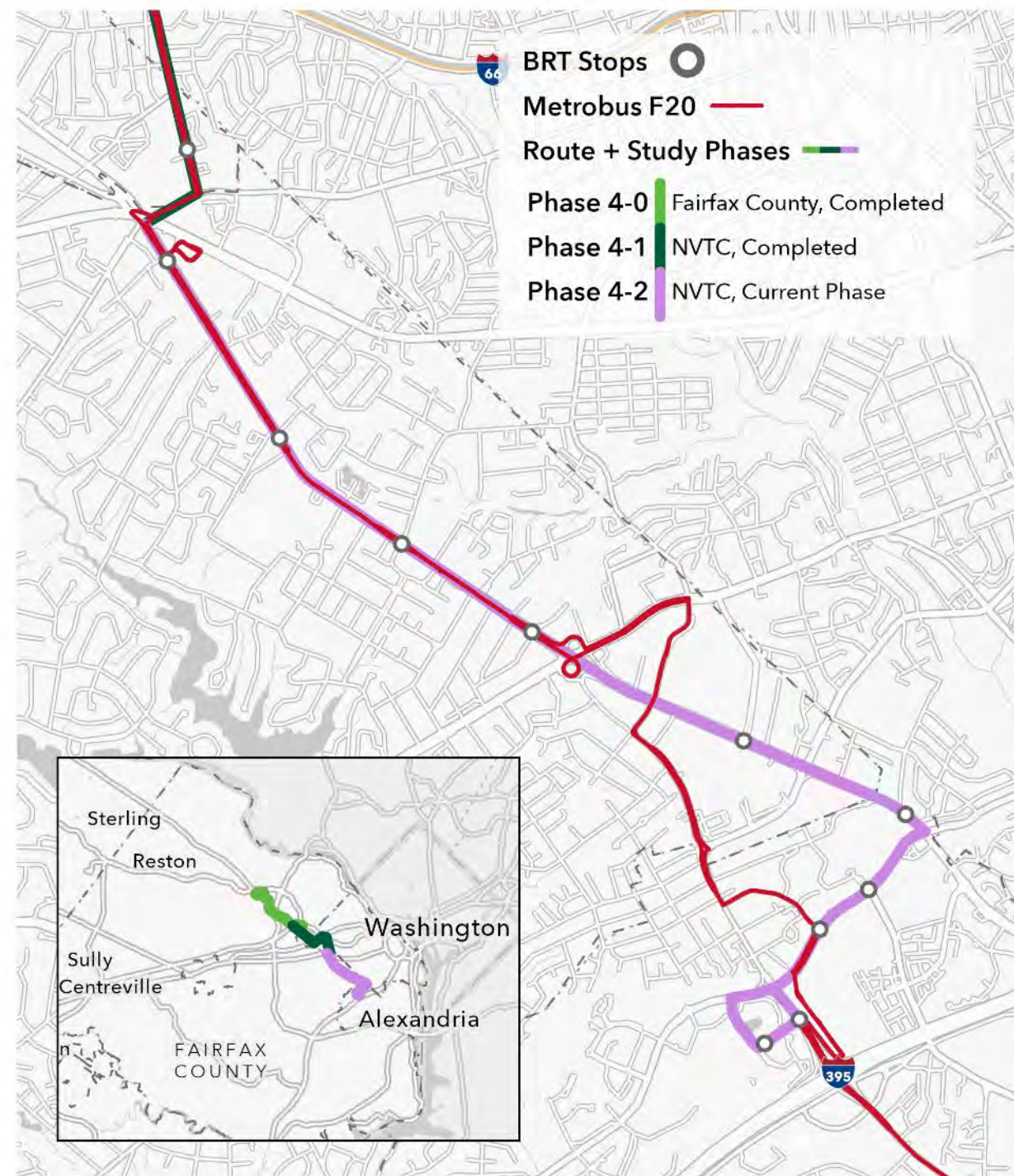
Phase 4-1

Phase 4-2

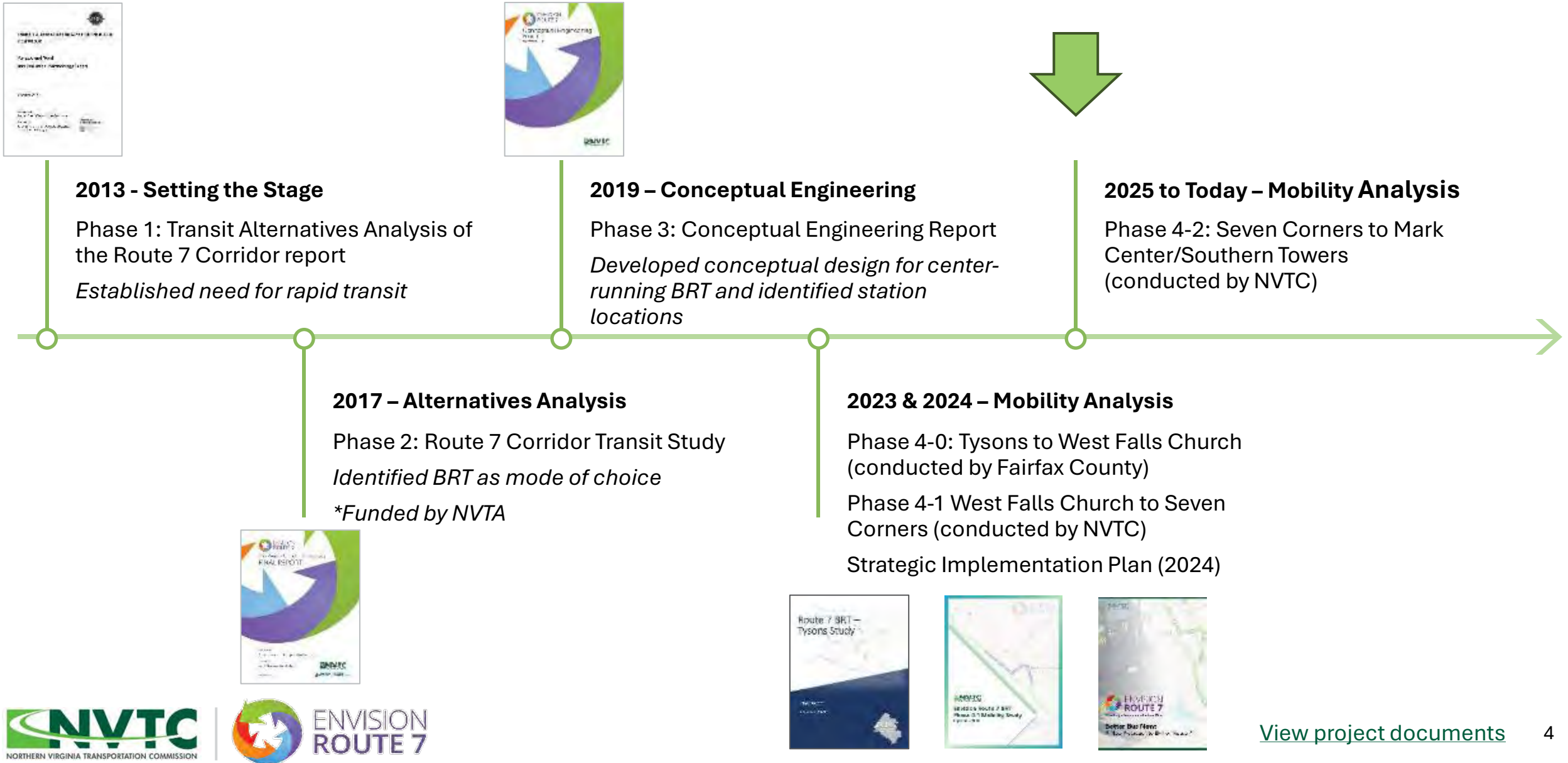


Metro Bus F20

- Carries **2.4M people** each year
- **Busiest** route in Virginia
- Average bus speeds on Route 7 **declined ~ 5%** from FY 24 to FY 25
