



NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Executive Director Newsletter



  @NoVaTransit

NoVaTransit.org
NoVaRides.org

Northern Virginia
Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 230
Arlington, VA 22201

June 2023



A Message from Kate Mattice

Our region has historically understood that our vast transit network of Metrorail, local and commuter bus, and VRE rail service is a key factor in the economic vitality and strong quality of life in Northern Virginia. This month, we're happy to release our much-anticipated updated study on the "[Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth](#)" that looks specifically at how our transit networks provide value – not only economic but also safety, environmental, and quality of life – to both our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole.

The report demonstrates that our transit network contributes \$1.5 billion in annual personal income and sales tax revenue that benefits the general fund of the Commonwealth of Virginia. That is money that can be spent on all kinds of programs throughout the state, and it represents a 160% return on investment—meaning that for every dollar Virginia invests in transit, another \$1.60 is created.

Transit Technology Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane led the research and development of the study, which also found that without our robust transit network, traffic and commerce in Northern Virginia would literally grind to a halt. We know that many of our roads and highways are already at, or over, capacity during peak travel times. If all the people who ride transit suddenly had to drive to get around, the resulting traffic would be unmanageable.

The publication of this study comes at a difficult time for transit agencies nationwide, and particularly so for Metro. The pandemic dramatically altered the way we work and commute. Old assumptions for how we fund transit, in addition to long-term structural challenges in the way we fund Metro, are no longer workable.

We hope to use this study to demonstrate that continued investment in public transit makes economic sense for all of Virginia and that we cannot risk losing the value it provides.


Executive Director

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June 16
VRE Operations Board

June 20-21
Commonwealth Transportation Board

July 6
Commission Meeting

July 18-19
Commonwealth Transportation Board

July 20
WMATA Committee

July 21
VRE Operations Board

July 26
Program Advisory Committee

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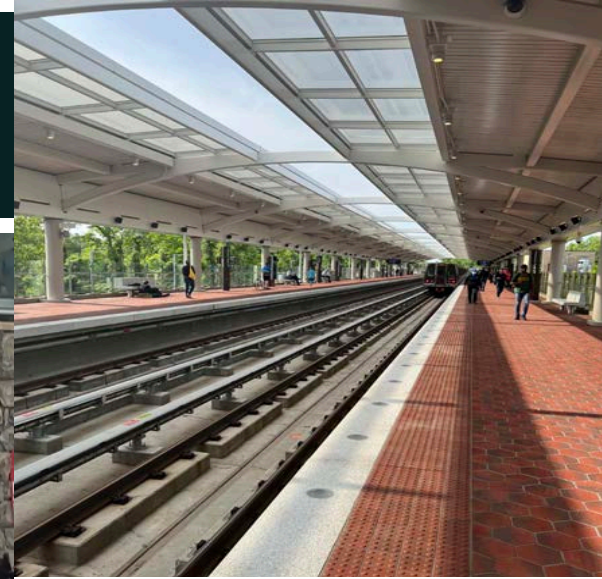


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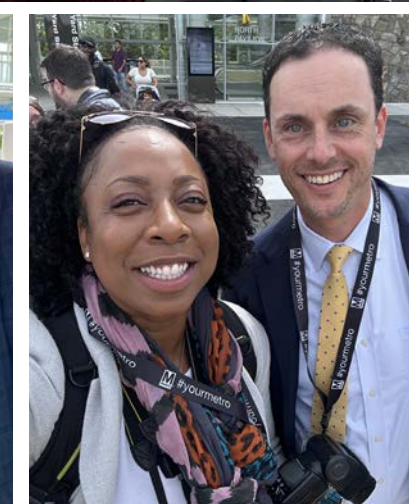


Potomac Yard-VT Station opening brings Metrorail to 98th station



Executive Director Kate Mattice helped cut the ribbon on the newest Metro station, [Potomac Yard-VT](#), in Alexandria May 19. NVTC Grants Manager Brittany Sumpter also played a small, but important role in the financing of Metrorail's 98th station, managing a \$20 million dollar grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, Rep. Don Beyer and Metro Board Chair Paul Smedberg joined other state and local officials in celebrating the opening.

