

# Advancing Transit

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



# Overview



*The COVID-19 pandemic taught us all to be flexible and adopt new ways of working and we are proud to say that the work of NVTC never faltered, despite the pressures and challenges we faced in 2020.*

NVTC recognizes that there will be life after COVID. Our work supports the growth and livability of the communities we serve. It's a future measured in decades. Smart planning now brings better outcomes later. In this first all-digital Northern Virginia Transportation Commission annual report, we take a look back at our accomplishments for the year.

NVTC's financial performance continued to be outstanding. We extended our decades-long streak of clean financial statement audits. NVTC also managed more than \$228 million for our member jurisdictions in FY 2020.

The key missions of NVTC continued in 2020, including the funding and stewardship of Metro. We appointed new Metro Board members, authored a new report on Metro funding, coordinated moving passengers during station construction and worked on behalf of the Northern Virginia jurisdictions to bring a unified voice to an agency that serves a large region with diverse needs.

Our Commuter Choice program adapted to pandemic-driven changes in toll revenue while moving forward with implementing new projects along the I-395/95 corridor and selecting a strategic set of new investments for the I-66 corridor.

Our Transit Technology Program made significant progress in assisting Northern Virginia's transit providers with needed fare collection system upgrades and played an active rollout in the introduction of a mobile SmarTrip app. The Transit Resource Center produced smart analysis of the pandemic's impact on transit ridership, traffic and the use of telework.

NVTC also remained engaged. In some ways, the world of video meetings allowed Commissioners and staff to interact with more people and participate in online events that they might have missed normally. We spoke at national conferences, engaged with stakeholders and even hosted our two U.S. Senators at our annual legislative briefing.

Challenges lie ahead as we look forward to recovery from the pandemic and we will continue to manage our programs in the best interest of our region and those who make our work possible.



Kate Mattice,  
Executive Director



Katie Cristol,  
NVTC Chair

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# A Transformative Transportation Bill, then a Global Pandemic

*The year started with one of the most transformative General Assembly sessions for transportation in a generation.*

Members passed a transportation omnibus bill aimed at streamlining Virginia's transportation funding allocation model and securing sustainable revenues for local transit operators, Metro and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE).

The omnibus bill increased the statewide gas tax, established a highway use fee for alternative fuel and fuel-efficient vehicles and allocated nearly a quarter of the Commonwealth Transportation Fund to transit. The legislation also created a discretionary Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) to provide funding for "transit routes of regional significance" and dedicated a portion of the program for reduced or free-fare programs for low-income riders.

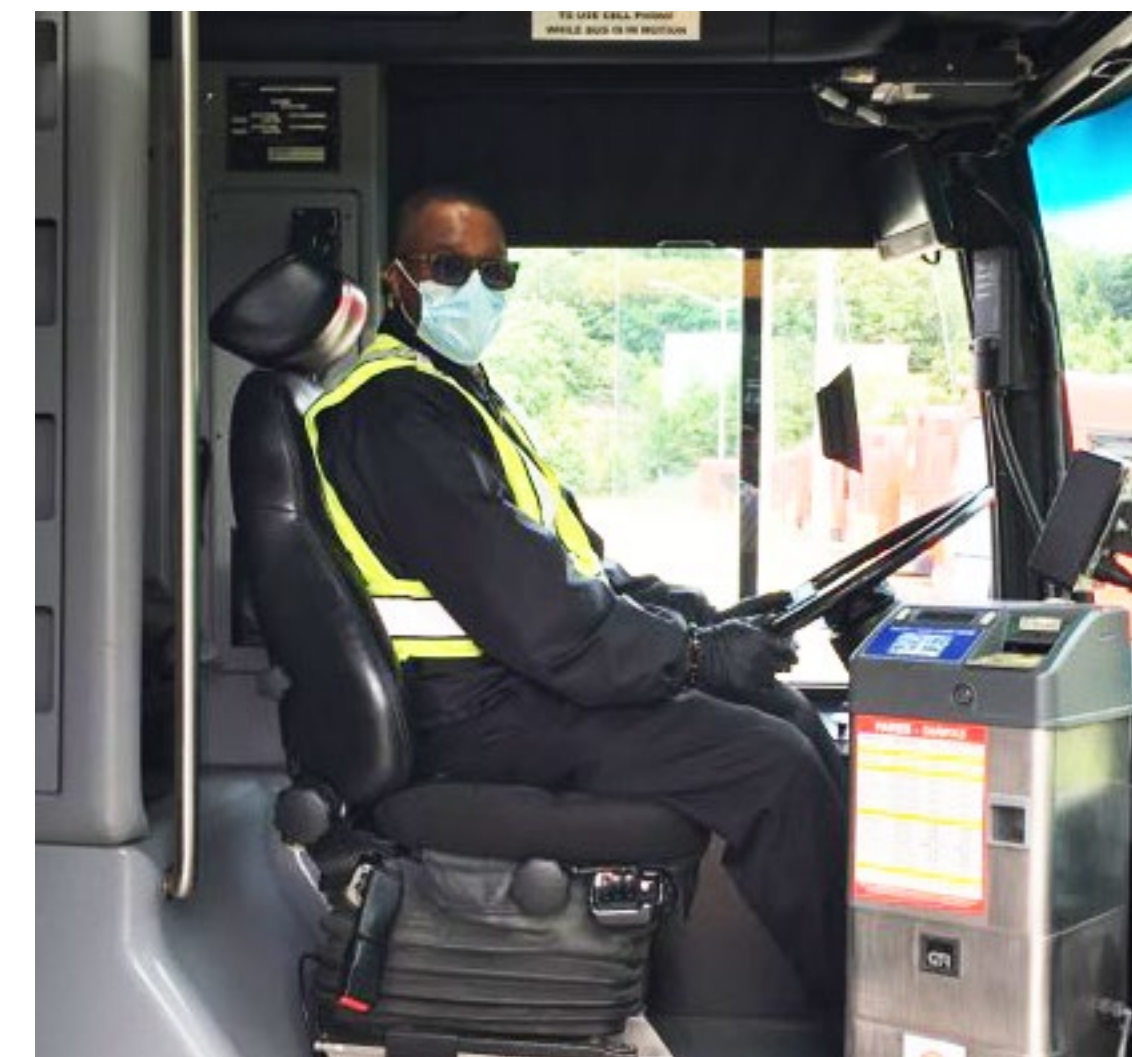
It supported construction of a new Long Bridge and established the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) to own and manage the real estate, as well as oversee and contract for passenger rail service. In Northern Virginia, the bill altered the regional gas tax and redirected a portion of the gas tax revenue to the Metro Capital Fund and guarantees \$50 million in Virginia's match to dedicated federal funding for Metro.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic came crashing down. Ridership on Metro, VRE and the region's bus system dropped sharply. The transit agencies implemented rear-door bus boarding and stopped collecting fares as a way to protect drivers from the virus. That meant far less fare revenue.

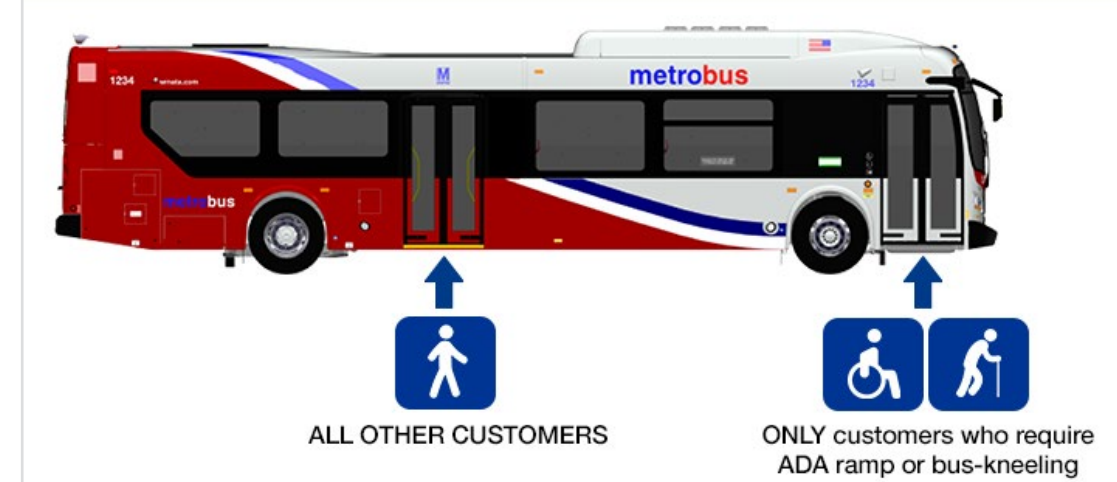
The pandemic also led to delaying provisions of the bill, but fortunately, not eliminating any of them when Gov. Ralph Northam signed it into law.

By the fall, the Commonwealth projected an estimated \$750 million shortfall for transportation over two years. The governor and Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine worked to keep major transportation projects on track with the goal of supporting economic recovery.

And in December, hope. The approval and administration of the first COVID-19 vaccines and a path forward to the return of "normal" life, including going to work and riding buses and trains.



