

Advancing transit in
Northern Virginia
since 1964



June
2026

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Executive Director
Newsletter





A Message From Kate Mattice

Public transit is, at its heart, a communal endeavor – and the work of NVTC reflects the shared commitment of everyone across Northern Virginia who believes in a more connected region. That’s why we work tirelessly with and for the local governments, transit agencies and community organizations serving Northern Virginia.

We strengthen these relationships every day. In May we gathered with transit operators and elected officials from across the Commonwealth at the Virginia Transit Association’s annual conference. While our staff created and led a panel on NVTC’s Commuter Choice program, I moderated another panel on legislative issues, where panelists stressed the importance of statewide coordination.

This month, we are hosting two significant events that rely on the regional collaboration that has become NVTC’s hallmark. First up, an [open house](#) for Envision Route 7, the planned bus rapid transit (BRT) route incorporating partnerships with the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church along with Arlington and Fairfax Counties.

We follow the open house with the first of a new series of webinars: NoVaTransit Talks on June 12. This [webinar](#), introduced by NVTC Chair Sarah Bagley and moderated by NVTC’s Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos, will share best practices on improving the rider experience, featuring bus planning experts from Loudoun County and the Cities of Alexandria and Fairfax.

We’re also engaged in collaborative work behind the scenes. While the DMVMoves Task Force completed its recommendations last year, topical working groups continue their missions to improve public transit across the Greater Washington region. NVTC is especially involved in undertakings to expand regional bus priority, unify service guidance and performance measures, and share designs for customer information systems. These efforts, combined with studies mandated by the Virginia General Assembly, have the potential to impact how our jurisdictions coordinate with one another and provide transit services in our region.

Ultimately, every meeting, every partnership, every route moves us closer to the region we're building together.


Executive Director



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- June 9**
Envision Route 7 Open House
- June 12**
NoVaTransit Talks Webinar: "Improving the Bus Rider Experience"
- June 16-17**
Commonwealth Transportation Board
- June 18**
Program Advisory Committee
- Joint WMATA & Legislative and Policy Committees
- June 26**
VRE Operations Board Retreat
- July 2**
Commission Meeting
Virtual Meeting

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NVTC welcomes new Commissioners

NVTC Chair Sarah Bagley swore in four new Commissioners at the May 7 Commission meeting.



(Left to right) New Commissioners Mariia Zimmerman, Kate Garman Burns, and Del. Kirk McPike being sworn in by NVTC Chair Sarah Bagley (Not pictured: Sen. Kannan Srinivasan, who took the oath of office virtually.)



Sen. Kannan Srinivasan, who represents parts of Loudoun County, fills the vacancy created when Gov. Abigail Spanberger appointed former Sen. Adam Ebbin to her administration.



Del. Kirk McPike, who represents parts of Alexandria, fills the vacancy created when Gov. Spanberger appointed Del. Mark Sickles to her administration. He previously served as an alternate Commissioner and a member of the Alexandria City Council.



Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Director Mariia Zimmerman, who addressed the Commission about her vision for the agency during the meeting, serves as an alternate representing the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Kate Garman Burns is the appointee of Virginia Secretary of Transportation Nick Donohue to the Commission to serve as a principal member of the Metro Board of Directors. She replaces Darien Flowers who was subsequently appointed as a Federal appointee to the Metro Board of Directors.



Envision Route 7 kicks off spring outreach efforts

The second round of community outreach for the [Envision Route 7](#) project kicked off on May 13. The outreach team is visiting businesses, transit centers and other key places along the Route 7 corridor to gather feedback and inform community members about the project. Envision Route 7 is a planned bus rapid transit system connecting Tysons and Alexandria in a corridor with one of the highest rates of transit ridership in Northern Virginia.

Respondents are being asked about existing transit in the corridor, their travel preferences, challenges and needs, as well as what bus priority design elements are important to riders. The goal of the outreach effort is to educate the public, stakeholders and decision-makers on the benefits of bus priority while gathering valuable feedback on how to improve mobility along the project corridor.