- Metro added two buses and operators to maintain the current schedule as congestion increased travel time
 - The regions **pays more to operate the same level of service**
- F2X starts December 2026, increasing peak frequencies



What We've Studied



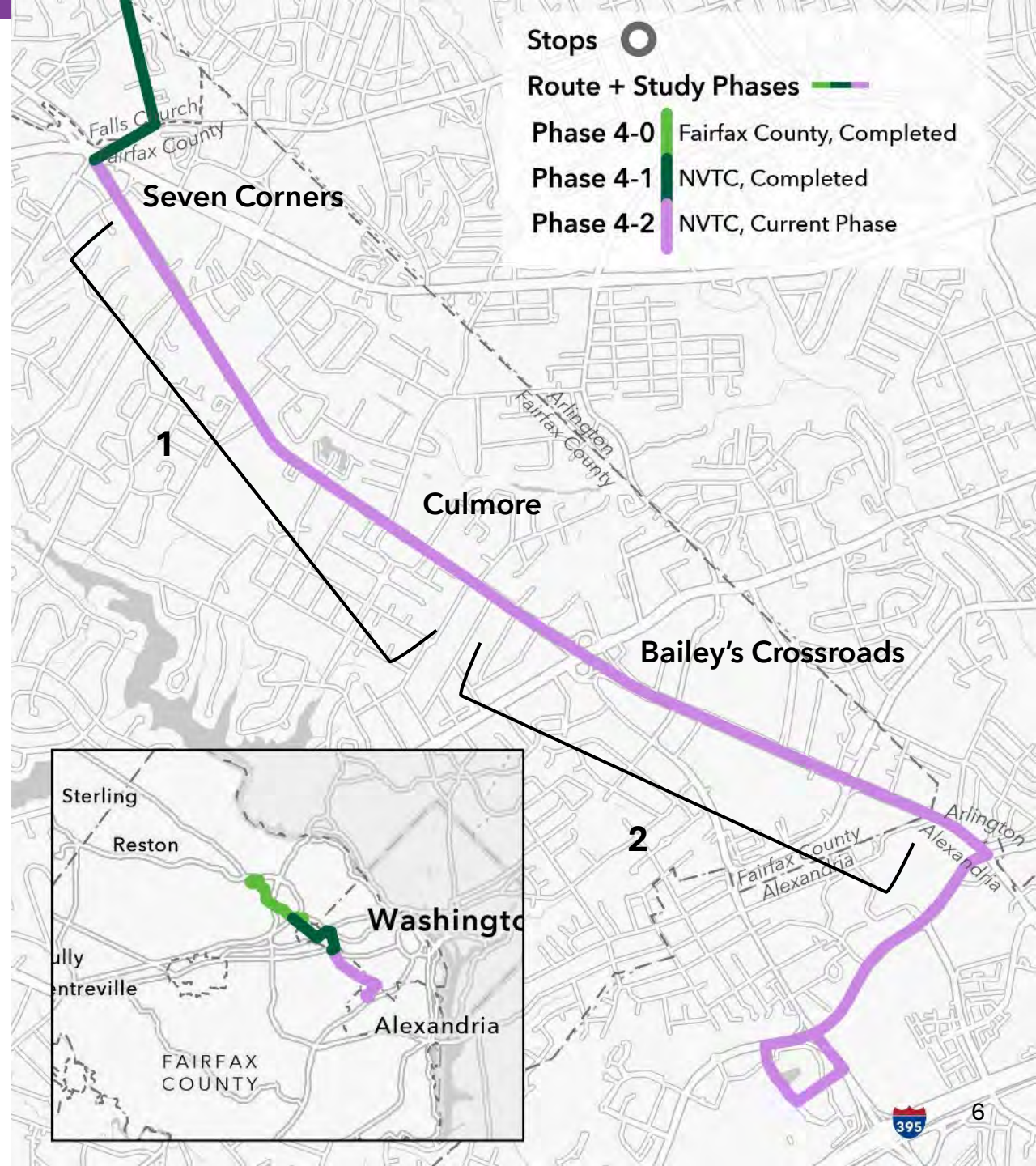
Where is Envision Route 7 Today?