Rear-Door Boarding Begins Tuesday, March 24



# COVID-19 and the Commission

## COVID-19 and Funding Challenges

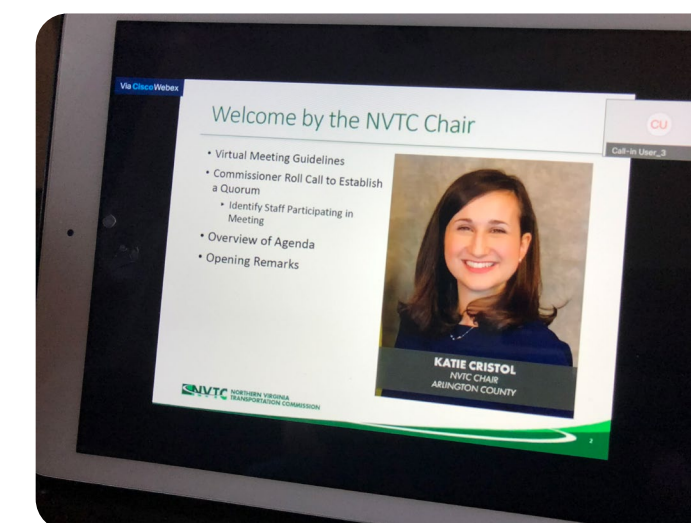
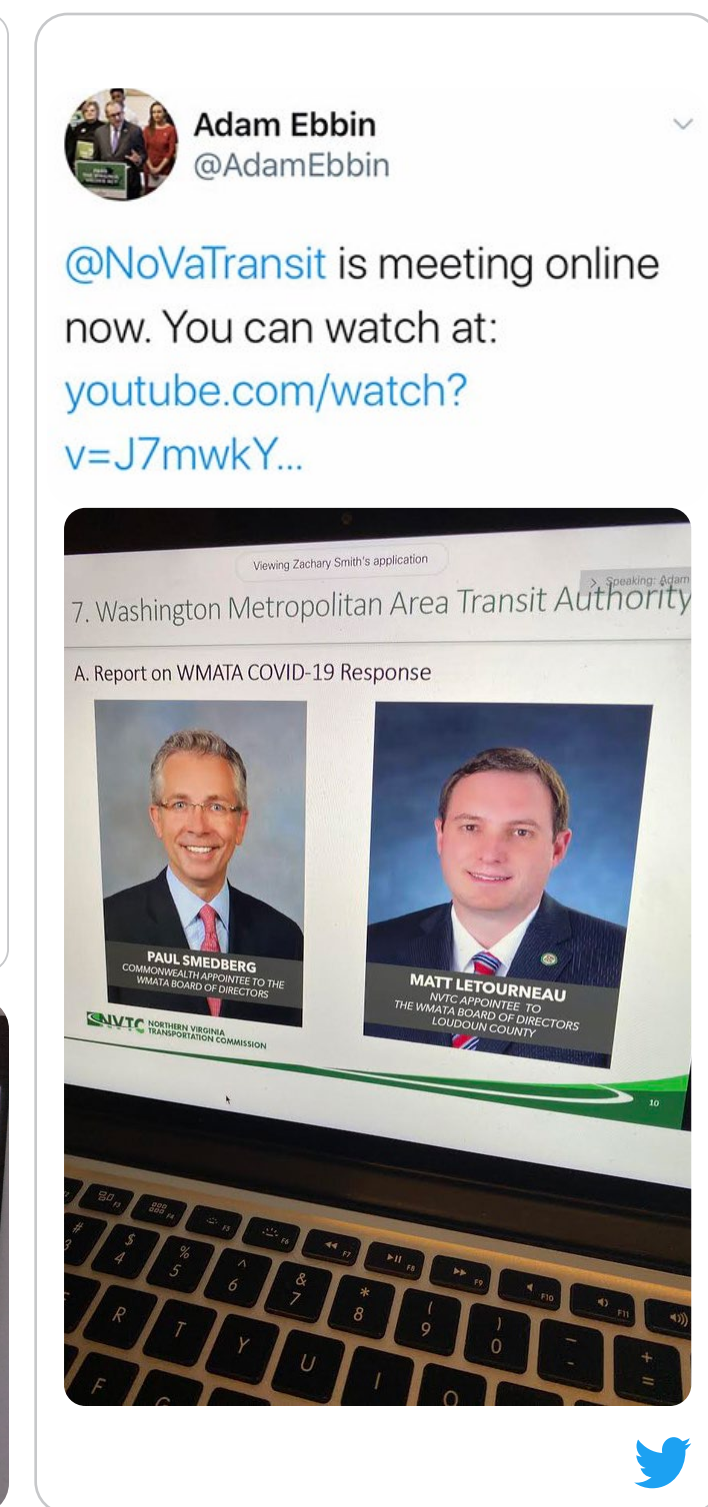
The sudden drop in transit ridership that resulted from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic put transit agencies in a financial bind. Most rely heavily on fares and with ridership falling to around 10% of normal and the halting of bus fare revenue collection, Metro, VRE and others found themselves in a financial hole. The CARES Act passed by Congress in March provided about a billion dollars to transit agencies in the Washington region. Metro used some of the money to reduce the amount local governments in Northern Virginia had to pay into the system, giving them financial relief. The Bipartisan Coronavirus Relief and Omnibus Funding Bill passed in December provided a second round of assistance to help agencies into 2021.

NVTC and our local governments are grateful to our congressional delegation for their unwavering support of both relief acts. Northern Virginia's members of Congress understand the value of transit for essential employees and that transit will play a key role in the post-pandemic recovery. It's vital to the short-and-long term economic health of Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth.

## COVID-19 Changes How NVTC Works

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States forced rapid changes in the way NVTC works. In mid-March, all staff members started working from home. While NVTC has long supported teleworking as a tool to reduce traffic congestion, there had never been a time when all employees were working at home at the same time. The transition happened nearly instantaneously, ensuring that important work continued uninterrupted.

Monthly Commission meetings and periodic committee meetings also had to shift online, but the ability to do that took an act of the General Assembly. NVTC led the charge to insert language into a budget amendment allowing virtual meetings of public bodies in Virginia when the governor has declared a state of emergency. While the provision wasn't enacted in time to hold the April meeting, by May the Commission successfully moved into virtual space, while ensuring the public could watch meetings and provide comments to Commissioners.



# NVTC Welcomes New Commissioners

## 2020 NVTC Officers

Katie Cristol, *Chair*  
 Canek Aguirre, *Vice Chair*  
 Jeffrey McKay, *Secretary-Treasurer*  
 Matt Letourneau, *Immediate Past Chair*

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission membership underwent a seismic change in 2020, swearing in ten new Commissioners and one alternate.

**Fairfax County** appointed newly elected Supervisors Walter Alcorn, Dalia Palchik and James Walkinshaw and alternate Daniel Storck.

**Arlington County** appointed newly elected Board Member Matt de Ferranti.

**Loudoun County** appointed newly elected Supervisor Mike Turner.

**Virginia's** new Speaker of the House Eileen Filler-Corn appointed herself to the Commission, along with Delegates Paul Krizek, David Reid and Richard "Rip" Sullivan, Jr.

Newly elected Senator John Bell rounded out the appointments to the Commission.

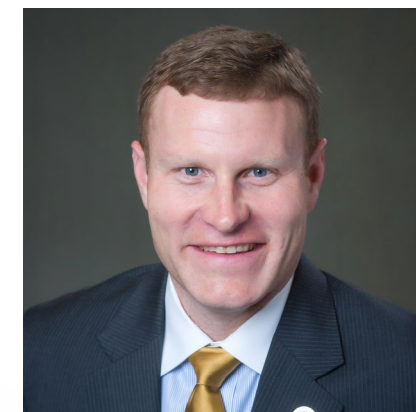
[Meet our 2020 Commissioners online.](#)



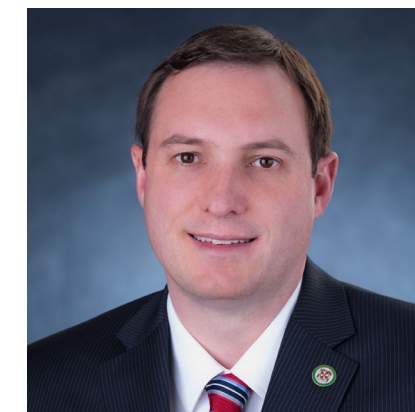
Katie Cristol  
NVTC Chair



Canek Aguirre  
NVTC Vice Chair



Jeffrey McKay  
NVTC Secretary-Treasurer



Matt Letourneau  
Immediate Past Chair



Walter Alcorn  
Fairfax County Supervisor



Dalia Palchik  
Fairfax County Supervisor



James Walkinshaw  
Fairfax County Supervisor



Daniel Storck  
Fairfax County Supervisor, Alternate



Matt de Ferranti  
Arlington County Board Member



Mike Turner  
Loudoun County Supervisor



Eileen Filler-Corn  
VA Speaker of the House



Paul Krizek  
Delegate



David Reid  
Delegate



Richard "Rip" Sullivan, Jr.  
Delegate

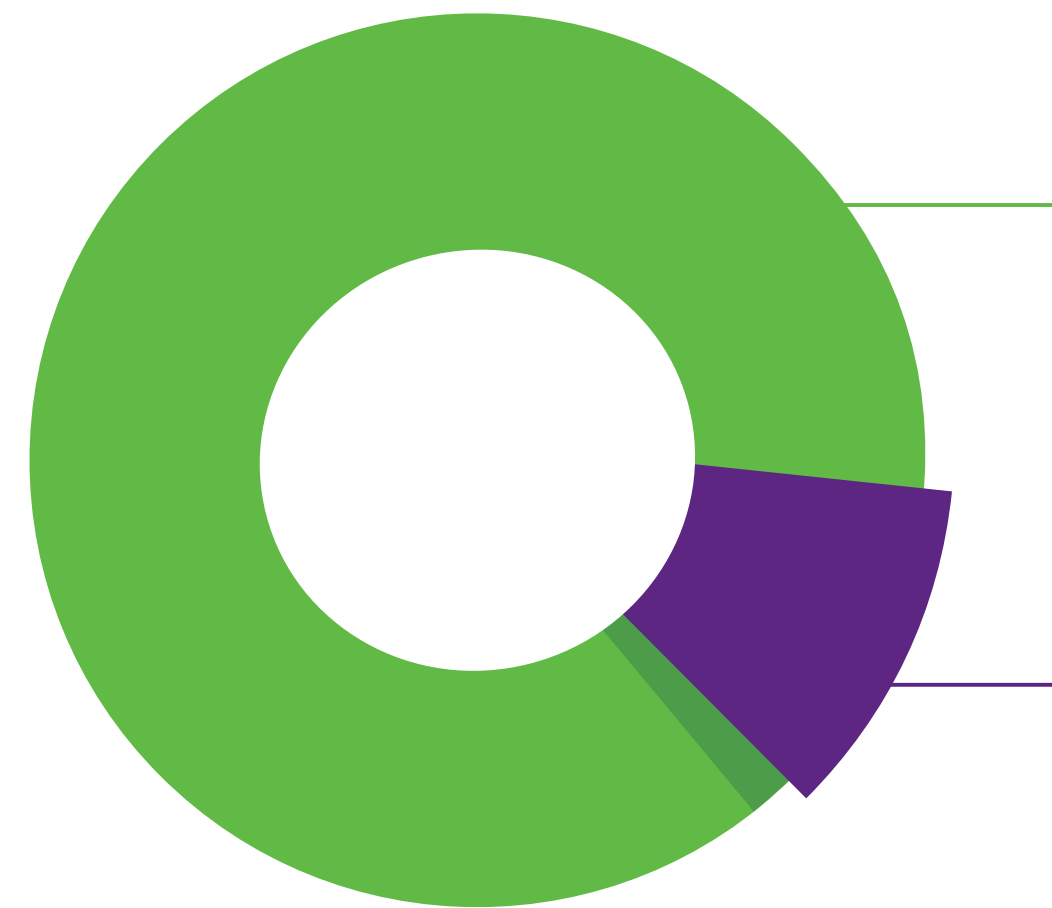


John Bell  
Senator

# Financial Management

NVTC fiscal year 2020 financial and compliance reports again received clean audit opinions. The opinions covered the financial position and change in financial position of NVTC's activities, internal control over financial reporting and compliance with laws, contracts, regulations, grant agreements and other matters and compliance with each major federal program.

NVTC's financial structure includes a general fund, three special revenue funds — one for transit activities, another for the I-66 Commuter Choice program and one for the I-395/95 Commuter Choice program — and an enterprise fund for NVTC's share of ownership in Virginia Railway Express.



