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in Northern Virginia
since 1964



Advancing Transit

Northern Virginia

institute
planning,
operation
expertise



Executive Director Newsletter



April
2024

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A Message from Kate Mattice

It's probably no surprise to regular readers of this newsletter that public transit is good for the environment. A train or bus carrying multiple people takes cars off the road and avoids the greenhouse gas emissions that come with them. But how do we quantify that advantage? That's where NVTC's newest report comes in. Our "Climate Benefits of Transit in Northern Virginia" report explores regional policies that connect transit to the environment and examines the climate impacts of transit in our region.

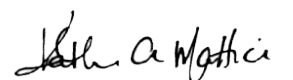
One key finding: The use of public transit in Northern Virginia reduces 120,000 to 160,000 metric tons of CO₂ annually. The report concludes that all buses, including those that burn diesel fuel, are better for the environment than the cars, SUV's and light trucks that people might otherwise drive.

The report also makes recommendations, like increasing ridership of public transit and growing the amount of available public transit in Northern Virginia. These are common sense measures that can help Virginia and the Greater Washington region meet ambitious climate goals.

The "Climate Benefits of Transit in Northern Virginia" report is just one example of our ongoing research efforts as we work to inform decision making throughout our region, as well as across the Commonwealth. In March, NVTC hosted experts from our local governments, transit agencies and other regional organizations to plot a course for future research projects. Our Strategic Transit Policy Research Roadmap will help guide NVTC's transit policy research over the next four-to-six years. The stakeholder input ensures that we are conducting research that will be most useful to our partners.

I'm also proud of NVTC's long history of publishing thoughtful research and reports that have real-world impacts on the growth and sustainability of the region's transportation network. Feel free to check out our history of NVTC research products, online tools and interactive maps on our website at <https://novatransit.org/resources>.

It's the kind of work that we've done since our creation in 1964 and will continue to do, helping shape our region for decades to come.


Executive Director

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*Save
the
Date*

April 11
Program Advisory
Committee

April 16-17
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

April 19
VRE Operations Board

May 2
Commission Meeting

May 16
Joint WMATA & Legislative
& Policy Committees

May 22-23
Virginia Transit Association
Annual Conference

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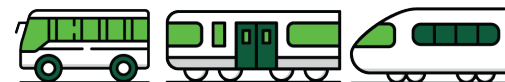




New Commissioner and alternate sworn in

Chair Matt de Ferranti swore in one new Commissioner and one alternate Commissioner at the March Commission [meeting](#). James "Jimmy" Bierman, Jr. joined the Commission as a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Alternate Justine Underhill comes to the Commission from the City of Falls Church. Daniel Storck of Fairfax County, who joined the Commission as an alternate in 2020, now serves as a principal Commissioner.

Additionally, the Commission commended departing Commissioners. The terms of House of Delegates appointees Aimee Gilroy, Joseph Kornhoff, David Skiles and John Tuck III expired at the start of the new General Assembly Session. The Commission is awaiting the appointment of four members from the House of Delegates and one from the Senate.



Daniel Storck

Federal program to help NVTC identify locations for 'on-route' recharging of electric buses

NVTC is receiving free technical assistance from a federal program to help NVTC analyze how local public transit agencies in Northern Virginia could share infrastructure that allows electric buses to recharge while running their routes. "On-route charging" enables buses to recharge their batteries on the go, rather than having to return to a garage to plug in, potentially extending the range of the buses. This could improve reliability and lower infrastructure costs for battery electric buses (BEB).

Several of our bus providers in Northern Virginia have overlapping routes that could be effective for shared on-route charging, including ART, DASH, Fairfax Connector and Metrobus. The analysis will identify potential locations for those chargers.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) created the [Joint Office of Energy and Transportation](#), which works with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) (NREL) to provide technical assistance. Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane submitted a successful request on behalf of NVTC for assistance from the Joint Office to evaluate potential sites for shared charging and consider how the operational model would function. This year-long analysis comes at no cost to NVTC or local or state governments. NVTC will work closely with Northern Virginia's public transit agencies to advance this study.

Examining on-route charging is one of six strategies identified by NVTC's [Northern Virginia Zero-Emission Bus Strategic Plan](#), which we published earlier this year.



