

Advancing transit in  
Northern Virginia  
since 1964



April  
2026

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Executive Director  
Newsletter





## A Message From Kate Mattice

Metrorail turns 50 years old this year and it's time to celebrate half a century. The nation's second-busiest mass transit system has carried millions of people since the first trains started operating on March 27, 1976 and NVTC has been intertwined with Metro's history from the beginning. Work to plan the Metro system began soon after NVTC's founding in 1964 with endorsement of a proposed rail rapid transit line, the creation

of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority formal planning work and the preservation of right-of-way for future Metrorail.

NVTC helped guide the planning for Metro in Virginia—from appointing members to the Metro Board of Directors to coordinating the locations of stations and their design to creating a financial plan to complete the planned system.

Northern Virginia is home to 32 of the system's 98 stations, including the newest stations on the Silver Line and at Potomac Yard. Each line and station was the result of years of work and collaboration across NVTC's jurisdictions and the Greater Washington region. Metro has also become the backbone of the larger transit network, with local and commuter buses and Virginia Railway Express trains making important connections to Metro stations, allowing travelers to reach a nearly infinite number of destinations.

The work continues to this day, through NVTC's close coordination with Virginia's Metro Board appointees, distribution of state and regional funding for Metro and oversight of Metro funding and policy.

Metro has transformed Northern Virginia's landscape as people sought to live and work near stations. The system has fueled the region's economic boom and generated tax revenues that benefit the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. Metro and the larger transit network have also combatted the growth in traffic congestion and helped avoid harmful pollution. It's hard to imagine what Northern Virginia would look like without Metro and I know that it will be a critical part of life in the region for the next 50 years.

  
Executive Director



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**April 16**

Program Advisory  
Committee

Joint WMATA & Legislative  
and Policy Committees

**April 17**

VRE Operations Board

**April 21-22**

Commonwealth  
Transportation Board

**May 7**

Commission Meeting

**May 15**

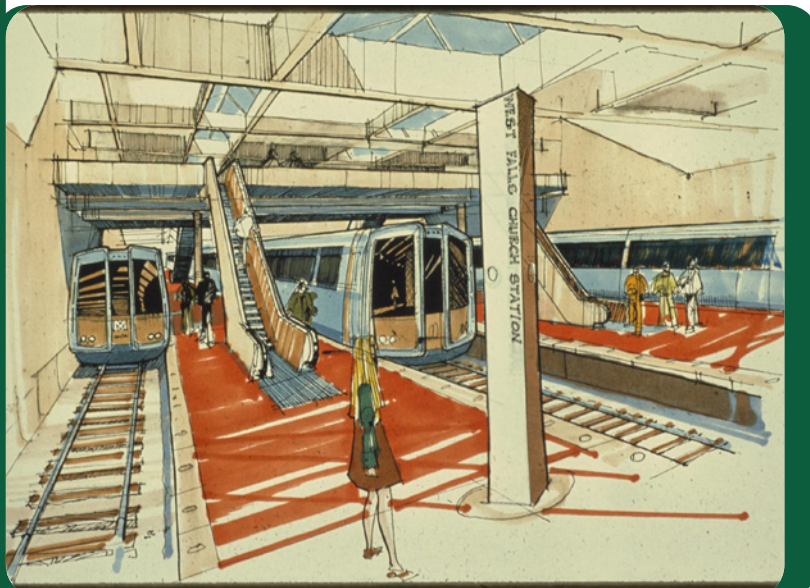
VRE Operations Board

**May 19-20**

Virginia Transit Association  
Annual Conference & Expo

**May 21**

Virginia Passenger Rail  
Authority



Rendering courtesy of Metro

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# Commission thanks Sen. Ebbin, welcomes new DRPT and VRE leadership



*Sen. Adam Ebbin and Chair Sarah Bagley*

The Commission lauded former Sen. Adam Ebbin for his 18 years of service to NVTC during its monthly [meeting](#) in March. Ebbin first served as an appointee from the House from 2004 to 2012 and returned as a member of the Senate from 2016 until February.

A resolution noted that he "worked tirelessly with local, regional and state officials to propose long-term sustainable transit funding that will provide adequate growth to meet current and future operating and capital needs for Metro, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Northern Virginia's local bus providers." He also chaired the General Assembly's SJ 28 Growing Needs of Northern Virginia Public Transit Joint Subcommittee. Ebbin resigned from the Senate last month to take a job in the administration of Gov. Abigail Spanberger.