**\$203.4MIL**  
DISPERSED FOR WMATA

**\$21.3MIL**  
DISPERSED FOR LOCAL SYSTEM NEEDS

**\$228.3MIL**  
SPECIAL REVENUE

During fiscal 2020, the transit special revenue fund allocated \$228.3 million in state and regional assistance to member jurisdictions.

**\$25.6MIL**  
COMMUTER CHOICE PROGRAM

The special revenue funds for the Commuter Choice program received \$25.6 million in fiscal 2020 and disbursed \$12.6 million for regional projects.

**\$179.5MIL**  
ENTERPRISE FUND

NVTC maintained an enterprise fund, recognizing NVTC's share of ownership of VRE, which equaled \$179.5 million as of June 30, 2020.


# Financial Management

**\$27.4MIL** 

Revenues from the 2.1% regional gas tax, which NVTC received and disbursed to WMATA for operating and capital requirements, equaled \$27.4 million.

**\$20.8MIL**   
**TRANSIT ASSISTANCE**

Department of Rail and Public Transportation transit assistance to VRE, for which NVTC served as recipient, totaled \$20.8 million.

**\$159 MILLION**   
**STATE ASSISTANCE**

State assistance for WMATA, through NVTC, came to \$159 million.

**\$41MIL**

State assistance for which NVTC applied on behalf of its member jurisdictions' transit systems, came to \$41 million.

**\$20,500,000** 

**FEDERAL GRANTS** on behalf of two NVTC jurisdictions totaled \$20.5 million, of which \$1.3 million was received in fiscal 2020. NVTC served as recipient for the awards and ensured its jurisdictions' compliance with Federal Transit Administration requirements.

**\$285MIL**   
**RECIPIENT OR AGENT OF FUNDS**

NVTC served as the recipient or agent of funds for more than \$285 million in fiscal 2020.

# Metro Policy and Governance

## Appointed Loudoun County's First Metro Board Member

The Metro Board of Directors reelected Commonwealth of Virginia Representative Paul Smedberg to serve a second time as Board Chair. NVTC appointed Loudoun County Supervisor Matthew F. Letourneau as a principal director of Metro in March. Letourneau joined the board as an alternate director in 2019 and was the first person from the county to serve on the panel. Commissioners Walter Alcorn and Canek Aguirre joined the Board as alternate directors.

In 2020, City of Alexandria council member Canek Aguirre took over as Chair of NVTC's WMATA Committee steering it through an unprecedented year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The WMATA Committee serves as a forum for key issues pertaining to Metro and provides guidance to staff on NVTC products such as the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA and this year's Report on Virginia's 3% Cap.

## Continued to Elevate Virginia's Voice on the Metro Board of Directors

NVTC's works with Northern Virginia's local governments to unify priorities for Metro and its Board of Directors. In 2020, NVTC pressed for changes to the Bus Transformation Study to ensure our local transit operators were included in important discussions and decisions that impact bus service across Northern Virginia.

We successfully advocated for local relief from Metro FY 2021 annual operating subsidies leveraging CARES Act allocations to ensure that the Northern Virginia cities and counties that pay subsidies to Metro also received funding relief. And we championed issues important to our local governments, including controlling local subsidies, maintaining Metrobus services and improving fare products.





# Metro Policy and Governance

**REPORT ON Virginia's 3% Cap**  
on the Growth in Operating Assistance Payments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

**NVTC**  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**NVTC**

Districts of Columbia and Virginia. In Virginia, NVTC jurisdictions, which include the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun, pay the subsidy. Loudoun County began contributing to WMATA's jurisdictional operating subsidy in FY 2021, as services on the Silver Line Phase 2 is budgeted to commence that fiscal year. WMATA's operating costs are also funded to a lesser extent through additional non-fare revenue.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the cap, WMATA calculated the historical jurisdictional operating subsidies using WMATA Board-approved subsidy allocation formulas based on inputs that represent a jurisdiction's request for 200 fare load of WMATA's three modes of transit service: Metrolink, Metrobus, and MetroAccess. As such, the total annual operating subsidy increases varied between 2% - 18%, and the annual operating subsidy increases in Virginia varied from 1% to 21% (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Annual % Change in Jurisdictional Operating Subsidies Prior to the Legislative Cap (FY 2011 - FY 2019)**

Fiscal Year	Metrolink	Metrobus	MetroAccess	Total Jurisdictional Operating Subsidies
2011	~12%	~10%	~8%	~10%
2012	~15%	~12%	~10%	~12%
2013	~18%	~15%	~12%	~15%
2014	~10%	~8%	~6%	~8%
2015	~12%	~10%	~8%	~10%
2016	~15%	~12%	~10%	~12%
2017	~18%	~15%	~12%	~15%
2018	~10%	~8%	~6%	~8%
2019	~12%	~10%	~8%	~10%

Source: FY 2011 - FY 2019 Annual Report on WMATA's Operating Assistance Payments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Data from FY 2011 - FY 2019 indicates that the increase in the historical jurisdictional operating subsidy is primarily attributable to the increasing Metrobus operating subsidy, especially in Virginia with the opening of Silver Line Phase 2.

Notably, over the same time period Metrobus experienced extensive reliability issues, resulting in a ridership decline of nearly 20%, decrease in farebox revenue due to loss of ridership, the need to close portions of the rail system to address system reliability (i.e. SafeTrack) and a loss of transit ridership due to nationwide factors that are outside of WMATA's control (i.e. gas prices, network, etc.). All of which necessitated jurisdictional operating subsidy increases.<sup>2</sup> Declining Metrobus

<sup>1</sup> Funding Metrobus, Metrolink and MetroAccess. "Contracting to Other Large Transit Agencies," July 30, 2019. <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>2</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>3</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>4</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>5</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>6</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>7</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>8</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>9</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

<sup>10</sup> WMATA, "Metrolink Board Resolutions 2017 at 2017-18 2017-18," <https://www.wmata.com/about/contracting-to-other-large-transit-agencies/>

## Found Virginia's Budget Cap a Useful Tool

At the request of the General Assembly, NVTC convened a special working group comprised of transportation professionals, stakeholders and former elected officials to dive into budget growth at Metro. The resulting *Report on Virginia's 3% Cap on the Growth in Operating Assistance Payments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority* (WMATA), examines Virginia's operating subsidy payments to Metro to identify and differentiate the true drivers of past and present operating subsidy increases from assumed cost drivers.

The report also acknowledges the impact of Metro's implementation of the cap on Virginia's subsidy payments and the role of NVTC jurisdictions in funding Metro. Since the cap has only been in place for two Metro budget cycles, the report concludes that the existing cap appears to be a useful tool to manage the growth in Virginia's operating assistance payments to Metro.

## Continued to Press for Increased Service and Cost Controls at Metro

NVTC continues to press Metro to encourage riders to return to the system, align service to demand and work closely with our Northern Virginia transit operators to improve the efficiency of the bus transit network, all through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic challenges that will linger in the years ahead through the *Report on the Performance and Condition of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority* (WMATA).

The report, required by Virginia code, also presents the last annual set of performance and condition data prior to the stay-at-home orders issued in the region and travel changes stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The General Assembly requires NVTC to recommend potential strategies to Metro to reduce the growth in operating costs and to improve the efficiency of operations. NVTC's 2020 Annual Report on WMATA includes recommended strategies for Metro to become more financially sustainable and a more effective transit system and mobility provider by rebuilding ridership.

# Metro Regional Response Coordination

*NVTC assisted Metro with regional coordination efforts leading up to, and throughout, the summertime shutdown of four Orange and all five Silver Line stations in Northern Virginia.*

The closures marked the second year of the Metro Platform Improvement Project, designed to rebuild Metrorail stations that had deteriorated due to age and environmental exposure.

NVTC Program Analyst Matt Cheng conducted regular meetings, conference calls and coordinated with representatives from municipalities and agencies impacted by the months-long closures.

- › The coordination work was focused on collective regional communications, construction scheduling and other mitigation efforts with local jurisdictions and state authorities.
- › NVTC will continue to work with Metro and regional partners on the final Platform Improvement Project phase closing the Arlington Cemetery Station and the Blue Line starting in Winter of 2021.



# Commuter Choice

*The Commuter Choice program continues to transform the transportation network in Northern Virginia by investing toll revenues into new and enhanced transit and multimodal improvements along I-66 inside the Beltway and I-395 and I-95 Express Lanes.*

For the first time, NVTC staff analyzed the performance of the active projects funded through the program. Commuter Choice's 24 operational and completed transit and access to transit projects move about 2,200 more people through the I-66 Inside the Beltway and I-395/95 corridors each morning.

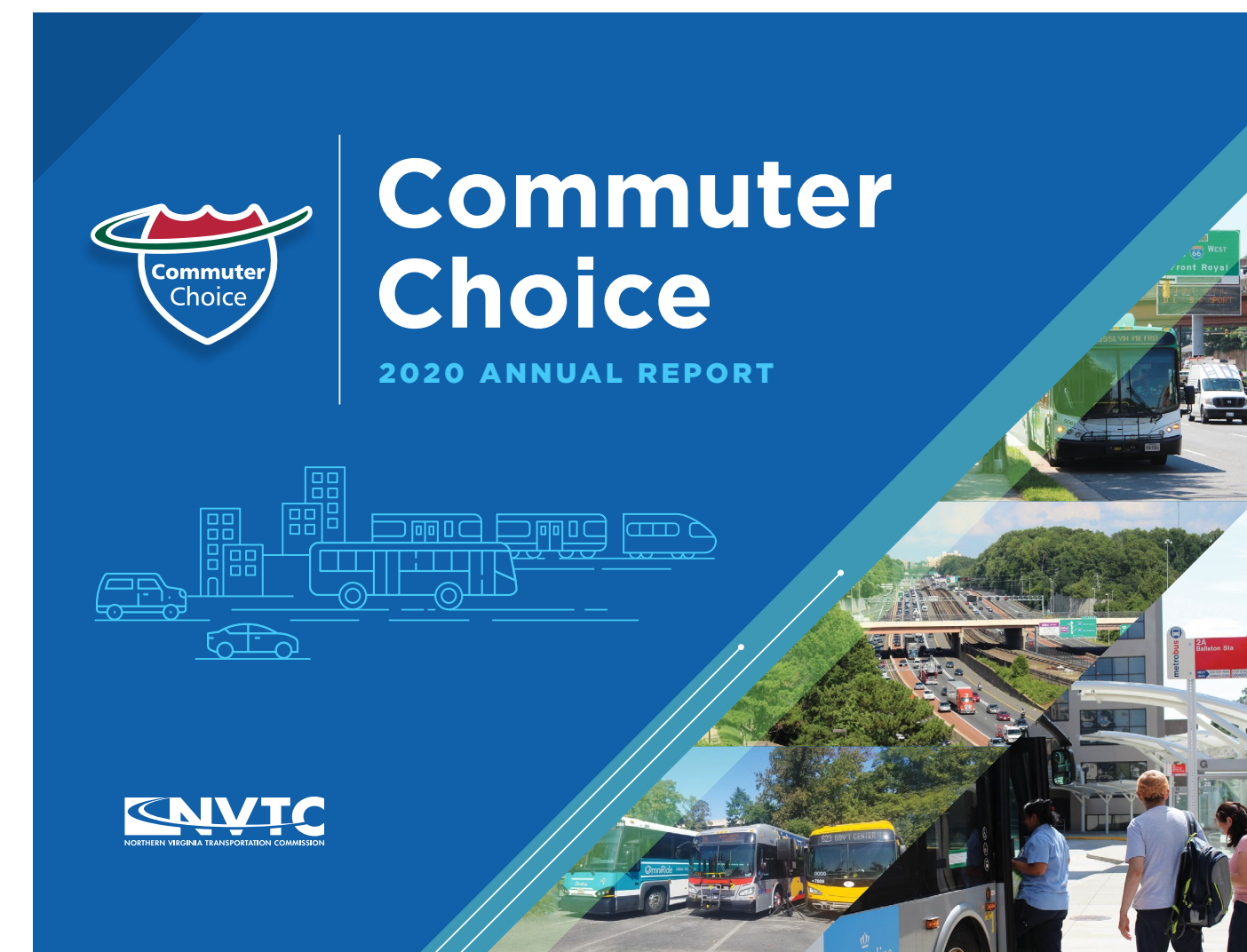
In addition to moving more people, the buses, stop improvements and park-and-ride facilities funded as part of the active projects will continue to benefit corridor commuters for years to come. The number of trips provided by these projects is 86% of the total target that was the basis for the projects' selection. The analysis shows that in the short 34 months of the program's implementation, it achieves its goals of moving more people and improving the transportation network in Northern Virginia.

