

Advancing transit in
Northern Virginia
since 1964



May
2026

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Executive Director Newsletter





A Message From Kate Mattice

A transformative idea was born a decade ago—turning money collected from tolls on Northern Virginia’s highways into a program that benefits everyone who travels through the region. That program – NVTC’s I-66 Commuter Choice program – began in early 2016 through an agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The I-395 Commuter Choice program came online three years later. Taken together, the two programs help people get where they need to go in less time. That comes in the form of commuter buses that travel in the Express Lanes, allowing riders to bypass traffic congestion and save an average of over 40 minutes for each trip along I-395/95.

It’s also park-and-ride lots where people can park their car for the day and leave the driving to someone else. It’s more connections to Metro stations, with buses that arrive more frequently, new Capital Bikeshare stations and access to transit improvements that make walking and biking to Metro and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) stations more convenient. It’s also expanded Metro and VRE stations to improve access and cut down on platform crowding.

Commuter Choice provides economic, environmental and safety benefits. The program saved drivers over \$7.3 million in fuel costs in 2025. Commuter Choice funded projects also improve air quality by lowering emissions from vehicles, promote economic development and reduce the number of car crashes.

At the start of its second decade, Commuter Choice continues to make strategic investments designed to improve commutes, even for those who don’t directly take advantage of the funded projects. Fewer cars on the road means less commute stress for everyone.

I’m proud of the trailblazing work this program has accomplished and look forward to the continued return on investment for Northern Virginia in the next ten years.

Kate A. Mattice
Executive Director

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May 15
VRE Operations Board

May 19-20
Virginia Transit Association
Annual Conference
& Bus Expo

May 19-20
Commonwealth
Transportation Board
in Alexandria, VA

May 21
Virginia Passenger Rail
Authority

June 4
Commission Meeting

June 12
NoVaTransit Talks Webinar

June 19
Program Advisory
Committee

Joint WMATA & Legislative
and Policy Committees

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May 2025 ribbon cutting for a Commuter Choice-funded DASH bus.





I-66 Commuter Choice public comment sets record

NVTC received nearly 500 survey responses for projects under consideration for I-66 [Commuter Choice](#) funding during the public comment period that wrapped up April 3. The majority of comments received were in support of the proposed projects and the response demonstrates strong interest in the Commuter Choice program and the benefits it brings to Northern Virginia commuters. Respondents also demonstrated deep knowledge of the routes and stations targeted for improvements and the potential benefits of investing in them.

Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein, with support from Program Analyst Jason Adle, led a virtual public hearing April 2 to provide an additional venue for members of the public to give feedback. The Program Advisory Committee was briefed on the 14 projects under consideration for funding at its April 16 meeting; the full Commission is expected to approve the final Program of Projects at its May meeting. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will be asked for final approval in June.

NVTC's Commuter Choice program would help create two new Metrobus routes: A6X and F2X.

Tell us what you think at novatransit.org/commuterchoice

NVTC's Commuter Choice program would increase service during rush hour on ART Route 55: East Falls Church to Rosslyn.

Tell us what you think at novatransit.org/commuterchoice

NVTC's Commuter Choice program would continue boosting service on four Fairfax Connector Routes:

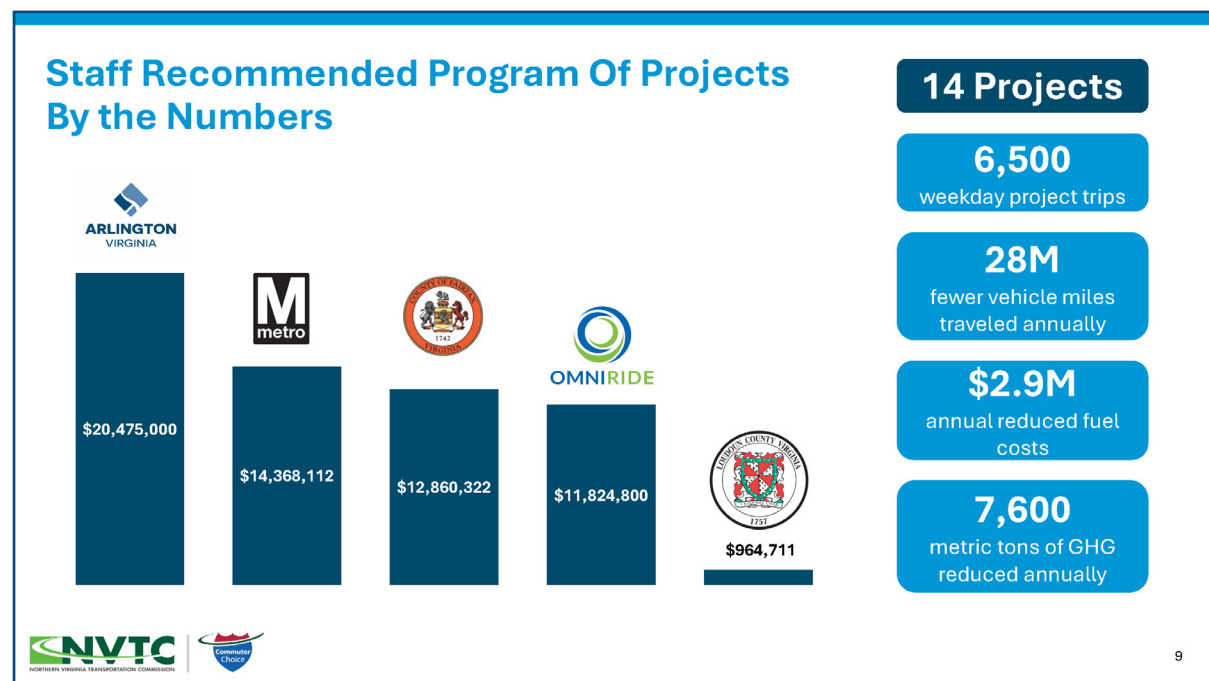
- 598: Reston to the Pentagon
- 697: Stringfellow Road to L'Enfant Plaza
- 698: Stringfellow Road to the Pentagon
- 699: Monument Drive to Washington, D.C.

Tell us what you think at novatransit.org/commuterchoice

Program Advisory Committee endorses I-66 Commuter Choice projects

NVTC's Program Advisory Committee (PAC) [endorsed](#) the I-66 [Commuter Choice](#) FY 2027-2028 Program of Projects from Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein and Program Analyst Jason Adle on April 16. The Program of Projects comprises \$60.5 million in funding for 14 projects, with proposed awards to Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, OmniRide and Metro. Upon full implementation of these projects, we anticipate that they will result in nearly 6,500 weekday project trips, saving Northern

Virginia commuters nearly \$3 million in gas costs and 128,000 hours of travel time annually. The PAC also heard an update on the I-66 Needs Assessment study from Daniel and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) NOVA Transit Planning Manager Amy Garbarini, as well as a zero-emission bus technical assistance update from Director of Programs and Policy Ann McGrane and Program Analyst Owen Williams.





WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees discuss oversight work, Richmond developments

NVTC's WMATA and Legislative and Policy Committees held a [joint meeting](#) April 16 where Metro Inspector General Michelle Zamarin briefed members on her office's recent audit and investigation work, [semi-annual report](#) and an overview of the annual work plan process. Zamarin also spoke to the success of the office's collaboration with Metro, including regular reporting to the Board and proactively addressing OIG recommendations. Committee members also heard from NVTC WMATA Program Manager Adam Hager regarding the requirements, goals and timeline of NVTC's 2026 ["Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA."](#)

The joint committees then received an update from Program Analyst Owen Williams on key outcomes from the General Assembly

session, including recently passed legislation affecting transit, such as [reforms](#) to the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) program, [strengthened](#) bus lane enforcement, expanded Metro advertising revenue [opportunities](#) and an [evaluation](#) of contracted transit service compensation. Owen also highlighted several studies and reports assigned to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) this year, as well as ongoing [work](#) through the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) to advance updates to the MERIT Operating Assistance program and TRIP. NVTC's Legislative Liaison Aimee Perron Seibert then provided a state budget update and Executive Director Kate Mattice updated the joint committee on Congress's reauthorization of surface transportation funding.