- Completed Phase 4-2 Study
 - Evaluated impact of center running and curb running bus lanes between Seven Corners and Southern Towers/Mark Center
- Traffic impacts along whole corridor have now been studied
- Share findings and provide context so jurisdictions can make bus priority choices on corridor
- Support for a BRT service along Route 7 is strong

Takeaways

Phase 4-2 study corridor operates as **two distinct segments** – with Culmore in the middle

- 1) From Seven Corners to Culmore, there is a need to **upgrade** the roadway, which could then accommodate bus lanes
- 2) From Columbia Pike to Alexandria, Route 7 is **wide enough to handle curb bus lanes**, avoiding major impacts to property owners



Beyond Transit

- Improve last-mile connectivity for transit riders
- Construct sidewalks to provide safe space for pedestrians
- Widen sidewalks to be ADA compliant
- Enhance streetlighting to improve safety at night



Challenges

- Multiple roadway owners and jurisdictions requires matrix of solutions
 - Context sensitive bus priority allows for agility in improving bus priority
- Bus frequency along parts of the corridor is not high enough to implement bus lanes in some sections of corridor
- Constrained funding and staffing across jurisdictions impacts ability to advance capital project





NVTC Next Steps



NVTC Next Steps for Envision Route 7

- Engage with jurisdictional partners, DRPT and VDOT on advancing bus priority in the near term
 - Scheduling briefings for boards and commissions
- Collaborate with WMATA to deliver increased frequency
 - F2X to begin operation in December during peak hours
- Build the case for bus priority on Route 7
 - Mason District Transportation Town Hall on 10/10
 - Elected official tour on 10/28 from Southern Towers to Seven Corners



Future progress on Route 7 is dependent on jurisdictions selecting a preferred roadway design



Envision Route 7 Upcoming Dates

- **10/5** –Falls Church City Council Working Session
- **12/1** - Fairfax County Transportation Committee presentation
- **12/3** - NVTC Commissioners asked to accept report
- And more in 2027!