NVTC ensures that the Commuter Choice program delivers projects with tangible benefits to toll road users by fostering viable, attractive alternatives to driving alone. Evaluating project performance led to new policies that encourage applicants to coordinate

project ideas with other agencies and advocate for more diverse and readily measurable projects.

So far, Commuter Choice has supported numerous new and enhanced bus services, including 56 additional commuter buses each day on the I-66 corridor. However, the near-term demand for further transit services is likely modest due to behavior changes brought about by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Though transit services will continue to be an indispensable part of the program, we encourage a broader array of proposals, including large infrastructure projects that could shape commuting for decades. Just as in other program areas, NVTC's continued efforts to encourage regional coordination extend to the Commuter Choice program. Transportation improvements do not align neatly within jurisdictional boundaries, and it is vital to evaluate project impacts through a regional lens. The scoring process for the program now rewards applicants that coordinate their proposals with neighboring jurisdictions.



# Commuter Choice

## Commuter Choice on the I-66 Corridor Feels the Weight of COVID Travel Changes

Typically presented in June, NVTC delayed a recommendation for this year's Commuter Choice on the I-66 corridor program of projects to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Since toll revenues support transportation infrastructure across Virginia, the decline of toll road users on I-66 had an unprecedented impact on the transportation network and the program.

Before the pandemic, Commuter Choice on the I-66 corridor anticipated a \$25 million grant cycle for Round Four (FY 2021-2022). However, with a nearly 50% decrease in tolled trips on the 66 Express Lanes Inside the Beltway, NVTC worked closely with partners at the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to evaluate the effect on the program. Fortunately, Commuter Choice had sufficient revenue from prior years to continue to fund existing projects. Due to anticipated shortfalls, however, NVTC postponed the recommendations for final awards until funding for the entire slate of projects could be confirmed.

In October, the Commission split the funding round into two smaller groups to adapt to the reduced quantity of funds, prioritizing projects that were not reliant upon ridership to be successful. The initial recommended Round Four (FY 2021-2022) program, with six projects requesting \$3.7 million in funding, was presented to the CTB in December. Throughout the public health emergency, the Commuter Choice team worked closely with recipients to ensure that they used existing toll revenues efficiently, effectively and within the program's guidelines.

## Commuter Choice on the I-395/95 Corridor Continued to Move Ahead

The 2019 inaugural funding round for Commuter Choice on the I-395/95 corridor supported projects for 20 months due to NVTC's policy to launch a call for projects on each corridor in alternating years. In November 2020, the Commuter Choice team launched the Round Two (FY 2022-2023) Call for Projects with an application deadline in January 2021. NVTC anticipates full funding of the Round Two program from discussions with Transurban, the Commonwealth's 95 and 395 Express Lanes concessionaire.



# Transit Technology

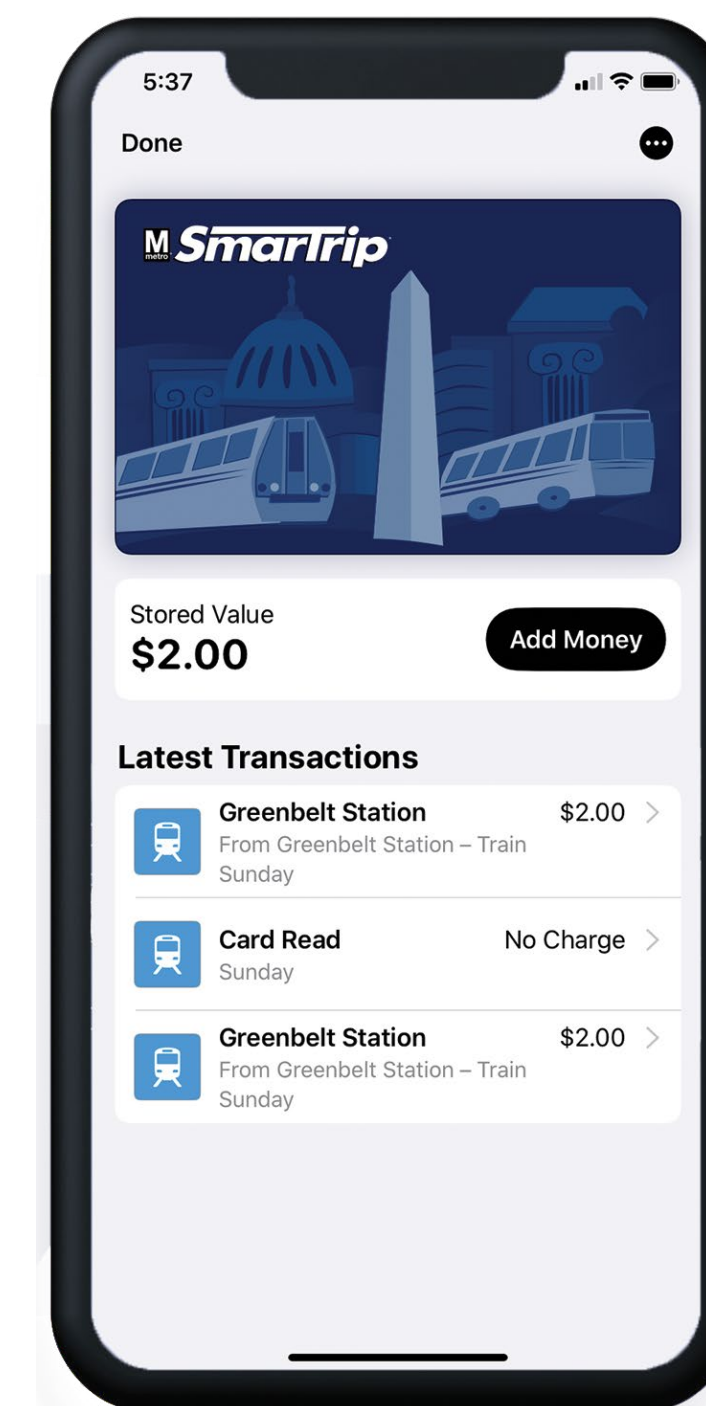
## Regional Fare Collection Program

This year saw a major update of the Northern Virginia Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan. The update, developed by NVTC and Northern Virginia transit agencies, documents the vision for an enhanced regionally integrated fare collection system and identifies NVTC's role in supporting and coordinating implementation of fare collection initiatives in Northern Virginia. While considerable progress and innovation was accomplished through implementation of the 2018 strategic plan, the need to meet new challenges and maintain state of good repair while modernizing the regional fare collection system continues.

While the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted fare collection across the region, NVTC continued planning for the safe return of passengers.

### NVTC Regional Fare Collection Program support and coordination 2020 highlights include:

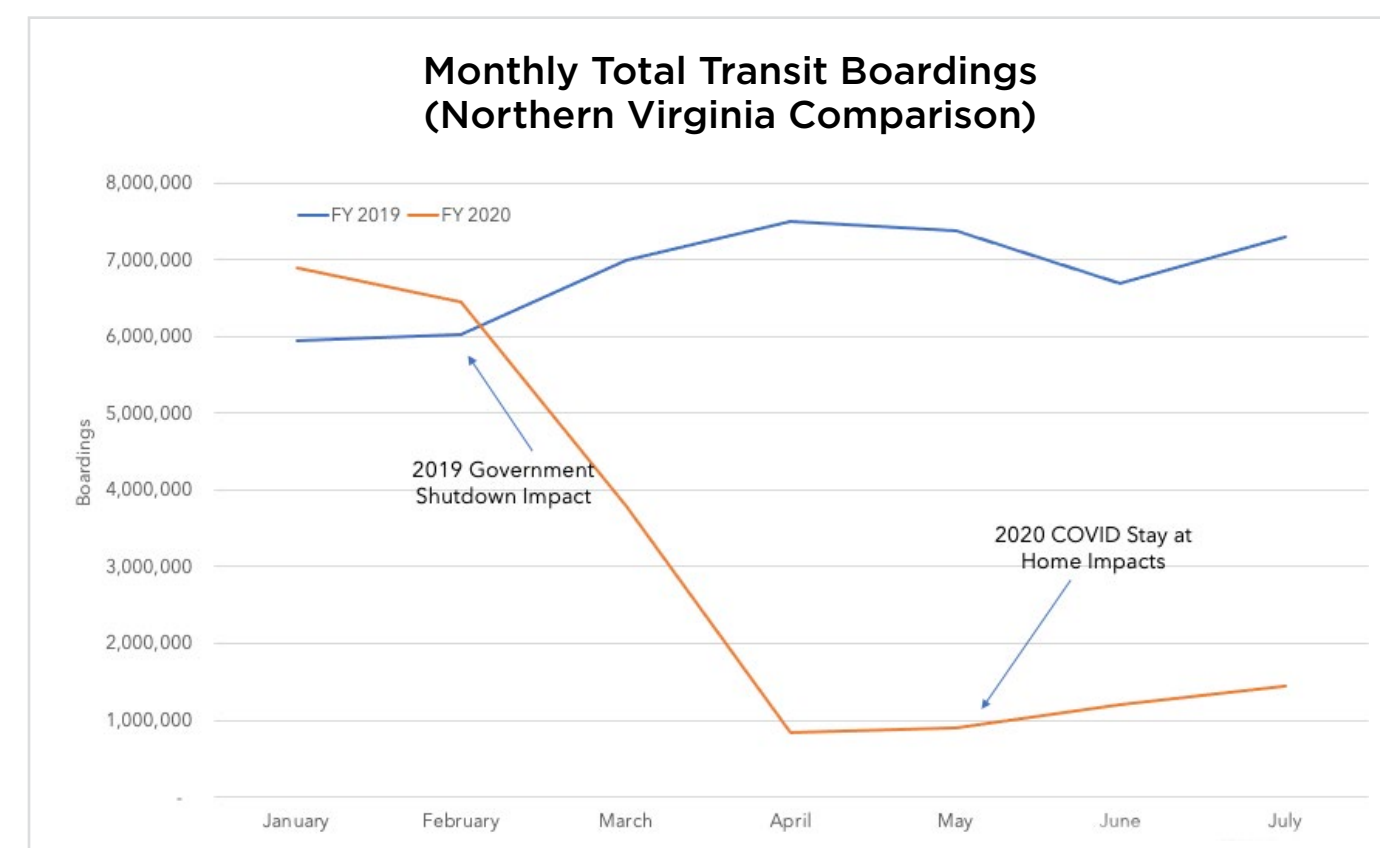
- › Assisting regional partners in maintenance and rehabilitation of aging fareboxes through the Driver Control Unit (DCU) Upgrade program.
- › Coordinating and supporting partners in working with Metro on procurement of new fareboxes.
- › Coordinating regional partners in defining the fare payment technology vision and strategy for Metro.
- › Coordinating and supporting regional efforts for off-Board and all-door fare payment systems.
- › Coordinating and supporting launch of the SmarTrip mobile app and mobile wallet for Apple IOS users, with an Android and Google Pay launch in the pipeline.
- › Coordinating and supporting extension of the DASH Bus App pilot project and mobile upgrade for Virginia Railway Express.
- › Assisting regional partners in supporting accelerated innovation such as procurement for rear-door payment validation.