Metro hosts 'Fleet of the Future' celebration

Executive Director Kate Mattice had the honor of being invited to join Metro's [Fleet of the Future](#) celebration on the National Mall on March 19. Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke and Metro Board Chair and Commissioner Paul Smedberg led the night's festivities, all with a full-size mockup of the next generation of Metrorail cars in the background. The display

gave visitors an opportunity to see what Metro's 8000-series railcars will look like. The 82-foot model train includes Metro's first-ever open gangway between cars and other modifications from earlier fleets. Metro also showed off its first electric bus on site.





WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Your Metro, the Way Forward

Annual Transformation Report



Metro releases annual report

Metro released its inaugural [annual report](#) on its Strategic Transformation Plan (STP) at its Executive Committee meeting on March 7, highlighting progress made toward several key initiatives including rail automation, zero-emission buses and crime prevention. The STP's goals of Service Excellence, Talented Teams, Regional Opportunity and Partnership, and Sustainability serve as a framework for Metro's decision making across the organization. The annual report also noted year-over-year monthly ridership increases of over 4.5 million trips and the highest levels of rail and bus customer satisfaction in several years.

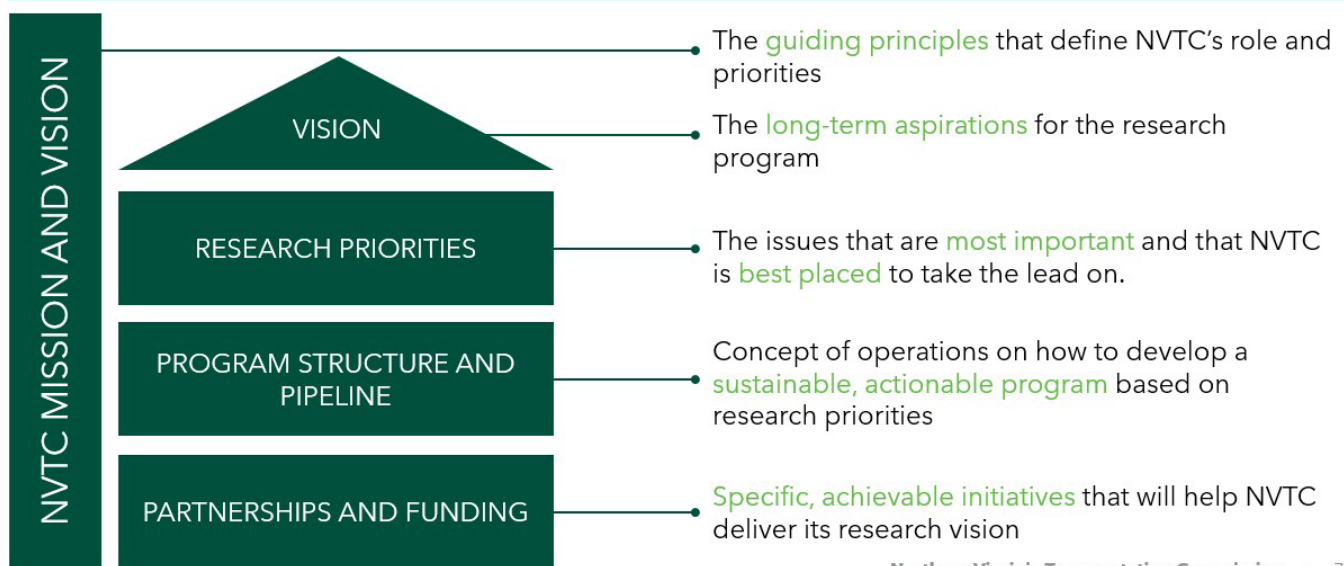
Regional partners join NVTC to plot course for future research projects

Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony hosted a regional workshop focused on transit policy research on March 20 at NVTC's offices in Court House. Xavier and his consultant team solicited feedback and input into a Strategic Transit Policy Research [Roadmap](#), which is being developed to help guide NVTC's transit policy research over the next four-to-six years. With almost 20 attendees from jurisdictions, transit agencies and other regional bodies, the

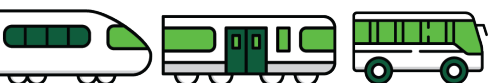
workshop identified a number of issues and themes important to the region's transit, as well as useful feedback for developing the research roadmap.

Preliminary results will be presented to the Program Advisory Committee on April 11 and the draft roadmap will be presented to the full Commission at the May 2 meeting.