The infill station connects a rapidly growing area between the Braddock Road and Regan National Airport Stations. Metro [says](#) the station will eventually support 26,000 new jobs and 13,000 new residents. It will be adjacent to the future Virginia Tech Innovation Campus and three [DASH routes](#) have also been updated to stop at the new station. In case you missed the event, you can watch the livestream [here](#).



NVTC study finds transit worth \$1.5 billion to the Commonwealth of Virginia

Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane presented the [findings](#) of NVTC's study on the Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth to NVTC's [Legislative and Policy Committee](#) May 17. The study seeks to quantify the value of our region's transit network, including buses, Metrorail and the Virginia Railway Express, to Virginia in terms of annual income and sales tax revenue. We found that Northern Virginia's transit network generates \$1.5 billion (in 2021 dollars) in annual income and sales tax revenue to the Commonwealth.

We estimate that this represents a 160% return on investment for Virginia and find the network provides numerous environmental and user benefits for residents and workers in the region as well. The results of this study show that transit is crucial to Northern Virginia's success and requires stable, sustainable funding going forward. We plan to publish the full technical report of our methodology and findings after the June Commission meeting.

Supports **128,000** households



Avoids **70,000** metric tons of CO₂ emissions



Supports **311,000** jobs



Saves commuters **\$130M** in vehicle operating costs



Avoids over **400** serious injuries



\$1.5B
Revenue from Personal Income and Sales Tax (\$ 2021)

\$693M
(Indirect & Induced Impacts)



\$828M
(Direct Impacts)

\$600M
(Direct Impacts)



2018

2025

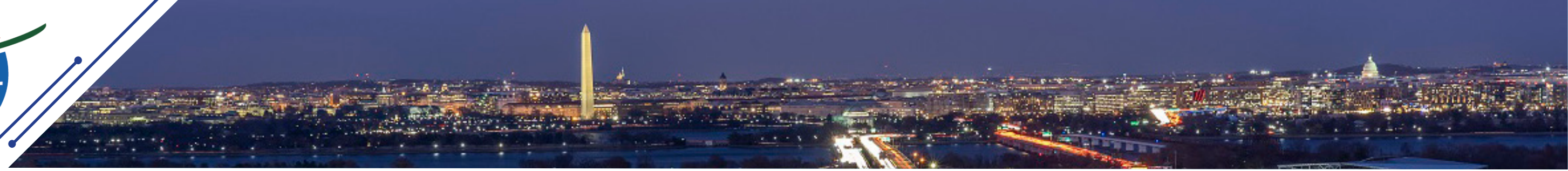


public meeting gathers feedback from Falls Church residents

NVTC hosted an open house at the Mary Riley Styles Public Library in Falls Church on May 16 to discuss the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Commissioner David Snyder provided opening remarks before Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony gave a presentation on the project work.

This part of the project evaluated four potential design scenarios for the Envision Route 7 segment that extends from I-66 to Seven Corners through the city. Each of the four scenarios was evaluated in terms of its impacts to BRT bus operations and traffic. The meeting was designed to collect community feedback on which scenarios might work best in Falls Church. For folks who couldn't make it to the event, we have a survey open now through June 4. Please visit NoVaTransit.org/programs/Route7 to learn more about the project and complete the survey online.