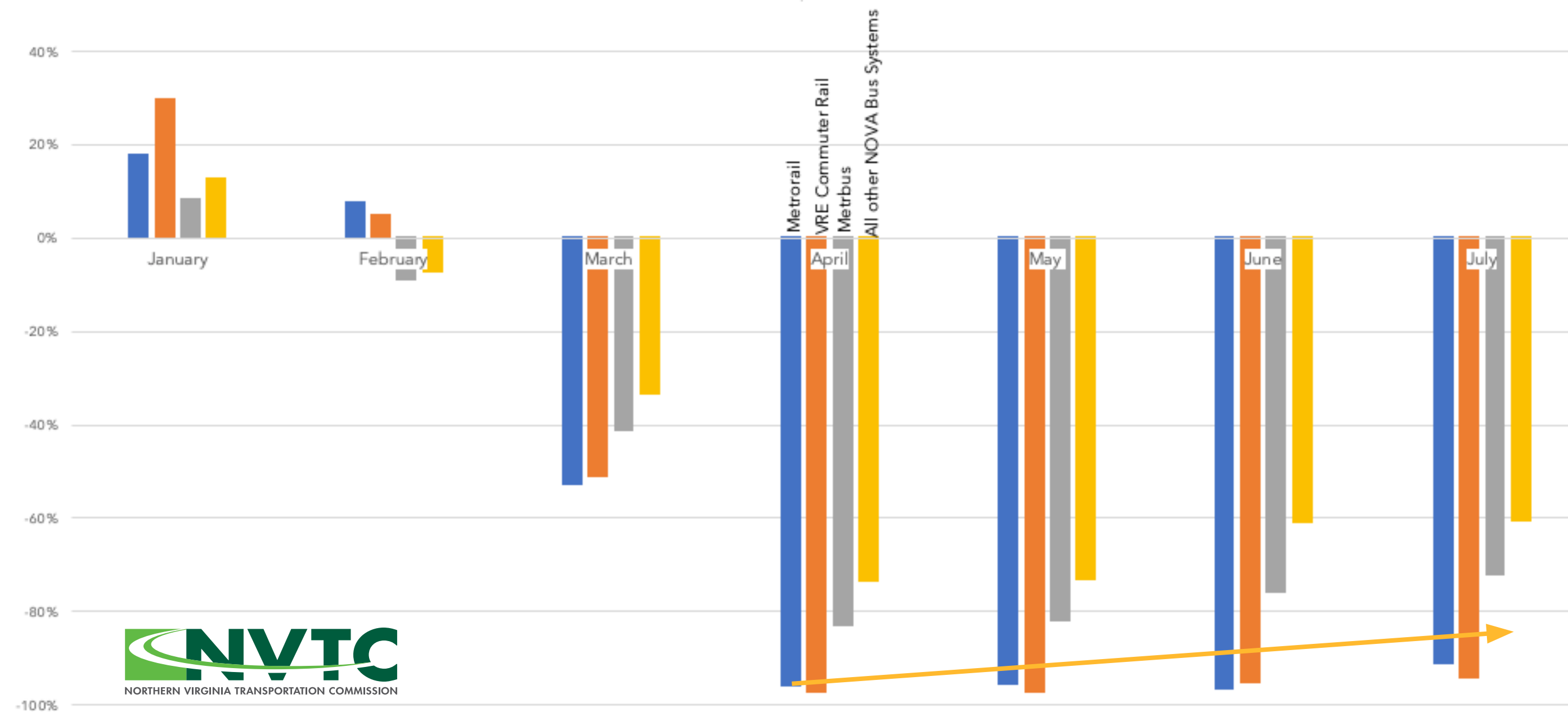
# Transit Resource Center

NVTC's Transit Resource Center includes our team of highly skilled planners and engineers who are working closely with our jurisdictional staff as well as analyzing regional transit trends. In 2020 the team:

- › Provided analysis of COVID-19 pandemic on transit ridership and teleworking.
- › Used TBEST tool to help Fairfax County evaluate transit alternatives related to Phase 2 of the Silver Line, service in Centreville and Franconia-Springfield and help Alexandria re-imagine their bus service plan.
- › Compiled and reported transit utilization data and visualization for Northern Virginia.



## Percent Change in Ridership 2019-2020, by Service Type



# Virginia Railway Express

*The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission is co-owner of Virginia's only commuter rail system, the highly successful Virginia Railway Express.*

With the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), NVTC provides governance and oversight of VRE directly and through its appointments to the VRE Operations Board.

In 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia launched a new statewide passenger rail authority (VRPA) that will be responsible for promoting, sustaining and expanding the availability of passenger and commuter rail service in the Commonwealth. Once fully operational, the new authority will assume all administrative and fiduciary responsibilities for Virginia's state-supported passenger rail services, including the current six daily roundtrip Amtrak Northeast Regional services originating in Roanoke, Norfolk, Newport News and Richmond.

The VRPA will also provide funding to VRE, which will continue to operate commuter rail service in Northern Virginia. Moving forward, the VRPA will also administer all capital expansion projects, infrastructure and land acquisitions related to Gov. Ralph Northam's \$3.7 billion Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, which will double Amtrak and VRE service in Virginia over the next decade.

As a part of this new arrangement, NVTC and its partner commission, PRTC, finalized two major agreements that will ensure VRE is in the strongest position with the new VPRA moving forward.

- › **The Passenger Rail Operations and Access Agreement** includes provisions to enable VRE trains to operate on right-of-way acquired by the Commonwealth of Virginia from CSX Transportation (CSXT); to provide the right for VRE to manage VRE station facilities located in the right-of-way; and to increase VRE service once planned improvements within the railroad corridor are completed.
- › **The Passenger Rail Improvements and Funding Agreement** includes provisions for the two Commissions (NVTC and PRTC) to fund a portion of the planned improvements and the purchase of real property for right-of-way acquired by the Commonwealth from CSXT. The Commissions will utilize Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (CROC) funds for both a debt issuance and on a pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) basis as the source of the funding commitment. Once complete, the planned improvements will allow a significant increase in VRE service.

## Rich Dalton, New CEO of VRE

NVTC and partner Commission PRTC appointed Rich Dalton as the CEO of Virginia Railway Express (VRE). Dalton had been serving as Acting CEO and has been with VRE since 2012, previously serving as deputy CEO, chief operating officer and other roles.



"The search for the next VRE CEO drew interest from rail professionals from across the United States," said Katie Cristol, NVTC Chair, who also chaired the CEO Search Committee. "In this national search, Rich stood out on the basis of his unparalleled expertise in the operations of VRE and its partner agencies and his vision for the future of the system."

# Partnerships

*NVTC partners with local, state and federal agencies and governments, as well as private and public regional organizations and colleges and universities to work on continually improving and expanding transportation networks throughout the region. These are a few of the organizations we joined with in 2020.*

			
		 Federal Transit Administration	
	 The Voice of Public Transportation in Virginia	 AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION	 Northern Virginia Transportation Authority The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

## Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee



After a nine-month break, Executive Director Kate Mattice joined colleagues on the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) to hear an overview of revenues affecting transit capital and operating throughout the Commonwealth. The meeting included a review of the FY 2021 Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) funding process and recommendations for FY 2022 as well as touching on the DRPT Six Year Improvement Program and other DRPT program updates.

## RM3P



NVTC staff joined stakeholders from across Northern Virginia at the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) Stakeholder Summit to gather comments on their proposed initiative. RM3P, administered jointly by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), is focused on improving commuter travel by providing dynamic information that can be used by travelers to help manage congestion along the road and transit networks in Northern Virginia.