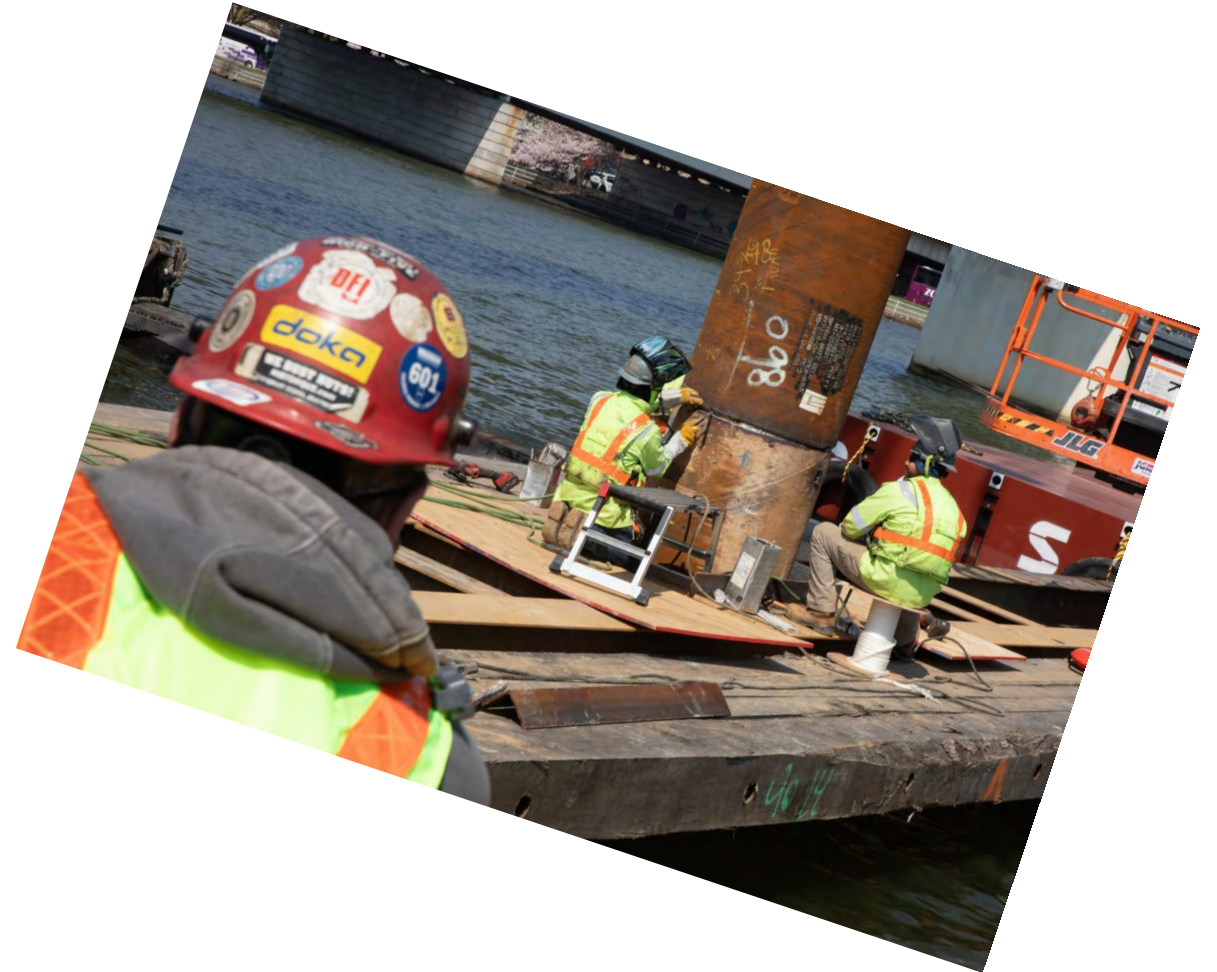




FY 2028 Preliminary Budget Summary

- FY28 total operating budget: **\$119.6 million**
 - ✓ Includes operations, maintenance, existing debt service
 - ✓ Increase of \$4.4 million or 3.8% over FY27
 - ✓ Currently has passenger fares and jurisdictional subsidy at FY27 levels, but those are subject to discussion
- Operating budget is currently unbalanced with a funding gap of approximately **\$13 million**
- FY28 projected capital commitments: **\$87.5 million**
- Expect both operating and capital to evolve and be refined