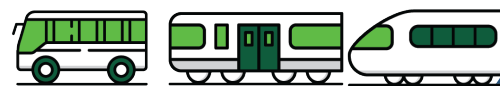
Highest public engagement yet on projects under consideration for Commuter Choice funding

Public comment on the 16 projects under consideration for I-395/95 Commuter Choice FY 2024-2025 funding closed May 15 with 646 comment submissions—more than five times as many received in any Commuter Choice funding round to date, and an overwhelming number were supportive of projects considered for funding. Besides NVTC’s own social media posts and advertising, jurisdictions and transit operators with projects under consideration for funding helped spread the word to their constituents and riders. A [story](#) on WJLA-TV that highlighted the proposed Program of Projects and public comment period aired in the final days of the public comment period, boosting engagement.

NVTC’s public comment materials reached many Northern Virginia commuters even beyond those who commented:

- Chair Dalia Palchik’s [English](#) and [Spanish](#) video greetings on Facebook and Twitter to introduce the comment period fostered over 1,100 click-throughs to additional information.
- Nearly 100 people interacted with NVTC’s posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn by liking or sharing them.
- NVTC’s public comment web pages, which provided [information](#) about the projects and ways to comment, garnered over 2,000 views.

The full set of public comments will be shared with the Commission and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission before both approve a Program of Projects for referral to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The commissions are slated to act on June 1.



Commuter Choice Program of Projects presented at regional transportation public meeting

Executive Director Kate Mattice served as a member of the listening panel for the annual [joint public meeting](#) of Northern Virginia transportation agencies May 1 as we highlighted the public comment period for I-395/95 Commuter Choice. Transportation Secretary Shep Miller chaired the annual meeting which included the

Department of Rail and Public Transportation, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the Transportation Planning Board, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and Virginia Railway Express.