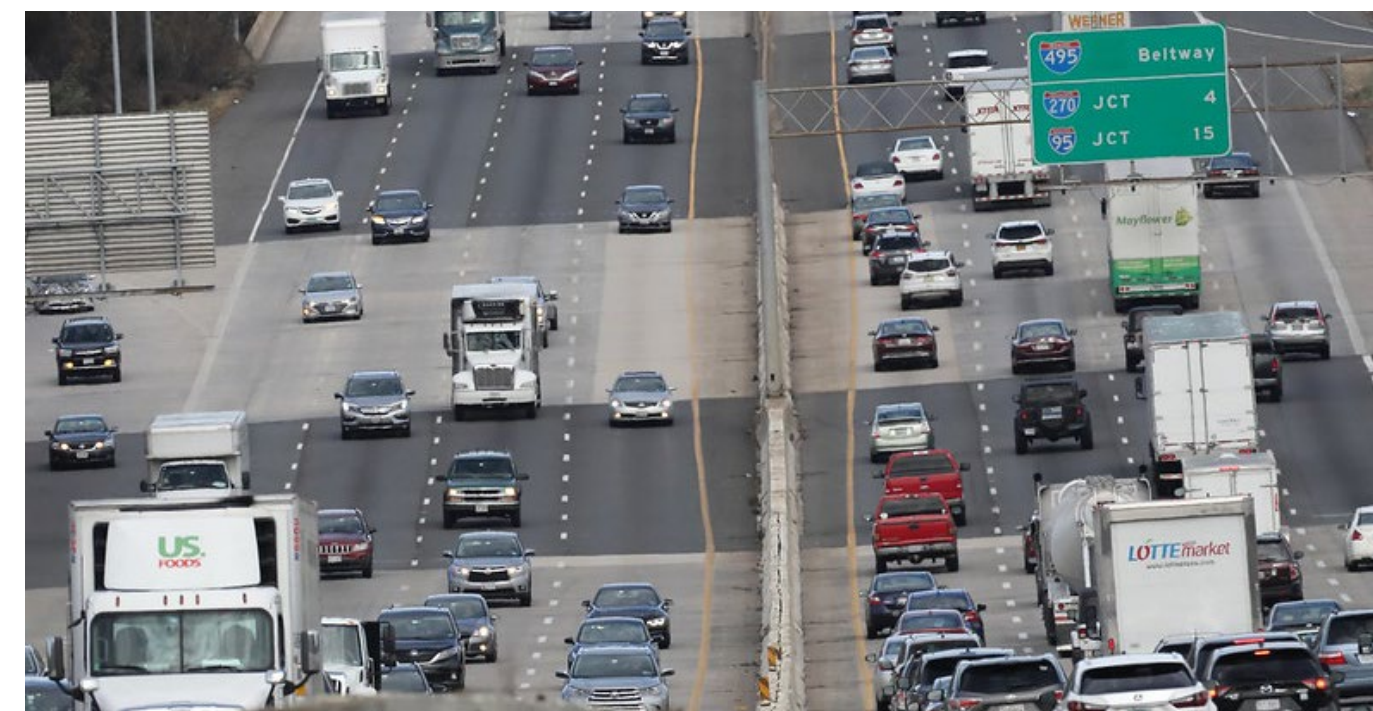


# Partnerships



## Capital Region Rail Network Visioning Study

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in the advisory committee for the [Greater Washington Partnership's](#) Capital Region Rail Network Visioning Study. The goal of this seven-month effort was to develop an integrated commuter rail vision and supporting technical report for the greater Washington region, from Baltimore through to Richmond, focused on alleviating infrastructure constraints, continuing the growth in business and equity opportunities and leveraging the momentum of recent regional efforts to enhance rail service.



## American Legion Bridge Transit/Transportation Demand Management Study

NVTC staff participated in the I-495 American Legion Bridge (ALB) Transit/Transportation Demand Management Study. The study followed the [joint announcement](#) last year by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan that the two states would work together to replace the heavily congested bridge that carries the northern part of the Capital Beltway over the Potomac River.



## Alexandria Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

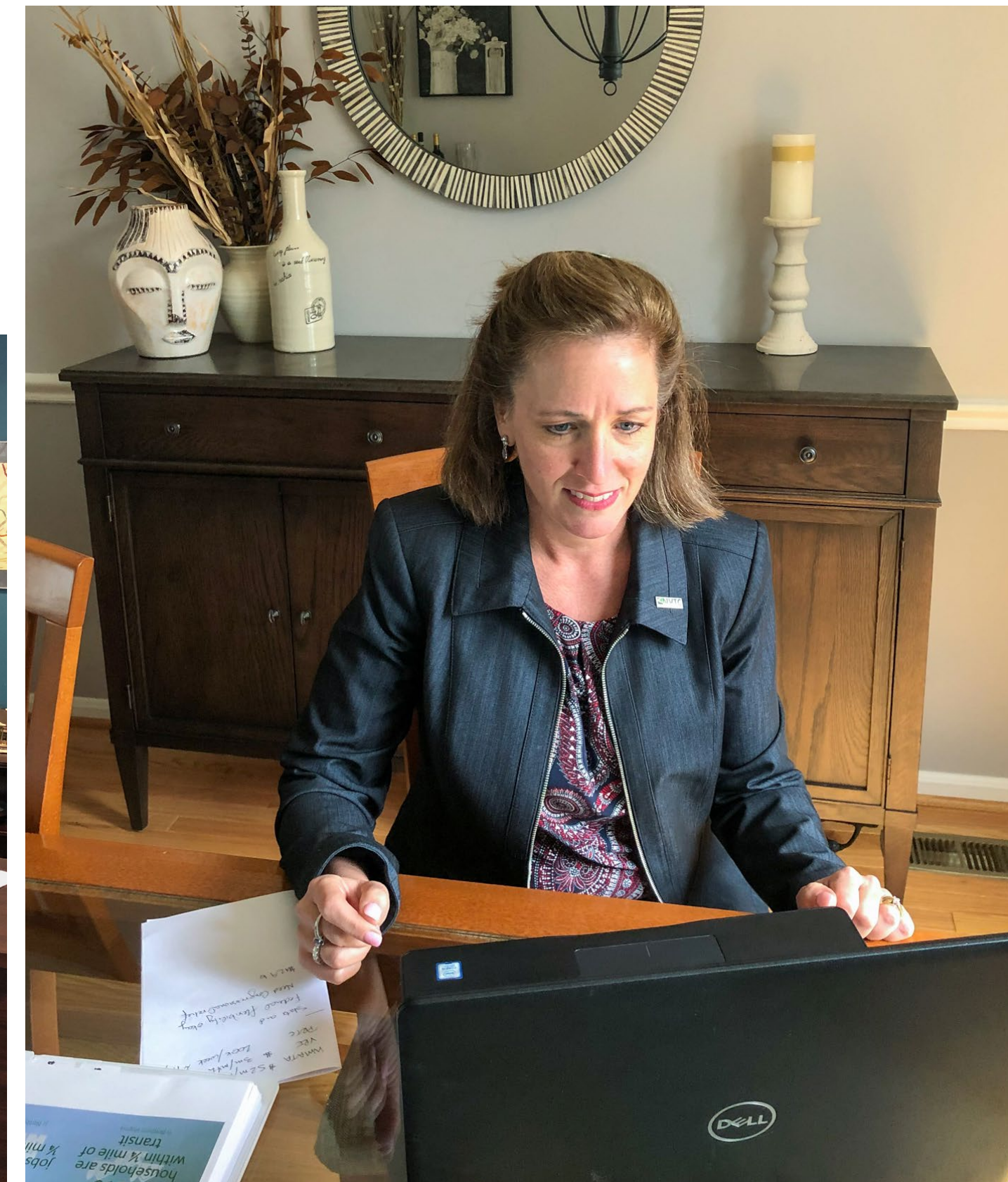
Grants Manager and DBE Officer, Brittany Sumpter, partnered with the [City of Alexandria](#), to host their first ever “Virtual DBE Public Consultation” event. As a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, NVTC is committed to ensuring that our sub-recipients continue to level the playing field by providing small businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals a fair opportunity to compete for their federally funded-transportation contracts.

# NVTC In The News

*NVTC appeared in the news on television, radio and in print in 2020. Many stories focused on adapting transit and transit funding in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. News outlets also featured projects that are part of NVTC's Commuter Choice program.*

## Key Stories

- › Public Transit Organizations Ask Congress for Emergency Funding [▶](#)
- › I-66 Tolls Push More Commuters into Car Pools or Buses, Report Says [▶](#)
- › What I-66 Toll Money Could Pay for Next (If Traffic Returns) in Northern VA [▶](#)
- › A New Rail Authority in Virginia Could Revolutionize Connections for Riders Throughout the State [▶](#)
- › How the Pandemic is Threatening Public Transit Systems Across the US [▶](#)



# In the Community

*NVTC's outreach efforts took a new form this year, as the COVID-19 pandemic moved in-person events online, but they weren't diminished as staff learned to host and participate in webinars and other types of online meetings.*

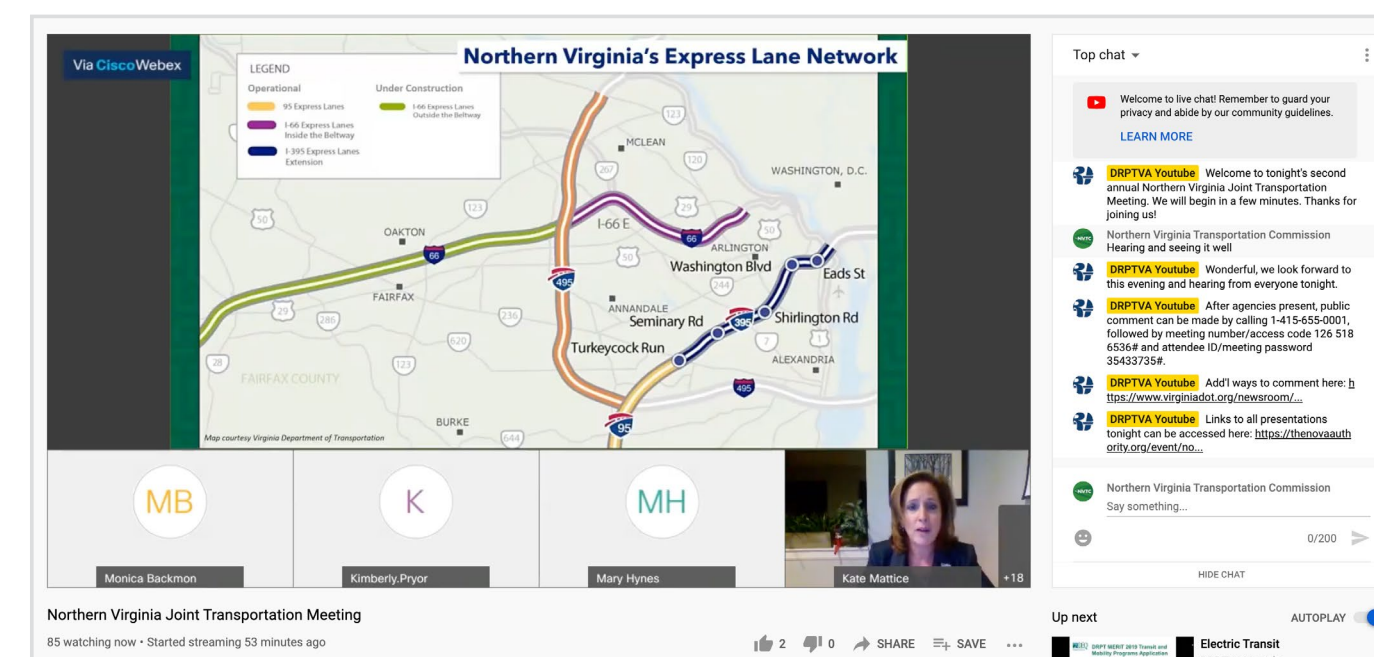
## Annual Joint Legislative Briefing

This year's NVTC-PRTC Legislative Briefing moved [online](#) for the first time, but the change to a virtual event brought in Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine and the biggest audience in the event's history. Over 160 people watched the more than two-hour event. Both of Virginia's senators discussed efforts at the federal level to provide more emergency relief money for public transit, as well as aid for state and local governments.