The Commission also thanked former Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Director Tiffany Robinson and welcomed two new faces, one who is very familiar to our readers. Former NVTC staff member Allan Fye was sworn in as an alternate representing DRPT, and new VRE CEO Katie Choe made her first official appearance at a Commission meeting.





Images from NVTC March 2026 Commission meeting featuring Allan Fye, Sarah Bagley, Ann McGrane, Katie Choe, Maureen Coffey, Daniel Storck, Walter Alcorn, Takis Karantonis



## Comment period wraps up for I-66 Commuter Choice projects

The public comment opportunity for [projects under consideration](#) for I-66 Commuter Choice funding ran from March 5 through April 3, with Program Manager Daniel Knickelbein hosting a virtual public meeting on April 2. The 14 applications represent transportation improvements put forward by Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, OmniRide and Metro. The proposed projects include enhancements to existing bus service and new bus routes and rail station improvements; all proposed projects

would provide additional travel options for commuters across the I-66 corridor.

The Commuter Choice and communications teams collaborated on a series of English and Spanish language ads on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Threads](#) to encourage people to fill out our [survey](#). Our teams also shared posts on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#). Staff will compile the comments received and share them with Commissioners.

Want to learn more about the projects under consideration for I-66 Commuter Choice funding and provide your feedback?

**Join the Public Hearing!**

**What:** I-66 Commuter Choice Public Hearing

**When:** 5 p.m., Thursday, April 2

**Where:** Online

El programa Commuter Choice mejoraría el servicio de autobús durante el horario pico en la ruta 55 de ART: East Falls Church a Rosslyn.

Cuéntenos qué opina sobre este plan y otros proyectos bajo consideración.  
[novatransit.org/commuterchoice](http://novatransit.org/commuterchoice)



# ENVISION ROUTE 7



## Envision Route 7 team discusses design alternatives, spring outreach plans

The NVTC [Envision Route 7](#) project team hosted members of the Envision Route 7 Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) at NVTC March 10, providing updates on bus lane design alternatives, information on how we'll evaluate those alternatives and a review of the upcoming outreach phase, which is currently scheduled for late spring. Fairfax County staff also provided updates on planned initiatives and projects within the County that will benefit bus service along the Route 7 corridor.



NVTC leads the planning process for Envision Route 7, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route designed to connect Alexandria to Tysons along the Route 7 corridor. The PTAC is composed of representatives of partner jurisdictions as well as project delivery partners such as Metro and the Virginia Department of Transportation.





# Metrorail celebrates 50th anniversary

Metro celebrated 50 years of Metrorail on March 27, which launched a new era of transportation in the National Capital Region. It all began on March 27, 1976, with the first Metrorail trips carrying customers on the 4.6 miles of Red Line between Rhode Island Avenue and Farragut North.

The system quickly transformed how the region moved. In the decades since, Metro has become the backbone of the region's transportation network, with generations of customers relying on the system.

Over the years, customers have taken more than 7 billion trips on Metrorail and more than 15 billion trips across Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess.

Today, the system has grown into a six-line, 130-mile network with 98 stations. In 2025 alone, Metrorail delivered 147 million trips while playing a central role in the area's economy and daily life.

At its March 26 meeting, the Metro Board recognized the contributions of former Board members and general managers. In addition to current Virginia Board members Walter Alcorn, Darien Flowers and alternate Canek Aguirre, former Virginia Board members Kate Hanley, Mary Hynes, Paul Smedberg and Jeff McKay were among the attendees for the celebration.



*NVTC archival photos from the early days of Metro; Current and former Metro Board members, general managers and staff at the March 26 Metro Board meeting.*



# Metro Board revises budget

At its March 26 Board [meeting](#), Metro released a revised FY 2027 Operating Budget [proposal](#) reflecting updated revenue and expense assumptions as well as continued regional economic considerations. The revised proposal includes an additional \$14 million in revenues driven by fare compliance, uptake of Tap.Ride.Go. and a new fee for [Abilities-Ride](#). Metro identified opportunities to lower operating costs and jurisdictional subsidies in the revised budget by deferring some bus and rail service improvements and initiating a \$3 per trip Abilities-Ride fee. The FY 2027 Operating Budget and FY 2027-2032 Capital Improve-

ment Program are expected to be approved in April.