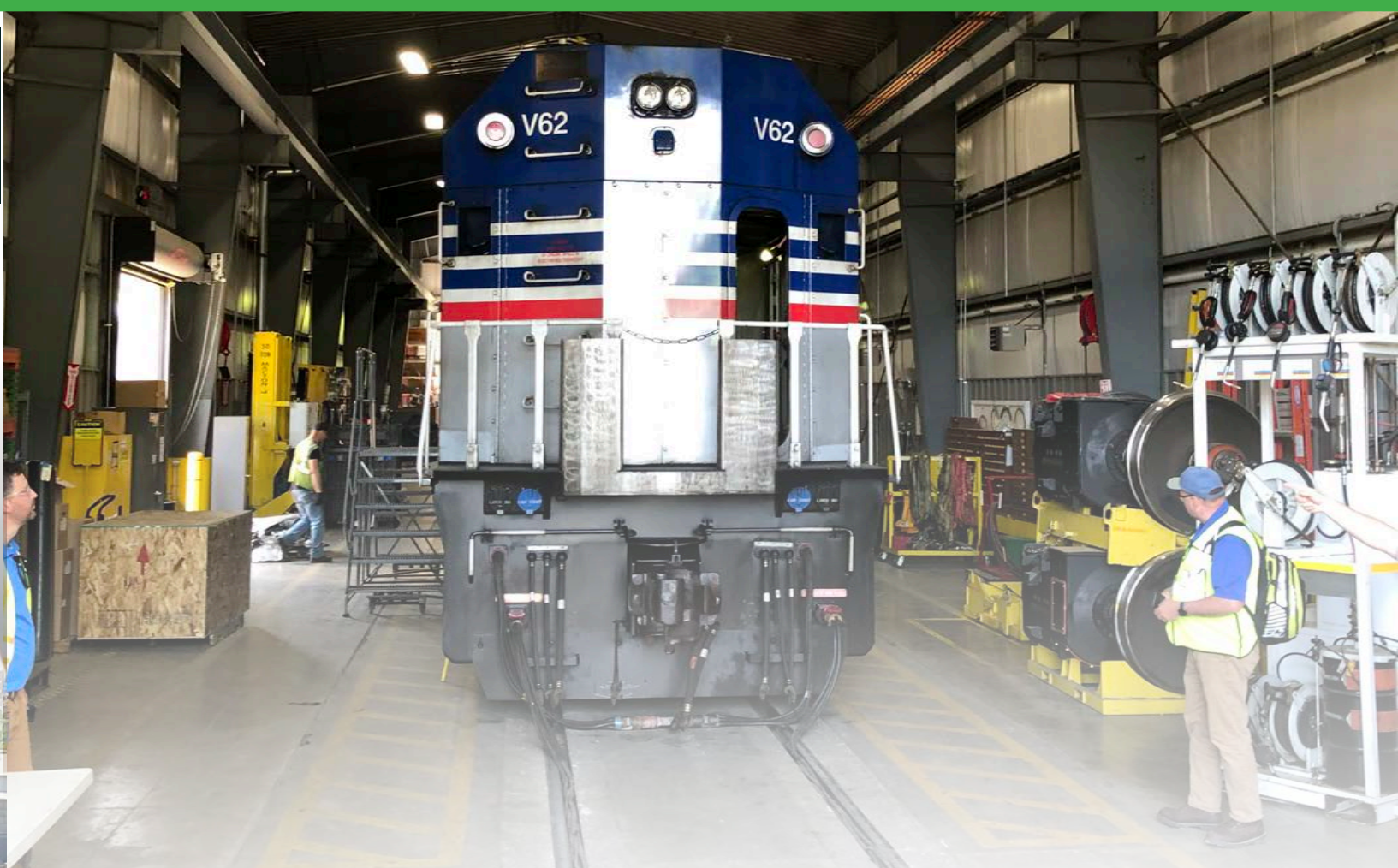




Metro's Yellow Line reopens

Metro's Yellow Line service [resumed](#) May 7, giving riders from Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax County a faster connection across the Potomac River and into the District of Columbia. The Yellow Line bridge/tunnel was closed for eight months to allow the agency to rebuild the 1970's-era structures.

The agency says the \$384 million project included replacing more than 1,000 individual steel plates held together by more than 12,000 bolts and mitigating water intrusion in the tunnel. The day before reopening, several hundred lucky Metro fans got a [preview ride](#) on the "Yellow Brick Road."



NVTC staff take VRE ride, visit Metro fare lab

NVTC staff joined regional partners on two separate tours in May. Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane and Program Analyst Ronnetta Zack-Williams, along with members of the TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee, joined staff from the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) to ride the Manassas line from Union Station to Broad Run Monday. During the tour, VRE staff were on board to talk about their operation and explain the improvements coming as part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative. Upon arrival at Broad Run, VRE staff gave a tour of the facility and described the future facility expansion project.

the coming years. It was an opportunity to learn more about how Metro tests its fare collection devices as well as the different technologies that must work together to ensure a seamless payment experience. The group also got to look at some of the new faregates being developed to reduce fare evasion. A special thanks to TPB, VRE and Metro for hosting our folks!



Virginia Transit Association conference brings transit professionals together

Several NVTC staff members joined Executive Director Kate Mattice in Virginia Beach for the [Virginia Transit Association's](#) annual conference. It's an opportunity to connect with transit professionals and elected leaders from across the Commonwealth and to learn about best

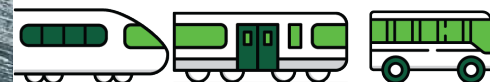
practices and emerging trends in the industry.

Adam Hager, Ronnetta Zack-Williams, Ann McGrane, Kate Mattice, Brittany Sumpter, Allan Fye, Canek Aguirre, Sophie Spiliotopoulos, Tenley O'Hara (L-R)



Katie Cristol (holding award) stands with staff from Arlington County and Virginia Railway Express

We also congratulate Commissioner and former Chair Katie Cristol for winning VTA's Outstanding Contribution by an Individual award. She has been a tireless advocate for Arlington County, NVTC and the VRE Operations Board and we were proud to join Virginia Railway Express and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority in nominating her for this honor.