Virginia Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine gave the keynote address, discussing the Commonwealth's efforts to keep projects on track with the goals of keeping people employed and aiding recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The briefing also included five panelists: Metro GM/CEO Paul Wiedefeld, VRE CEO Rich Dalton, PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider, NVRTA Executive Director Monica Backmon and NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice.

## Joint Regional Public Meeting

Executive Director Kate Mattice shared updates on our Commuter Choice program as part of a five-agency public meeting, as required by [Virginia law](#). Nearly a hundred people watched the two-hour meeting [online](#). It included VDOT, DRPT, VRE, NVRTA and NVTC.



## Riding into the Future in Fairfax County and Alexandria

Executive Director Kate Mattice and other staff members were on hand as Fairfax County formally launched an [electric autonomous shuttle](#) connecting the Mosaic District with the Dunn Loring Metro Station. The same week Kate participated in the unveiling of the first of DASH's six all-electric vehicles.



# In the Community

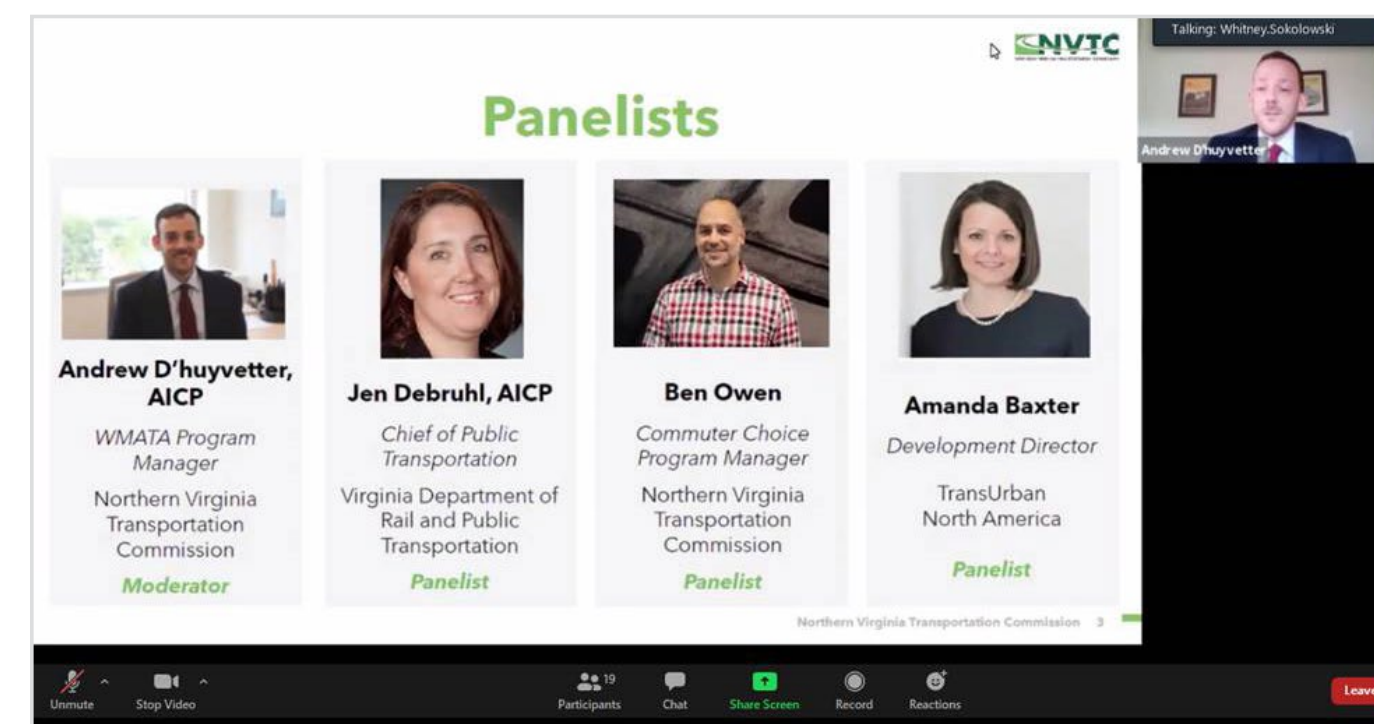
## Commuter Choice Lesson for Florida Lawmakers

Executive Director Kate Mattice spoke to the [Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization Board](#), in the Tampa Bay region of Florida, as they grapple with whether to support the Florida DOT's proposed toll lanes along their nearby interstates. Kate shared an overview of the Commuter Choice program and how the role of transit and multimodal options were integral to the implementation of our region's tolled corridors.



## NVTC Programs Highlighted at Statewide Conference

A number of our staff members presented at the American Planning Association Virginia Chapter Annual [Conference](#). The four-day virtual conference included discussions of our Commuter Choice and Envision Route 7 programs. Transit Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter moderated a "HOT for Transit" panel which included our Commuter Choice Program Manager Ben Owen, Jennifer DeBruhl, Chief of Public Transportation for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Amanda Baxter of TransUrban.



## NVTC's Mattice to NOVA Chamber: Transit Key to Region's Reopening

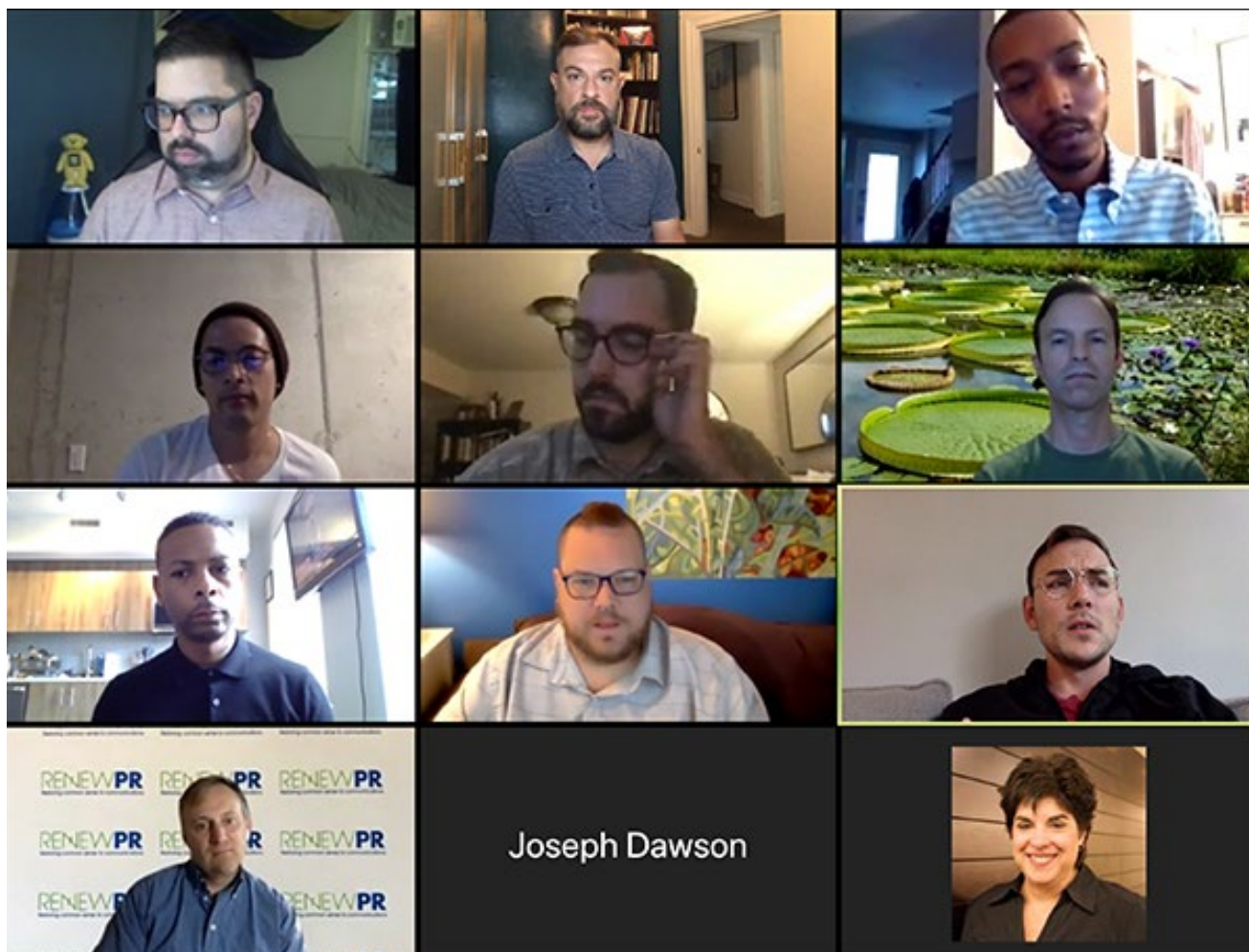
Executive Director Kate Mattice shared the impact and opportunities of COVID-19 on our area transit systems at the [NOVA Chamber's](#) annual State of Transportation Event.



# In the Community

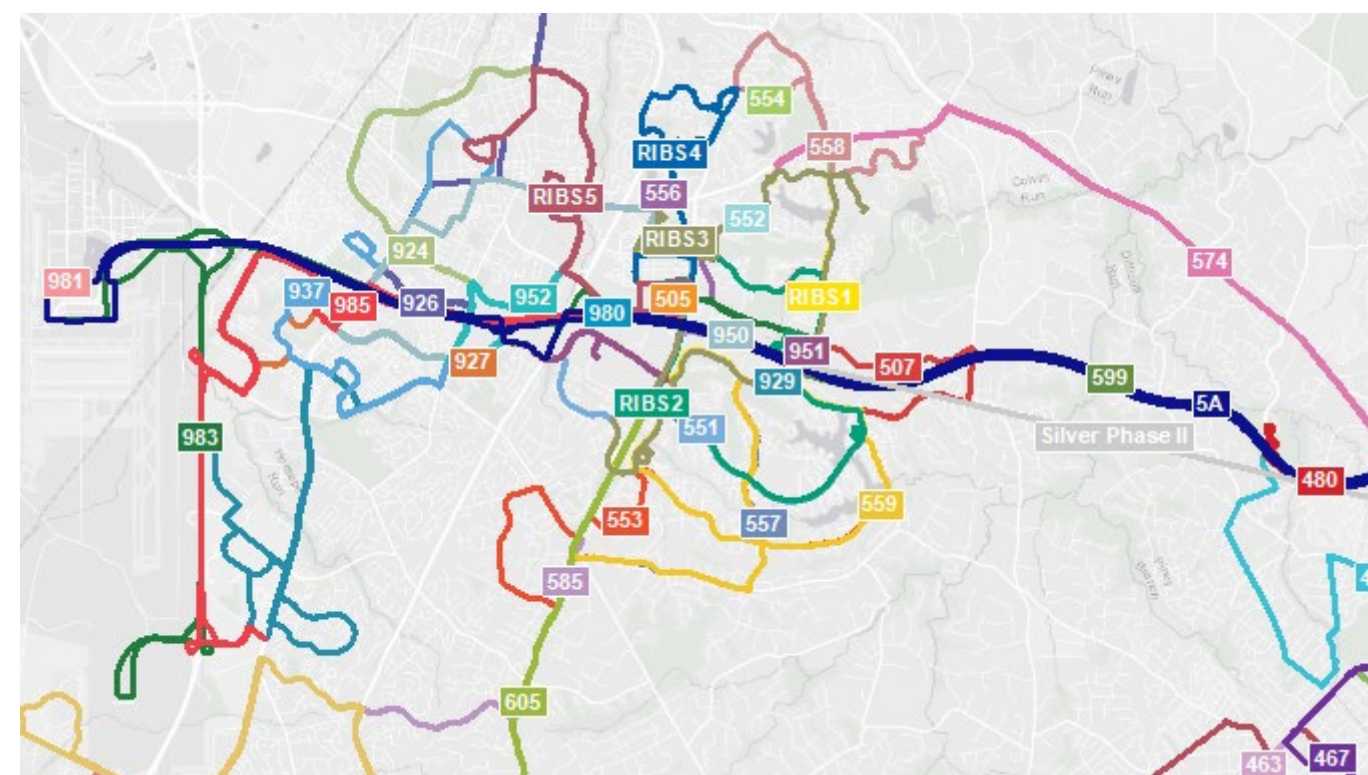
## Telling the Story of Transit During a Pandemic