Ridership and Fare Revenue



Special Trains and Locomotive Leasing

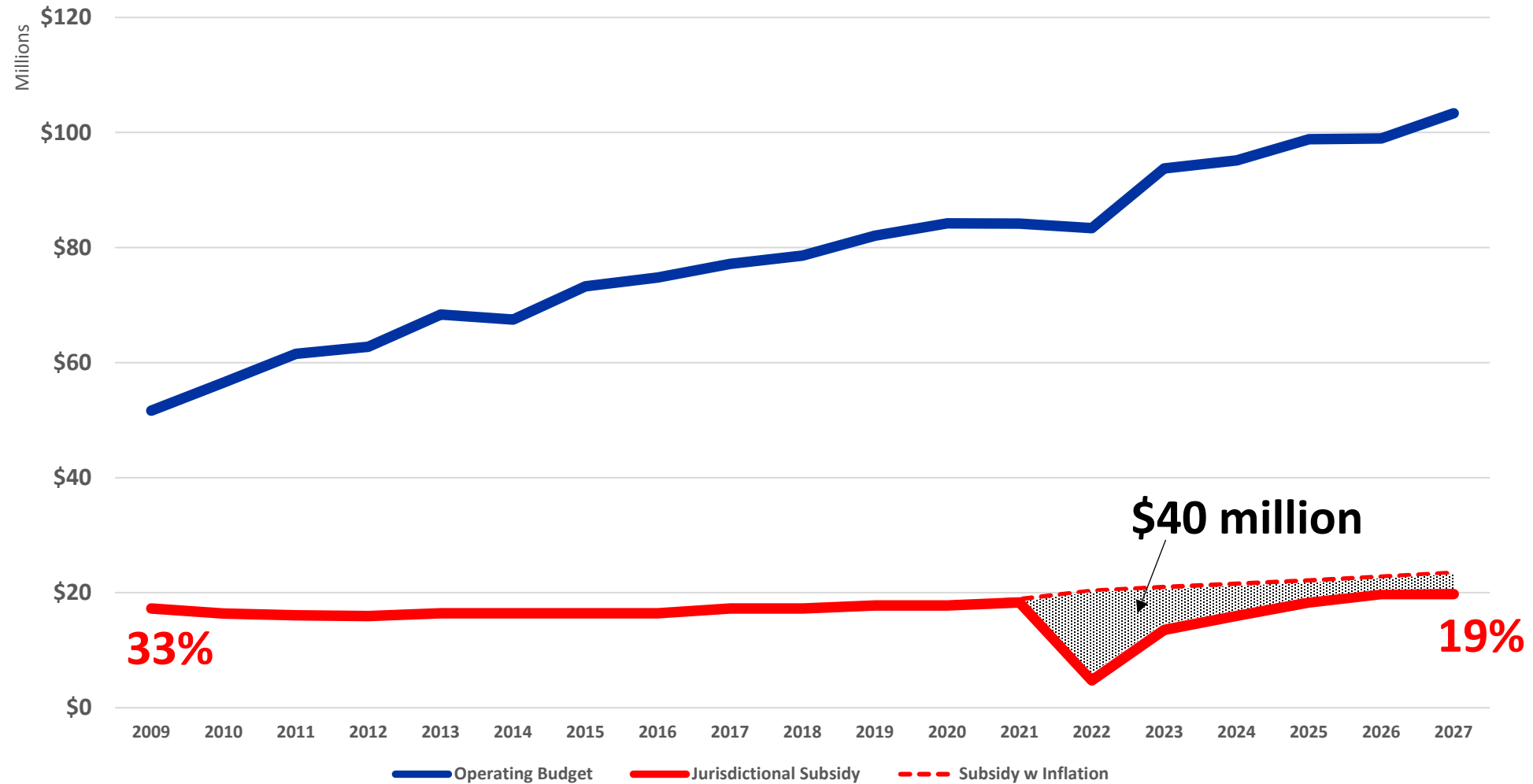


Fireworks Trains 2026

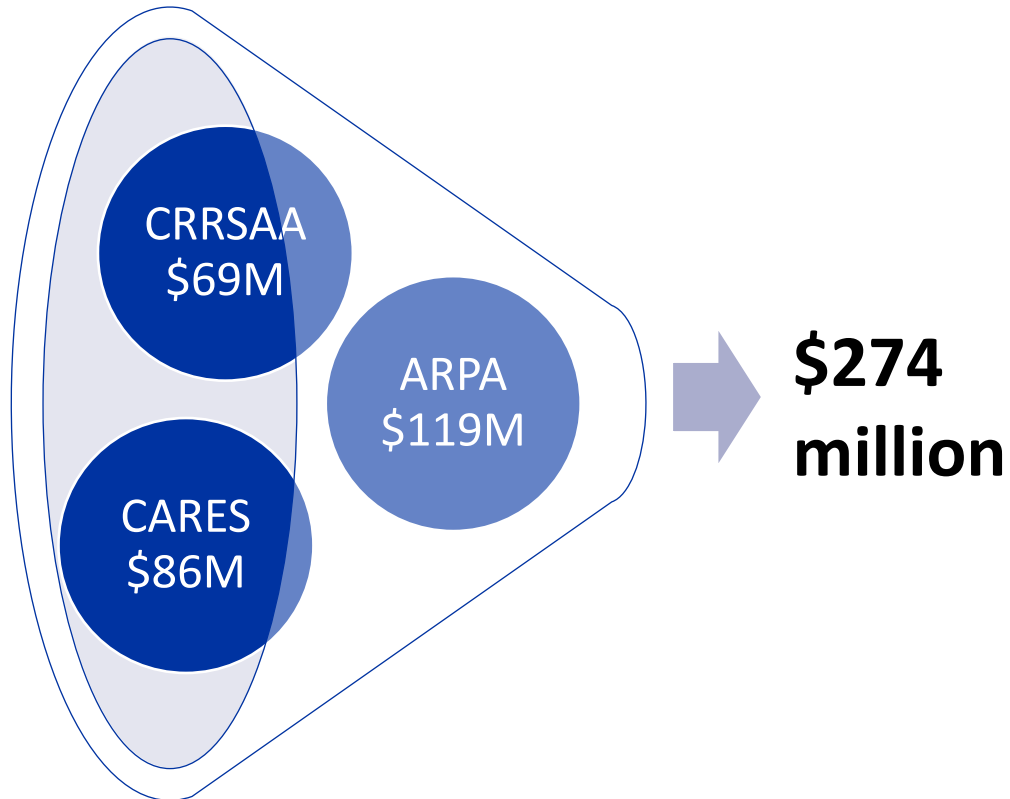


VRE MP-36 Locomotive

Jurisdictional Subsidy



Pandemic Funding Projection



- \$72 million remaining as of 6/30/26
- \$37 million usage assumed in current FY27 budget
- Current projection for FY27 is \$44 million due to reduced ridership and higher costs
- Leaves \$28 million for FY28 versus estimated need of \$41 million → **\$13 million gap**

Options to Fill Funding Gap in FY 2028



01

**Increase Jurisdictional
Subsidy**



02

**Seek State Funding
Support**



03

**Reduce Service and
Operating Expenses**

Financial Impact of Reducing Service

- Commuter rail has high fixed costs
- Starting point for evaluation is **S+ service** – 18 daily trains vs. 32, represents 58% of normal miles operated:
 - ✓ Diesel fuel usage declines proportionally
 - ✓ Access fees also decline 1:1 but savings offset by reduced reimbursement
 - ✓ Keolis train operators can be furloughed but that brings risks to VRE's long-term operations (all operators were retained during the early pandemic)
 - ✓ Essentially no savings on maintenance of rolling stock or stations
 - ✓ Minimal/no savings on insurance
 - ✓ Still need VRE direct staff across all areas
- Projected impact from a year of S+ service:



*Advancing transit in
Northern Virginia
since 1964*

October 2026



Executive Director Newsletter



NoVaTransit.org | NoVaRides.org | @NoVaTransit



A Message From Kate Mattice



We've spent a lot of time over the last year focused on our [Envision Route 7](#) program—which would bring even better bus service to the corridor connecting Tysons to the Mark Center/Southern Towers in Alexandria. We completed a new analysis, hosted two open houses for the public and convened many behind-the-scenes meetings. All of the work and outreach has been designed to advance planning for upgraded bus service in one of Northern Virginia's busiest corridors.