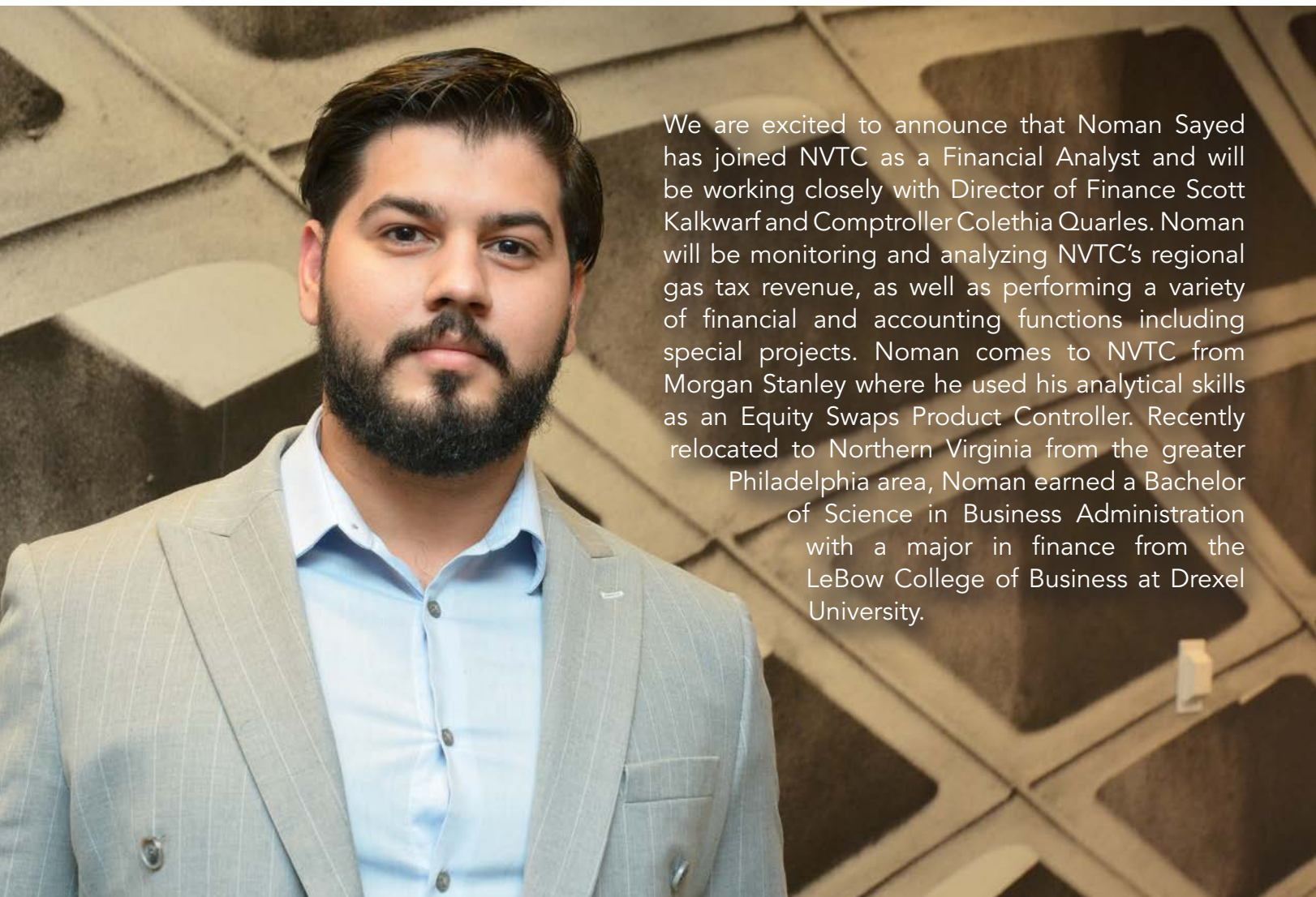


Transit Technology Working Group

The Transit Technology Working Group quarterly meeting was hosted by Senior Program Manager Ann McGrane and Program Analyst Sophie Spiliotopoulos on May 2. A status update on OmniRide's new microtransit service in Manassas Park was presented by Joe Stainsby from OmniRide, while Rajan Shankar from WMATA

provided an update to the group on the status of the back-office upgrade. The meeting concluded with Sophie presenting her and Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony's work using publicly available data to identify routes in Northern Virginia that could benefit from bus priority treatments.