The Board also reviewed the findings of an operational analysis funded by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. This analysis examined opportunities for Metro to realize greater cost efficiencies and enhance self-generated revenue. Consultants from Guidehouse presented 30 opportunities and a series of recommended action items including assessments of Metro's workforce and digital capabilities.

## To Reduce Jurisdictional Subsidy Growth, Revised Budget Proposal Defers Some Bus and Rail Service Improvements and Begins New Abilities-Ride Administrative Fee

### FY2027 Proposed (Original Plan)

#### Metro Bus

- More frequent service, including 24-hour routes
- More weekend service
- Improvements across the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia starting about July 1

#### Metro Rail

- Late night and weekend frequency increases
- Added peak capacity for crowding

### FY2027 Revised Proposal

#### Metro Bus

- Maryland improvements deferred beyond FY2027
- Additional District of Columbia improvements above proposed original plan beginning December 2026

#### Metro Rail

- Delay improvements until December 2026

**Abilities-Ride** New \$3 per-trip administrative fee

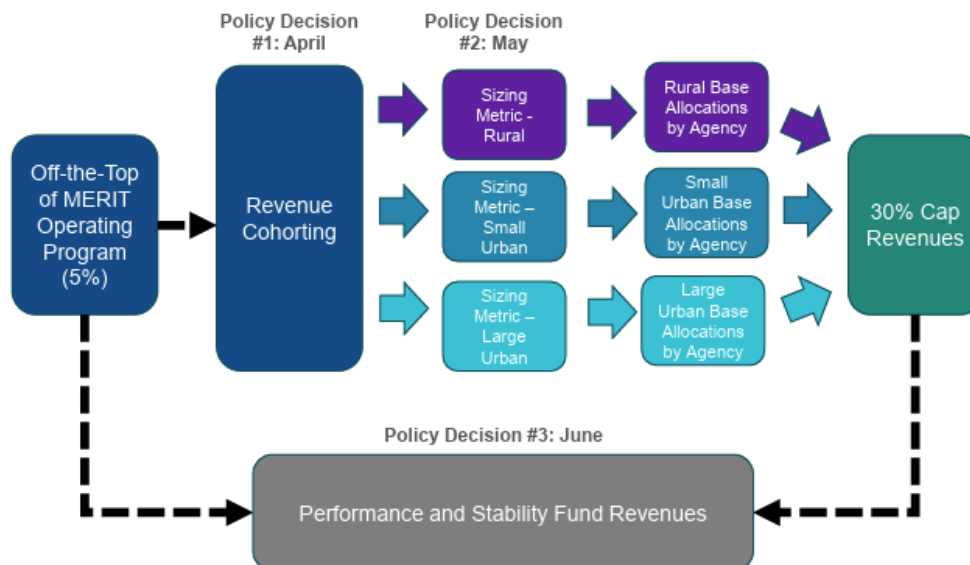
# TSDAC discusses potential changes to MERIT formula

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in a [meeting](#) of the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) in Richmond March 10 to continue discussion of potential updates to the [MERIT](#) transit funding formula. DRPT staff provided an [overview](#) of the ongoing MERIT review process and discussed several potential changes aimed at improving the program’s transparency and predictability. Much of the discussion focused on the concept of introducing “cohorts” for transit agencies within the operating assistance formula. Under this approach, transit systems could be grouped by characteristics such as agency size or service type so that agencies compete for funding with

more comparable peers rather than under a single statewide formula. TSDAC discussions will continue through the spring as DRPT staff refine the proposal and gather additional feedback before bringing recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board later this year.

Later that week, NVTC hosted a call with transit agency staff from across Northern Virginia to gather feedback on the cohort concept and other elements of the MERIT review. Input from these discussions will help inform Kate’s engagement in upcoming TSDAC meetings as the proposal continues to develop.