We're at a pivotal moment for Envision Route 7, one that will determine how this thoughtful planning moves into the design and operational phases. The route runs through multiple jurisdictions: Fairfax and Arlington Counties and the Cities of Falls Church and Alexandria. On top of that, the Virginia Department of Transportation controls a majority of the roadway. All have been at the table for the planning work. Each jurisdiction must now decide which roadway design to advance: which parts of the corridor should have center running bus lanes, curb running bus lanes or rely on other technology and service upgrades.

We will continue to engage with elected leaders from across the region, along with their staff, to explain how better bus service will benefit riders, nearby businesses and even the people who choose not to ride but still benefit from the promise of less traffic congestion when people can choose to use the high-frequency bus network.

While pure bus rapid transit (BRT) does include dedicated bus lanes, we're also focused on other bus priority measures, such as infrastructure and technology upgrades designed to speed up buses, making trips shorter and more appealing. Many can be installed now without waiting for the full buildout of BRT. And we're excited about another step forward for bus service on Route 7. This December, Metro will introduce the F2X, a limited-stop bus route funded through NVTC's Commuter Choice Program, providing more frequent and faster service in the corridor.

We know that Northern Virginia will continue to grow over the coming decades. Expanding bus service in the region will go a long way toward keeping us all moving.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate A. Mattice".

Executive Director

In This Issue

- 4 State and local agencies join NVTC for Envision Route 7 analysis discussion
- 4-5 Marketing campaign promotes transit connections
- 6 Proposed Commuter Choice policy changes presented
- 7 Commuter Choice celebrates OmniRide's 40th birthday
- 8 NVTC attends Mpact Transit + Community Conference in Toronto
- 8 Kate participates in Leadership Greater Washington 2027
- 9 *Charting Transit: Next stop, campus*
- 10 Meet NVTC's 2026 Commissioners
- 11 Good luck, Daniel Knickelbein!



Save the Date

October 13
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

October 13-15
Governor's
Transportation
Conference

October 15
Joint WMATA/
Legislative and
Policy Committees

October 16
VRE Operations Board

November 5
Commission meeting

November 18
Virginia Passenger Rail
Authority

November 20
VRE Operations Board





ENVISION ROUTE 7 State and local agencies join NVTC for Envision Route 7 analysis discussion

Staff from state agencies, local jurisdictions and Metro joined NVTC September 9 to discuss bus priority options and potential traffic impacts related to the planned [Envision Route 7](#) project. Envision Route 7 would connect Tysons and Alexandria through one of Northern Virginia's most traffic-congested corridors.

The meeting was the final Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) meeting for Phase 4-2 of the study. We updated attendees on takeaways from outreach efforts and data analysis results. NVTC staff will hold additional PTAC meetings after the contract work ends to keep project partners updated on progress and continue regional discussions.



Marketing campaign promotes transit connections

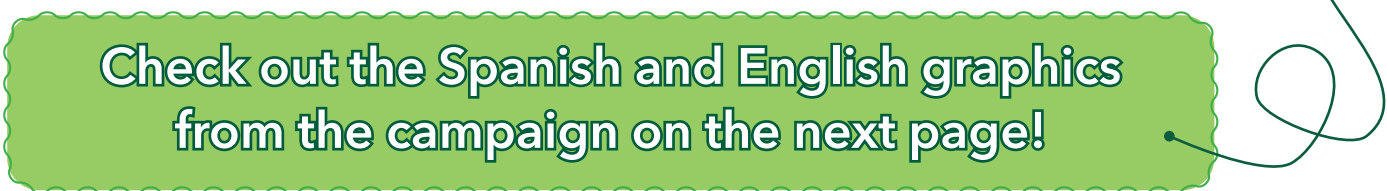
NVTC launched a new marketing campaign in early September designed to promote the connections people can make by riding public transit. Backed by a grant from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the campaign encourages people to ride transit following a series of weekend Metro Rail shutdowns earlier this year, related to building the second entrance for the Crystal City Metro Station. This is our fifth marketing campaign since 2019.

With Commission approval, we issued a request for proposals and signed a contract with Sensis, a Bethesda-based firm that has done work on transit marketing, including Metro's Better Bus initiative. The campaign promotes all of Northern Virginia's transit agencies in both the images used and the accompanying ad copy.

In addition to the ads, Sensis rebranded [novarides.org](#), which includes a new trip planner using the Transit app. Novarides.org also has links to all of our transit agencies so people can learn more about each one.

Ads are being shown on Facebook, Instagram and Reddit, as well as other online placement. We're also getting the word out on Spotify and other audio streaming platforms. The campaign includes Spanish-language advertising, comprising 30% of the total ad buy.

The campaign runs until mid-November and NVTC's communications team will provide a report on its performance once it wraps up.



Check out the Spanish and English graphics from the campaign on the next page!