Welcome Noman Sayed



We are excited to announce that Noman Sayed has joined NVTC as a Financial Analyst and will be working closely with Director of Finance Scott Kalkwarf and Comptroller Colethia Quarles. Noman will be monitoring and analyzing NVTC's regional gas tax revenue, as well as performing a variety of financial and accounting functions including special projects. Noman comes to NVTC from Morgan Stanley where he used his analytical skills as an Equity Swaps Product Controller. Recently relocated to Northern Virginia from the greater Philadelphia area, Noman earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a major in finance from the LeBow College of Business at Drexel University.

Welcome Rachel Inman and Ben Mattice

We are excited to welcome Rachel Inman as our new transit fellow. Rachel is a recent graduate from Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in public and urban affairs, majoring in smart and sustainable cities with a minor in landscape architecture.



This summer, Rachel will be working on a Northern Virginia Bus Stop Survey during the summer with Transit Resource Center Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony. With seven bus agencies and over 7,500 bus stops, Northern Virginia bus stops vary in their design, placement and amenities. Rachel's project will help us understand what bus stop amenities exist, what factors influence the inclusion of different amenities and who benefits from different amenities.

Rachel will continue her studies at Virginia Tech as an accelerated master's student in the urban and regional planning program, and plans to take graduate classes with concentrations in transportation planning and urban analytics to supplement her interest in using data to inform more accessible and efficient public transportation systems. I want to thank the [Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation](#) for their ongoing support of NVTC's Transit Fellow program, which seeks to prepare students and recent graduates for a career in transportation.



We are also happy to welcome back Ben Mattice. Ben is working part time this summer with the Communications team. Ben is a student-athlete working towards a Bachelor's in Advertising: Art Direction at Temple University. Ben will continue his work with graphic design for NVTC's social platforms and will help pursue ideas that support NVTC's mission of public awareness to the benefits of public transportation.





Former Commissioners interviewed for 60th anniversary documentary

NVTC's Communications team interviewed four past Commissioners for a planned documentary for NVTC's 60th anniversary in 2024. Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman and Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther spoke with Carol DeLong in early May. The former Falls Church

mayor served on the Commission from 1976 to 1990 and as chair in 1982. They met with Sharon Bulova the following day. The former chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is the second-longest serving Commissioner, having served from 1988 until 2019, and as chair in 1996.

NVTC says farewell to Silas Sullivan

Transit Fellow Silas Sullivan departed NVTC after almost a year and a half of supporting NVTC projects. His work included research into the compensation structures of peer agencies, a Case Study of Microtransit Deployment, the study on the Value of Transit in Northern Virginia and the Commuter Choice program for I-66 and

I-395/95. Following his graduation from Virginia Tech with a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree, Silas will be taking time to travel and visit family before starting a new chapter at a local transit agency in the Greater Washington region this summer.



Monique and Matt sat down with Mary Margaret Whipple later in the month. She served from 1985 to 1986 when she was a member of the Arlington County Board and again from 1988 to 2012 while she served in the Virginia Senate. She chaired NVTC in 1995 and also served on the Metro Board.



Transit Fellow Nathan Varnell joined Monique and Matt in late May as they met with Jim Moran at his offices overlooking the U.S. Capitol. Mr. Moran served on NVTC from 1985 until 1990, while he was mayor of Alexandria, prior to being elected to Congress. He also served as chair in 1988 and 1990.





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