Policy Research Roadmap Framework



Northern Virginia Transportation Commission • 7



Statewide Ridership Comparison: December Year-to-Year

Transit ridership for Virginia agencies in December 2023 was 11% higher than December 2022.

- Bus ridership was 11% higher

December 2023 ridership for Virginia agencies was 86% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

- Bus ridership was 84% of 2019 levels

VRE ridership in December 2023 was 12% higher than December 2022 and 32% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

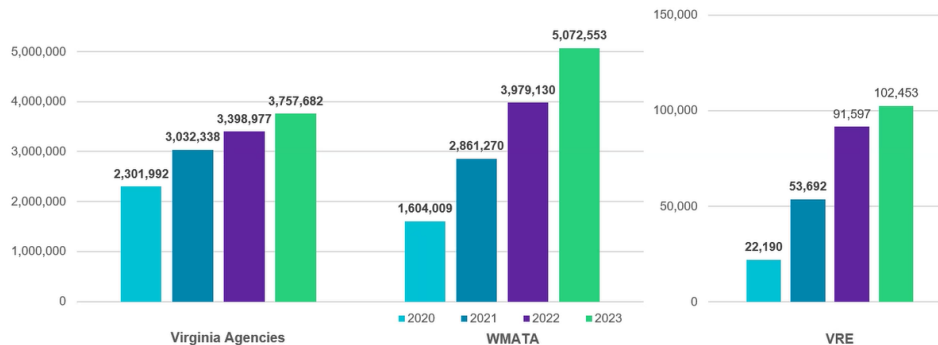
WMATA ridership in December 2023 was 27% higher than in December 2022.

- Bus ridership was 17% higher
- Heavy rail (Metro) was 31% higher

December 2023 WMATA ridership was 61% of pre-pandemic December 2019 levels.

- Bus ridership was 84% of December 2019 levels
- Heavy rail (Metro) was 58% of December 2019 levels

Ridership Comparison: Year-to-Year
2020 – 2023



Mode	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023 vs 2020	2023 vs 2021	2023 vs 2022
Virginia Agencies	2,301,992	3,032,338	3,398,977	3,757,682	63%	24%	11%
VRE	22,190	53,692	91,597	102,453	362%	91%	12%
WMATA	1,604,009	2,861,270	3,979,130	5,072,553	216%	77%	27%
All Agencies + VRE + WMATA	3,928,191	5,947,300	7,469,704	8,932,688	127%	50%	20%

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

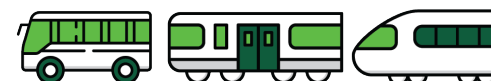
TSDAC reviews Virginia transit trends, available funding

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in a [meeting](#) of the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee ([TSDAC](#)) March 28, the organization that provides guidance to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) on the allocation approach to state transit aid. The meeting contained updates on transportation-related bills in this year's General Assembly Session, including Metro funding, the upcoming Northern Virginia Transportation Study and ridership trends across the Commonwealth showing major gains--bottom line, transit growth is remarkable!

The committee also dove into DRPT funding available for allocation in the FY 2025 Six Year

Improvement Program (SYIP). DRPT is currently reviewing funding applications for transit operations, capital, special programs, the Transit Ridership Incentive Program and the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility program. DRPT will present its proposed SYIP to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in May, with approval anticipated in June.

Meanwhile, DRPT anticipates only a slight increase in overall transit operating funding in FY 2025.





Daniel Knickelbein

Daniel Knickelbein joined NVTC in March as a senior program analyst. He will primarily support the [Commuter Choice](#) program and has already expressed interest in supporting the [Envision Route 7](#) Bus Rapid Transit system program as well as our legislative work. Daniel joins us most recently from Chicago, where he worked as a Transportation Planner at TranSystems. Daniel's previous experience also includes working

for a Council of Governments in the Chicago area and the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Daniel has a bachelor's degree in political science from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota and is looking forward to exploring the DMV area and learning more about the unique structure of governments in the Commonwealth.

Staff learn strategic thinking tools in annual training

NTVC staff gathered for our once-a-year training session on March 22 with a focus on strategic thinking. The session led us through the steps on how to think about NTVC's vision and mission, as well as individual programs and projects, and how to translate big picture thinking into our day-to-

day work. I want to thank our facilitator, Margarita Rozenfeld, for her creative approach to keeping our staff engaged throughout the learning process, as well as Chair Matt de Ferranti, who joined us for lunch and shared a few words of encouragement and thanks for the work we do.





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