The outreach period includes an open house at the [Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library](#) on Tuesday, June 9, from 5 to 7 pm. People can also provide feedback through an [online form](#).

As part of the lead-up to the public outreach effort, Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha participated in a webinar called "The Future of Sustainable Transit in Northern Virginia" held May 7. The event was co-hosted by the [Coalition for Smarter Growth](#), [EcoAction Arlington](#), [Sierra Club Potomac River](#), [Faith Alliance for Climate Action](#) and [Sustainable Mobility for Arlington](#). NVTC Commissioner and Arlington County Board Member Maureen Coffey provided opening remarks, with Vikram and representatives from Metro, DASH and Arlington County.



Help shape bus service along Route 7

Join us for an open house and share your ideas.

<p>Where: Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library 4701 Seminary Road Alexandria, VA 22304</p>	<p>When: Tuesday, June 9 Drop in anytime between 5 and 7 p.m.!</p>
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novatransit.org/programs/route7



CTB briefed on 10 years of Commuter Choice benefits

Executive Director Kate Mattice [briefed](#) the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on NVTC's [Commuter Choice](#) program and the benefits it brings to Northern Virginia and the entire Commonwealth May 19 as the program celebrates its 10th anniversary. Funding high quality, frequent and reliable public transit on express lanes provides new and affordable transportation options for commuters. It also benefits drivers by reducing the number of cars in both the general purpose and express lanes.

Commuter Choice has brought tremendous benefits over the last 10 years - moving 10.5 million people, saving nearly \$26 million in fuel costs and avoiding 197 million vehicle miles traveled in the I-66 and I-395/95 corridors.



A look back... See a timeline on pages 8 - 9



Saved **\$25.9M** in fuel cost for Virginians



Prevented **293** vehicle crashes



Moved more than **10.5M** people along I-66 and I-395/95



Avoided **1.9M** hours of travel delay



Reduced **197M** vehicle miles traveled

Commuter Choice outreach receives National Association of Government Communicators award

Senior Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman accepted a second-place award from the National Association of Government Communicators at their 2026 Communications School on May 12. The award recognized NVTC's paid social media campaign to promote the 2025 Commuter Choice Program of Projects public comment survey.

Commuter Choice Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein provided key information on the projects proposed for funding, and

Communications and Design Specialist Colie Touzel created six animated and six static graphics in English and Spanish that we used for the ads. Matt recorded and edited videos in English and Spanish with Program Advisory Committee Chair Dalia Palchik to drive additional attention to the public comment opportunity and managed uploading, scheduling and targeting for the ads. For just \$500 for ads on Facebook and Instagram, the campaign returned a reach of more than 27,000 and an astonishing engagement rate topping 68%.



Matt Friedman accepting NAGC award
Courtesy Gregg Felsen Photography





10 Years of Commuter Choice



A novel idea was born 10 years ago—use money collected from tolls on Northern Virginia’s most traffic-congested highways to pay for projects that encourage people to find other ways to commute. That idea became NVTC’s Commuter Choice program. First, in the I-66 corridor, then in the I-395/95 corridor. Since then, Commuter Choice has invested \$212 million into 72 unique projects that provide travel alternatives and help reduce congestion. That includes new and improved bus service, new buses, expanded Metro Rail and Virginia Railway Express stations, new park-and-ride lots, Capital Bikeshare stations and other projects to improve access to public transit.

What do these projects bring? Faster commutes for people riding transit and transportation alternatives and for those choosing the express lanes. It also saves commuters money they would have spent filling up their gas tanks, reduces pollution and prevents car crashes.



December 9, 2015

The Commonwealth Transportation Board authorizes the use of I-66 Inside the Beltway tolls for use by NVTC for a new competitive program (initially called Transform66: Inside the Beltway) to support transit and other investments. The official Memorandum of Agreement is signed on January 5, 2016.

March 6, 2016

NVTC issues its first call for projects for the program that will become Commuter Choice, receiving 19 applications for new multimodal projects including new and enhanced transit services for commuters.

May 5, 2016

NVTC officially kicks off Commuter Choice when the Commission awards \$9.8 million to 10 projects. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) [approves](#) the first program in July.