EL TRANSPORTE PÚBLICO TE CONECTA CON TODA EL ÁREA DEL DMV.



TU TRAYECTO AL TRABAJO DEL LUNES,



UNA CENA EL SÁBADO POR LA NOCHE,



O UN VUELO A LAS 6 A. M.



EL DMV ESTÁ LLENO DE CONEXIONES QUE VALE LA PENA



VIAJA EN TRANSPORTE PÚBLICO

Aprende más sobre tus opciones de transporte público y viaja hoy.



NOVA RIDES
NoVaRides.org

EL DMV ESTÁ LLENO DE CONEXIONES QUE VALE LA PENA CONSIDERAR.



VIAJA EN TRANSPORTE PÚBLICO

Aprende más sobre tus opciones de transporte público y viaja hoy.



NOVA RIDES
NoVaRides.org

TRANSIT CONNECTS YOU ACROSS THE DMV.



YOUR MONDAY COMMUTE,



A SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER,



OR A 6 A.M. FLIGHT.



THE DMV IS FULL OF CONNECTIONS WORTH KEEPING.



TRANSIT CONNECTS YOU ACROSS THE DMV.

Work. Dinner. The airport. One connected network.

RIDE TRANSIT

Learn more about transit options and ride today.



NOVA RIDES

RIDE TRANSIT

Learn more about transit options and ride today!



NOVA RIDES
NoVaRides.org



Proposed Commuter Choice policy changes presented

NVTC held the Joint Commission Working Group (JCWG) [meeting](#) September 17 to brief Commissioners from NVTC and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission on the upcoming Commuter Choice I-395/I-95 Call for Projects. Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Program Analyst Jason Adle provided background on the Commuter Choice program, proposed policy and scoring changes for the FY 2028-2029 funding cycle that the Commissions will take action on in October, and the anticipated funding amount.

The JCWG was followed by the Program Advisory Committee, where Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha provided an update to committee members on the Envision Route 7 program as the Phase 4-2 project wraps up and we look toward next steps for the program.

Proposed Policy and Scoring Changes

Policy Change

Changes maximum funding allocated to one project from a flat \$20M to 50% of available funding

Scoring Changes

1. Distinguish between accessibility and equity locations
2. Remove diversion mitigation criterion and create new safety criterion worth 15 points
3. Change weighting of transportation connections from 15 to 10 points

Technical Merit Scoring Changes





Commuter Choice celebrates OmniRide's 40th birthday

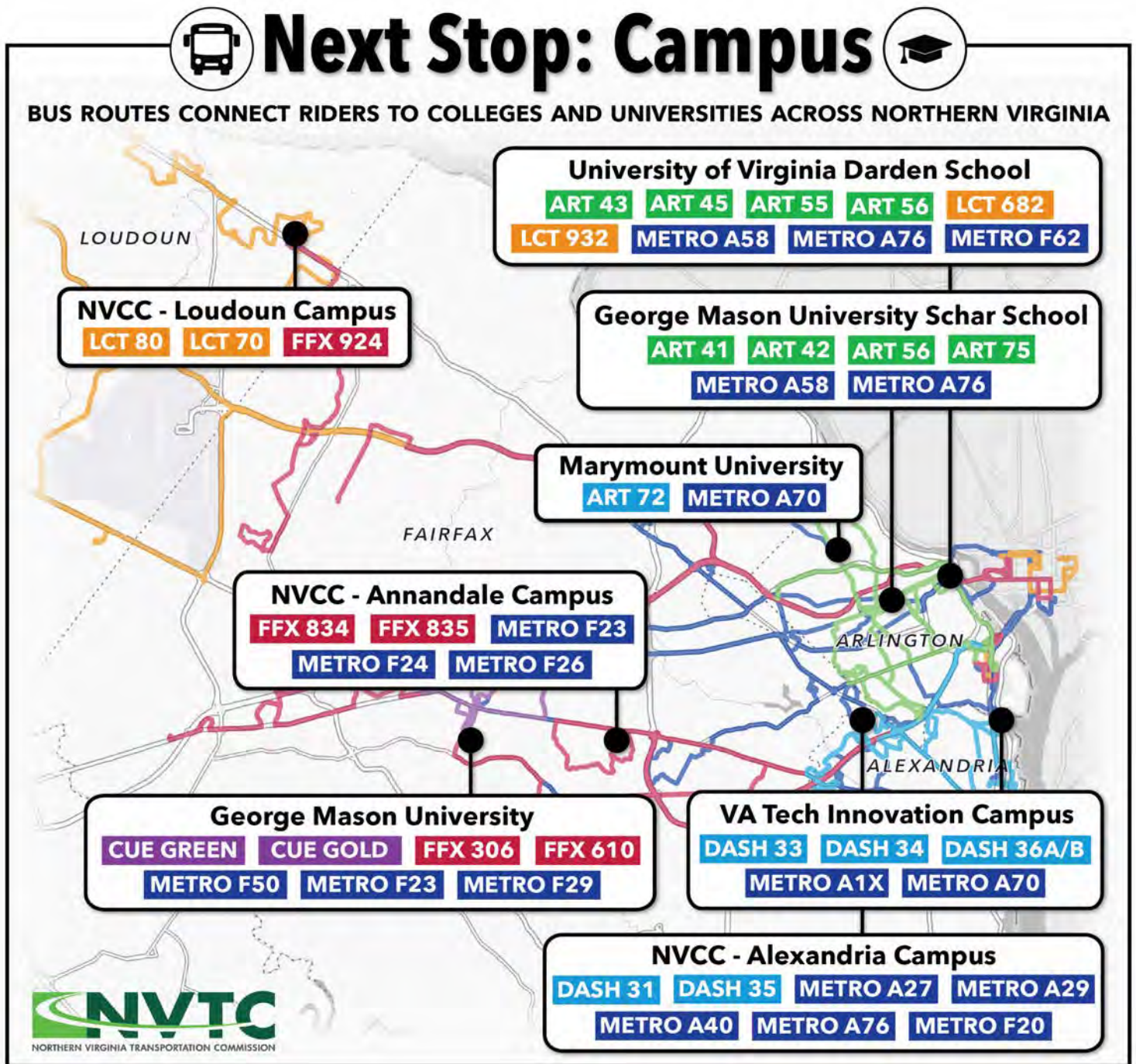
Strategic Communications Director Sarah Godfrey, Deputy Director of Programs and Policy Amanda Sink, Communications Specialist Colie Touzel and Administrative Assistant Sumbal Abid were on hand to mark the 40th anniversary of OmniRide September 23. NVTC staff engaged with community members and shared information about NVTC's Commuter Choice Program, which has made significant [investments](#) in OmniRide commuter and local bus service. OmniRide Executive Director Dr. Bob Schneider spoke about the impacts of 40 years serving the region and how this milestone would not have been possible without their employees, partners and communities.