Metro Board approves FY 2027 budget, rail modernization plan

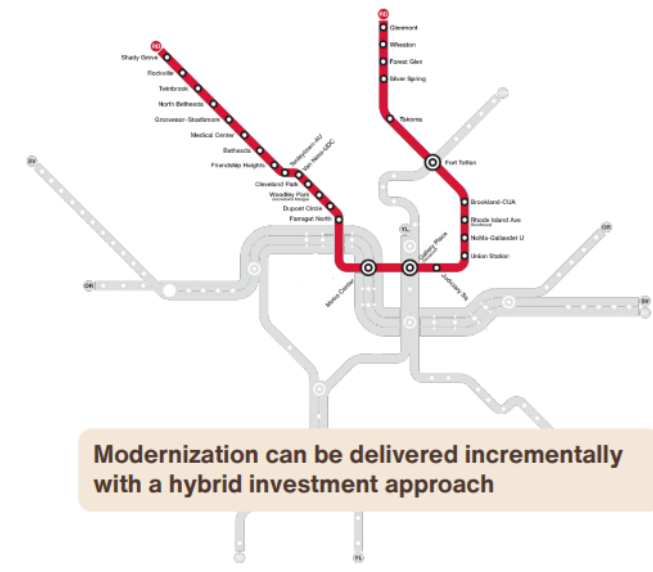
The Metro Board approved the [FY 2027 Operating Budget and FY 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Program](#) at its meeting April 23. The \$2.7 billion operating budget continues Metro's focus on reinvesting savings into service improvements, including increased bus frequency and coverage and more frequent weekday rail service. The \$2.1 billion capital program invests in state of good repair and modernization efforts that together restore, sustain and improve Metro across all modes.

The Board also agreed to a [resolution](#) supporting the Rail Modernization Program plan, beginning with the Red Line Modernization Project. Included in the FY 2027-2032 CIP, the Red Line project is the first phase of the

program and includes communications-based train control (CBTC) installation along the entire Red Line, related 7000- and 8000- series railcar conversions, platform screen door installation at 20 of the 27 Red Line stations and backend systems integration. Future modernization on other Metro Rail lines is contingent on additional funding identified through DMVMoves.

The Board also approved a reimbursable agreement with Arlington County for construction costs associated with a new entrance at the Ballston-MU Metro station and amended the Crystal City Metro station second entrance reimbursable project agreement to accommodate new design and construction requirements.

Red Line Modernization Project



Modernization can be delivered incrementally with a hybrid investment approach

Project Scope: capable of GoA Level 4 operations

- **Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) Installation:**
 - Entire Red Line (32 miles, 27 stations)
 - 3 rail yards (Shady Grove, Glenmont, Brentwood)
 - Greenbelt test track
- **Railcar Conversions:**
 - Mix of 7000-Series and 8000-Series cars
- **Platform Doors & Protection:**
 - Doors at 20 stations (out of 27 total)
- **Supporting Systems Installation:**
 - Connect new systems to the Metro Integrated Command and Communications Center (MICC)
 - Upgrade existing technical systems to improve monitoring and control operations



TSDAC advances MERIT operating assistance reform

Executive Director Kate Mattice attended the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) [meeting](#) in Richmond April 14 where the committee took action on Policy Decision #1 for the MERIT Operating Assistance updates, voting to establish three cohorts based on Census-defined geographic service areas—large urban, small urban and rural—and to allocate 81% of total funding to large urban systems, 12% to small urban and 7% to rural. All Northern Virginia agencies fall within the large urban cohort.