October 25, 2016

The first of many Commuter Choice project groundbreakings: Representatives from NVTC, Loudoun County, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) break ground on the Stone Ridge park-and-ride lot, which opened in July 2017.



December 12, 2016

PRTC’s OmniRide is the first grant recipient to implement new bus service as its Gainesville to Pentagon commuter bus route becomes operational.



September 20, 2017

Gov. Terry McAuliffe hosts an event celebrating the first year of Commuter Choice and announcing a second call for projects.

December 20, 2017

Commuter Choice officially expands to the I-395/95 corridor, with the creation of a new Memorandum of Agreement.

October 2019

The first I-395/95 funding awards are approved, with \$18.1 million for 10 projects receiving funding ahead of the November 17 “go live” date for the new I-395 Express Lanes.

October 6, 2023

Commuter Choice celebrates three milestones in FY 23: achieving the program’s highest weekday ridership, largest funding award and most public comments received.

July 1, 2025

Boosted by return-to-office policies, Commuter Choice sets a record in FY 2025, averaging over 65,000 trips per workweek on projects in both corridors.

2026

Commuter Choice turns 10! The program continues to improve quality of life for Northern Virginia residents by reducing congestion, providing transportation alternatives, and supporting economic development.



Gov. Terry McAuliffe, NVTC Commissioners and NoVa elected officials at the July 2017 I-66 Commuter Choice Ribbon Cutting

Kate and staff play key roles at VTA conference

NVTC staff made their presence known at the [Virginia Transit Association](#) conference in Fredericksburg May 19 to 20. We had the opportunity to share lessons learned and takeaways from our work, as well as connect with and learn from our transit colleagues across the Commonwealth.

Executive Director Kate Mattice moderated a panel on navigating the legislative landscape at the state and federal levels, where government affairs professionals from OmniRide, the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) and Hampton Roads Transit stressed the importance of continued coordination among transit agencies and entities in securing sustainable transit funding.



Joe Dillard, Greater Richmond Transit Company; Kate Mattice; Noelle Pinkard, Hampton Roads Transit; Lauren Gilbert, Advantus Strategies (left to right)

Discussing transit funding in Richmond

Executive Director Kate Mattice joined Chair Sarah Bagley, Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Metro Program Manager Adam Hager for an informative meeting with Virginia Transportation Secretary Nick Donohue in Richmond May 28. They had an important discussion focused on funding for Metro and all the transit agencies that serve Northern Virginia as Gov. Abigail Spanberger and the General Assembly work toward a final budget for the year.

NVTC also marked 10 years of NVTC's Commuter Choice program – Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein led a panel discussing lessons learned from a decade of investing toll revenues into transit projects that move more people through Northern Virginia's most traffic-congested corridors. Perrin Palistrant of OmniRide joined Ann and Daniel to share a grantee's perspective on the impact of the program, which has awarded more than \$212 million to support travelers along the I-66 and I-395/95 Express Lanes since 2016.



Ann McGrane, Perrin Palistrant, Daniel Knickelbein (left to right)



Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi with DRPT Deputy Director Allan Fye and VTA Executive Director Danny Plaugher (left to right); NVTC staff. (Two photos courtesy of VTA.)



Adam Hager, Sarah Bagley, Katie Mattice, Ann McGrane (left to right)

NoVaTransit — Talks —

Improving the Bus Rider Experience

Join NVTC and local experts to learn about new and ongoing projects that strengthen transit for our residents and workers.

Friday, June 12, 2026
12 - 1 p.m. Online

Welcoming
Speaker



Sarah Bagley
NVTC Chair,
Vice Mayor,
City of Alexandria

Moderator



Sophie Spiliotopoulos
NVTC Data
Visualization
Manager

Local Experts



Gladys Hurwitz
Loudoun County,
Microtransit Program



Silas Sullivan
City of Alexandria,
Bus Stop Accessibility
& Amenities



Wendy Sanford
City of Fairfax, CUE
Network Redesign





Metro Board welcomes new members, receives updates on planned RFK transit improvements

The Metro Board swore in new member Kate Garman Burns at its meeting May 14. Appointed by NVTC at its May 7 Commission meeting as the Commonwealth principal director to the Metro Board, Ms. Burns will also serve on Metro's Finance and Capital Committee. The Board also swore in two new federal appointees: former Virginia Board Member Darien Flowers and Anthony Bedell.