The celebration even included creation of a time capsule. There will be another celebration on Wednesday, October 14 from 4-8 p.m. at OmniRide's Western Maintenance Facility.



–Charting Transit– Next Stop: Campus

Bus routes across Northern Virginia connect students, faculty and staff to more than a dozen college and university campuses. Whether it's ART and Metrobus stopping at Marymount University in Arlington, CUE and Fairfax Connector traveling to George Mason University, or DASH pulling up to NVCC-Alexandria, the region's transit agencies have campus commutes covered. The graphic below shows just a handful of the transit-accessible campuses in NoVa and the bus routes that serve them.



NVTC attends Mpact Transit + Community Conference in Toronto

Chair Sarah Bagley and several NVTC staff heard from experts across the continent at Mpact's annual [Transit + Community Conference](#) in September in Toronto. Attending a combination of panel sessions and mobile workshops around the city, Chair Bagley, along with Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos, NVTC WMATA Program Manager Adam Hager and Program Analyst Owen Williams, learned how other cities are tackling transit funding and governance challenges and how robust transit networks are helping create vibrant, healthy communities. They particularly enjoyed learning how Toronto's more than two dozen transit agencies work together to create a seamless, integrated experience for residents and visitors alike.



Images from Mpact: (top left, left to right) Adam Hager, NVTC Chair Sarah Bagley, Sophie Spiliotopoulos and Owen Williams

Kate participates in Leadership Greater Washington 2027

Executive Director Kate Mattice is honored to be participating in [Leadership Greater Washington](#) as a member of the Class of 2027. As the cohort kicks off, she looks forward to building relationships with leaders from across the Greater Washington region, learning from their perspectives and experiences and sharing hers.

Kate is especially excited for the opportunity to collaborate on regional issues such as housing, public safety and, of course, transit. Over the next 10 months, the group will be engaged in conversations about our region that are designed to inspire collective action and meaningful civic impact.



Class of 2027, Kate Mattice second row from top, second in from left.

Meet NVTC's 2026 Commissioners



(left to right) Front row: Canek Aguirre, Kate Garman Burns, Sarah Bagley, Matthew Letourneau; Second row: Kannan Srinivasan, Dalia Palchik, Maureen Coffey, Kirk McPike; Third row: Saddam Azlan Salim, Catherine S. Read, Matt de Ferranti, Justine Underhill; Fourth row: James "Jimmy" N. Bierman, Jr., Mariia Zimmerman, David Snyder; Back row: Daniel Storck, Paul Krizek

Not pictured: Juli Briskman, David Reid, Alfonso Lopez, Takis Karantonis, Walter Alcorn, Rachna Sizemore Heizer

Read the biographies of NVTC's Commissioners at novatransit.org

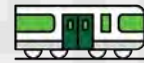
Good luck, Daniel Knickelbein!

We said goodbye to Daniel Knickelbein in September, who will be joining the Policy Communications Team at the Federal Highway Administration. Daniel joined NVTC as a Senior Program Analyst in March 2024 and was promoted to Commuter Choice and Policy Program Manager in October 2024. During his time at NVTC, Daniel was instrumental in managing the recently completed [I-66 Needs Assessment Study](#) and guiding jurisdictional staff through all phases of the Commuter Choice programming process. Thank you, Daniel, for your hard work and good luck in your future endeavors!



NVTC staff celebrating Daniel Knickelbein, middle, third from bottom right

Farewell!



2026 NVTC, PRTC & VRE

LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Join us for an engaging discussion about the future of transit in Northern Virginia and how it shapes our region's quality of life.

RSVP
- TODAY -

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Monday, December 14, 2026

George Mason University
Mason Square Campus
3351 Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22201

[novatransit.org/
2026-legislative-forum/](https://novatransit.org/2026-legislative-forum/)



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