NVTC Communications and Outreach Manager Matt Friedman served as a panelist for an online discussion on the topic of “Communications in a Time of Pandemics.” [DC Family Communicators](#), a group for LGBTQ professionals working in communications.



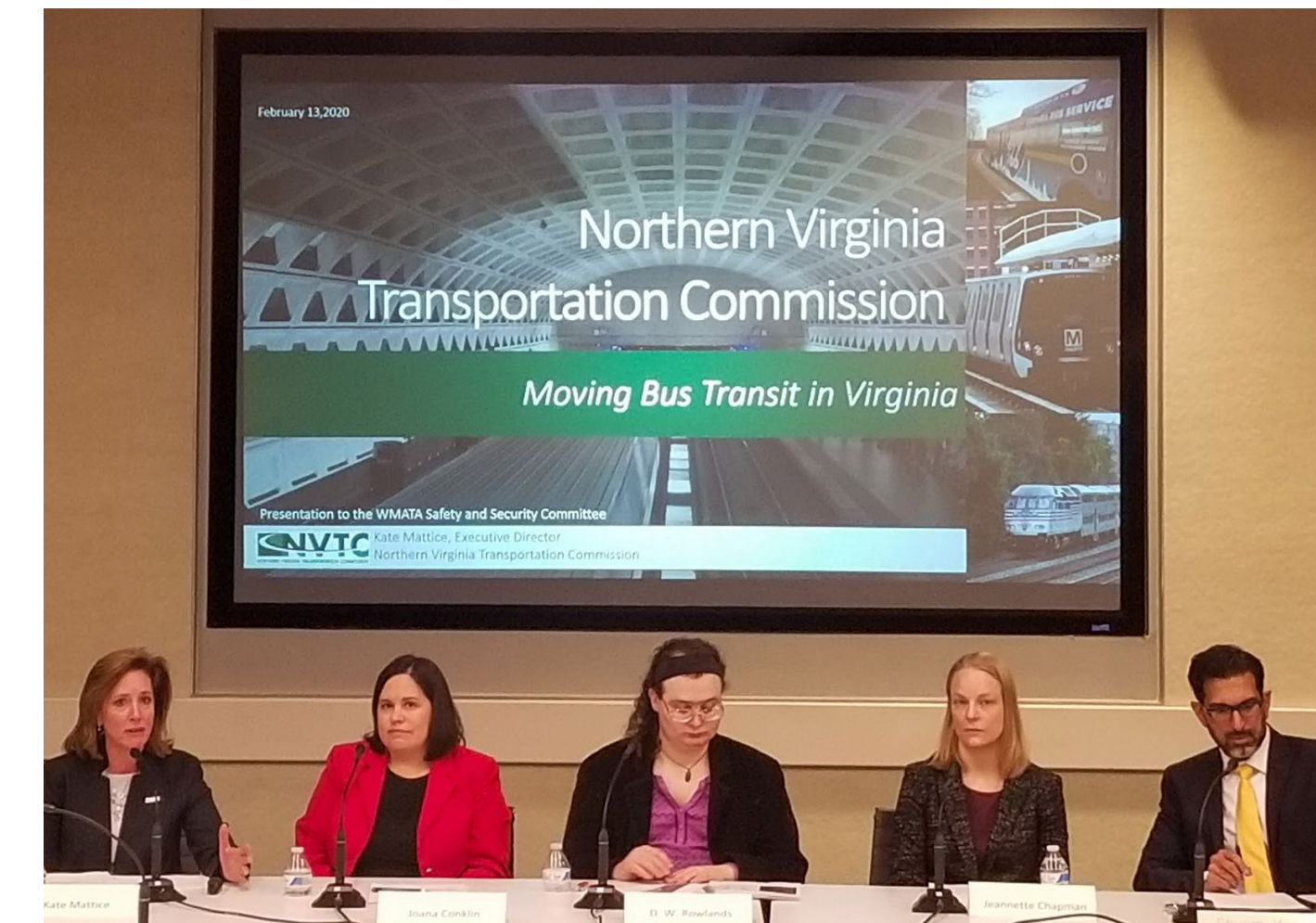
## NVTC Demonstrates Innovative Planning Tool to Regional Transit Planners

Program Analyst Matt Cheng presented NVTC’s Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST) at TPB’s [Travel Forecasting Subcommittee](#). Matt detailed the development of source data and transit database for TBEST as well as the technical capabilities of the software, including stop-level ridership projections, equity and accessibility analysis and operational planning workflows.



## BRT and Metro

Executive Director Kate Mattice joined a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) panel as part of a meeting of the [WMATA Safety and Operations Committee](#). It was an opportunity to talk about the plans NVTC and our Northern Virginia jurisdictions have for BRT.



# Honors

## NVTC's Receives the Virginia Transit Association Outstanding Marketing Campaign Award

The Virginia Transit Association presented NVTC with the award for Outstanding Marketing Campaign. NVTC partnered with local bus and rail systems for the first-ever joint transit marketing campaign in Northern Virginia. The campaign, known as NoVaRides, launched following the summer-long shutdown of six Metrorail stations and encouraged commuters to ride public transportation. The NoVaRides campaign overperformed in multiple metrics while ridership on regional transit systems grew by 6% in the 4th quarter of 2019 compared to 2018, which aligned with the prime months of the NoVaRides campaign.



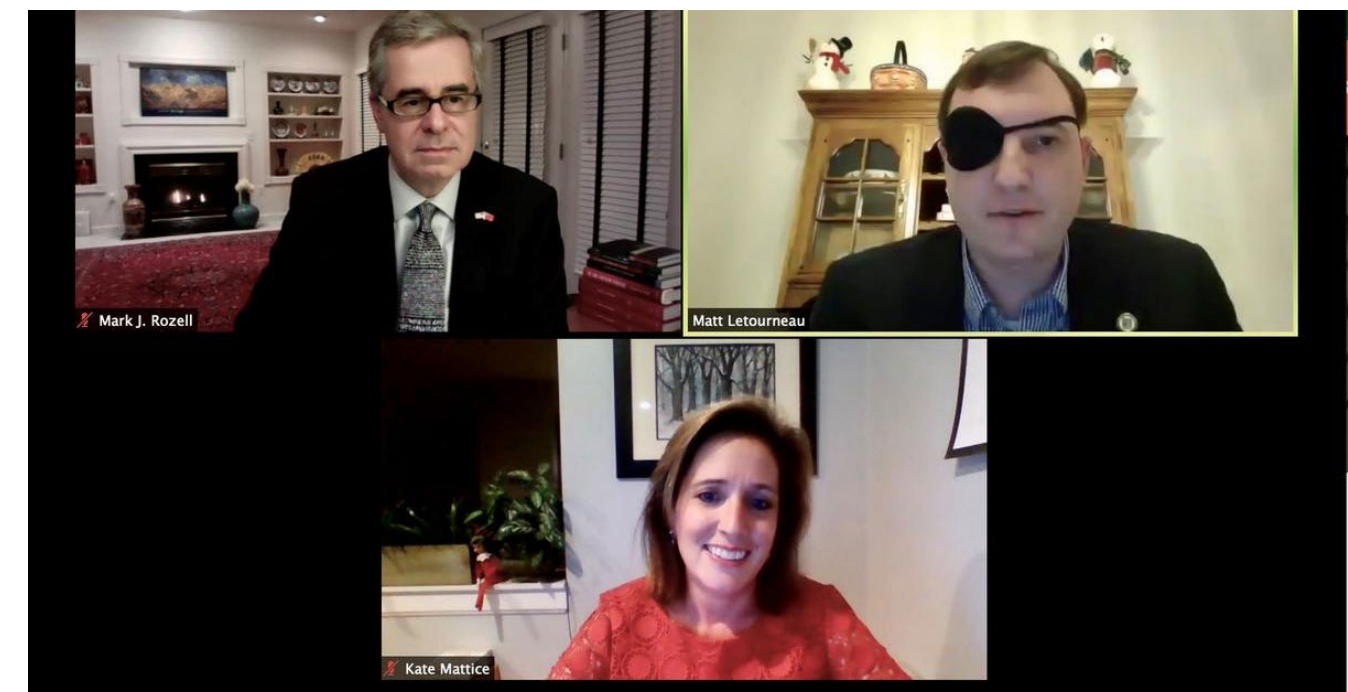
## Sharon Bulova Receives the American Public Transportation Association's Distinguished Service Award

NVTC's longest-serving Commissioner formally received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Fairfax County Chair Sharon Bulova, most recently NVTC's Secretary-Treasurer in 2019, was recognized for her work in support of public transportation over 35 years, beginning in 1984 and ending with her retirement in 2019. Ms. Bulova's nomination was endorsed by four members of Northern Virginia's congressional delegation, Virginia's governor and the chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors.



## Matthew F. Letourneau Receives George Mason's Schar School Exceptional Regional Leadership Award

The George Mason Schar School awarded NVTC Immediate Past Chair Matthew F. Letourneau an award for exceptional regional leadership. In addition to NVTC, Mr. Letourneau serves as a Loudoun County Supervisor, serves as NVTC's representative on the Metro Board of Directors and has served with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board and the Route 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission.



# Advancing Transit

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

*The 2020 Year in Review is a product of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission*

## Contact Us

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