Metro staff provided updates on the FY 2026 third quarter [Service Excellence Report](#) metrics, highlighting year-over-year ridership growth, improved customer satisfaction and continued declines in major crimes. Metro will provide an annual report this summer, which is anticipated to feature an analysis of the Better Bus Network implementation, among other items.

Finally, the Board received an update regarding transit improvements at the RFK Campus/Kingman Park site in Washington. As the district prepares for the new Washington Commanders stadium to open in summer 2030, Metro is working closely with partners to develop a transit strategy that moves tens of thousands of fans safely and efficiently. Planning stage recommendations include improvements to the existing Stadium-Armory Metro Rail Station, a new transit center and Gold Line bus rapid transit (BRT) connecting RFK stadium to Union Station and a suite of operational enhancements.



TSDAC advances MERIT operating formula review and TRIP program changes

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in a meeting of the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) in Richmond May 12, where members continued reviewing state transit funding programs.

In its review of Policy Decision #2, TSDAC indicated tentative support for DRPT's recommended MERIT Operating sizing metrics, including a shift to using a three-year average of agency data and cohort-specific weights for operating cost, ridership, revenue hours and revenue miles. DRPT staff will continue analyzing the recommended sizing metrics as part of the full formula development, including the Performance and Stability Fund, for further consideration by TSDAC in June.

DRPT staff also introduced initial concepts for Policy Decision #3, the Performance and Stability Fund, including whether the funds should be distributed by cohort and whether agencies that reach the 30% cap should remain eligible for performance funding. TSDAC indicated support for distributing performance funding by cohort, while the 30% cap question will be further considered at the June meeting. Members also began reviewing proposed TRIP [policy updates](#) following [HB 200](#), with discussion focused on regional connectivity, enhanced mobility innovation and zero/reduced fare program changes.

DRPT Recommendation: Policy Decision #2d

- DRPT recommends the following Sizing Metric Weights for the Large Urban Cohort:
 - Operating Cost: 40%
 - Ridership: 30%
 - Vehicle Revenue Hours (VRH): 15%
 - Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM): 15%

CHARTING TRANSIT

Collecting feedback on bus service along Route 7

Last fall, NVTC's Envision Route 7 team hit the corridor to talk to residents, visitors, business owners and bus riders about their vision for bus service between Seven Corners and Mark Center/Southern Towers. Across hundreds of conversations and online survey responses in five languages, three priorities rose to the top: more frequent service, bus priority and expanded hours. Data Visualization Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos created this graphic to catalog the feedback received in the fall.

Envision Route 7 Fall 2025 Outreach

 The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission asked the community both in-person and online to share their vision for improving bus service along Route 7 

Spreading the Word

- 41** days of public comment
- 10** rider-focused events
- 47%** interactions in languages other than English
- 5** languages used to connect to the community
 - English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic

What We Heard

- 70%** ride the bus along the Route 7 corridor
- 3/4** ride the bus at least twice a week
- 64%** satisfied or very satisfied with bus service
- Your Bus Improvement Ideas**
 - Frequency
 - Bus Priority
 - Hours of Operation

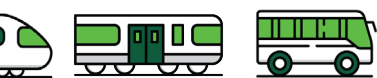


Introducing the Commuter Choice Project Explorer

The [Commuter Choice Project Explorer](#) is a new interactive map featuring the most up-to-date information on Commuter Choice-funded projects. You can search by project type, corridor, or grantee, and view funding amounts and when each project was awarded. As we approach 10 years of the Commuter Choice program and celebrate a decade of investing toll revenue to improve travel in our region, we're excited to share new ways to showcase its impact on Northern Virginians.



Want to share your thoughts for Envision Route 7? Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to fill out the survey, open until June 12.





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