TSDAC also received a preview of Policy Decision #2, which will establish tailored sizing metrics to distribute revenue within each cohort and is expected to be finalized next month. NVTC staff will continue engaging with local transit agencies and DRPT through upcoming cohort-specific workshops. The committee also received an overview of the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) ahead of a legislatively directed review that will begin next month to support development of updated program guidelines.

CTB reviews draft six-year transportation program and funding plan

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) met April 21 and 22 in Fredericksburg to [review](#) the draft six-year improvement program (SYIP) and draft six-year financial plan, which together outline the Commonwealth's transportation funding and investment priorities over the coming years. Although the draft FY 2027-2032 SYIP reflects increased funding for transit programs supported by growth in the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, the preliminary allocations for FY 2027 are anticipated to decline by 10.9% compared to FY 2026. This is partially due to the elimination of general fund transfers (pending biennial budget discussion) that support NVTC's subsidies to Metro.

The CTB also reviewed the process and timeline for finalizing the SYIP, with public comment and final action expected later this spring. In addition, the Board received programmatic updates on [SMART SCALE](#), including efforts to evaluate completed projects and inform future program refinements, as well as updates on highway safety investments and system performance. NVTC staff will continue to examine any changes to the SYIP and the potential impacts FY 2027 allocations may have on our jurisdictions.

Envision Route 7 plans shared at Tysons Community Alliance open house

[Envision Route 7](#) Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha and Program Analyst Jason Adle attended the [Tysons Community Alliance's](#) transportation open house April 30 to provide updates on the project, a planned bus rapid transit system (BRT) connecting Tysons and Alexandria. Other attendees included representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation, Fairfax County DOT, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and agencies working to improve mobility around Tysons. The event was an opportunity to discuss plans for BRT at an important destination for the region.



Past NVTC Commissioners reflect on Metro's history

Metro officially celebrated 50 years of rail service on Friday, March 27. To mark this golden milestone, NVTC's communications team produced a series of short [videos](#) comprised of past Commissioners sharing their recollections of the Metro system from the early days of planning in the 1960s to the completion of the Silver Line and Potomac Yard Station in this decade. Thanks to Senior Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman and Communications and Design Specialist Colie Touzel for producing and editing this series.



To view the videos, click each thumbnail above or scan the QR code!

NVTC hosts WTS-DC coffee chat

Executive Director Kate Mattice hosted a [WTS-DC](#) coffee chat April 21 where she shared insights from her long career in transportation with women working in the field. Thank you to WTS-DC Chapter President Shelley Wynne for organizing this insightful conversation on mentorship, leadership and the current state of transit.



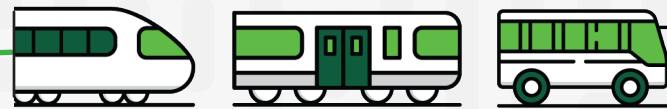
Welcome Amanda Sink!

NVTC welcomed Amanda Sink as NVTC's new Deputy Director of Programs and Policy on April 6. Amanda joins us from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), where she served as the project delivery and grants manager. She brings experience in regional transportation planning, project management and multijurisdictional collaboration across Northern Virginia.

Prior to her time at NVTA, Amanda was the deputy director of the Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority (EPTA) where she led transit services in Berkeley and Jefferson counties in West Virginia. She also served as a weather officer in the United States Air Force.



Welcome aboard!



CHARTING TRANSIT

NoVa's zero-emission buses

Across the region, NVTC supports local jurisdictions working to bring more zero-emission buses (ZEBs) to Northern Virginia's streets. These vehicles have a host of benefits, including reducing emissions and improving transit for customers by offering a smooth, quiet ride. NoVa currently has 36 zero-emission buses (and counting!) operating on our roads. These buses aren't just good for getting around, they're a critical step in our region's commitment to a sustainable, healthy future for our communities. You can learn more about our ZEB efforts on our [website](#) and be sure to follow us on [Instagram](#) and our other social media platforms to see more Charting Transit and other important updates.





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