## Full Cohorting Conceptual Process



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



## CTB reviews transit funding needs, Virginia's funding mechanisms

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) met in Richmond March 17 and 18, where members received a [series of briefings](#) centered on DMVMoves, the General Assembly's SJ 28 Growing Needs of Northern Virginia Public Transit Joint Subcommittee and long-term transit funding needs in Northern Virginia, alongside broader overviews of the Commonwealth Transportation Fund and [SMART SCALE](#). Discussion emphasized the scale and complexity of the region's transit funding challenge, including continued focus on Metro cost containment measures, as the state continues to evaluate long-term funding

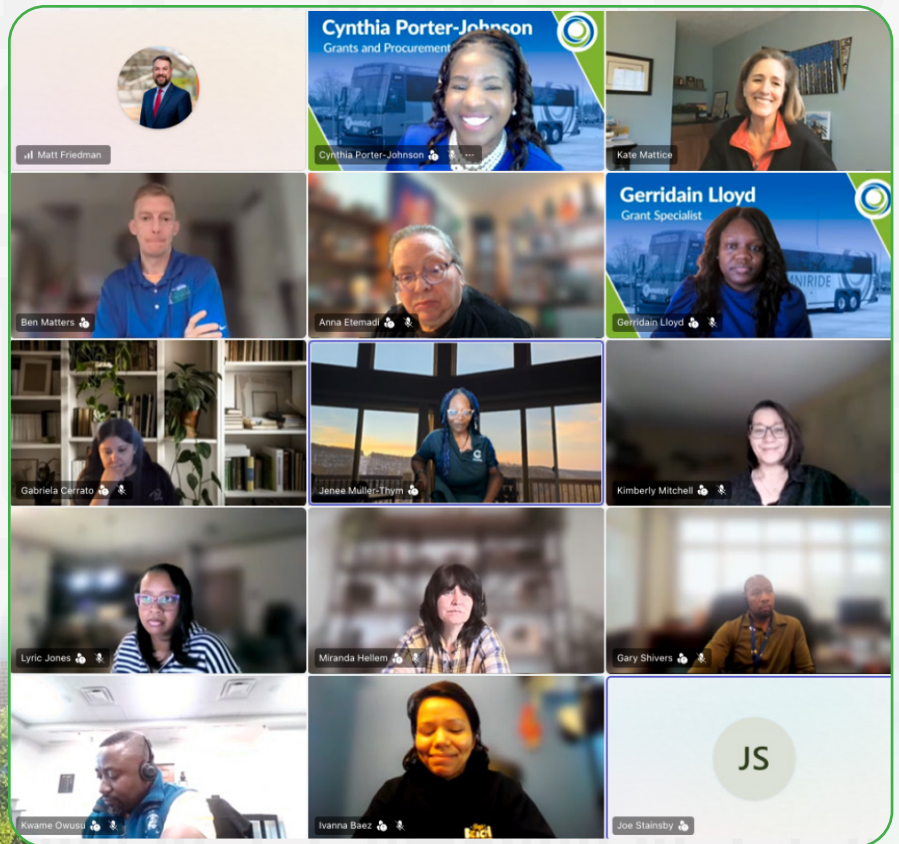
and policy options identified by the joint subcommittee.

CTB members also received a legislative and budget update, where Deputy Transportation Secretary Carter Hutchinson outlined key elements of the House and Senate budget proposals, which take differing approaches to transit funding and support. Spanberger administration officials noted that discussions on long-term transit funding remain ongoing, with additional consideration expected as the budget process continues.



## Kate shares career insights with OmniRide mentor program

Executive Director Kate Mattice shared insights from her career and leadership path with participants of [OmniRide's](#) inspiring M8 mentor program March 16. Kate was excited and honored to have met the rising star mentees and mentors at NVTC'S friends to the south. Thank you to Cynthia Porter-Johnson for the invitation and to all those who participated.



# Recognizing Women's History Month

In March, we highlighted some of the amazing women who support our regional transit network, including NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice, NVTC Chair Sarah Bagley, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) CEO Katie Choe and VRE Operations Board Chair Andrea Bailey. Their leadership and impact continue to move Northern Virginia forward.



## Women's History Month Spotlight

Chair Sarah Bagley, vice mayor of the City of Alexandria, is NVTC's chair for 2026. An avid bike rider and public transit user, Chair Bagley is a longtime advocate for transit-related programs and safer streets for all.



**SARAH BAGLEY**

*NVTC Chair; Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria*



## Women's History Month Spotlight

NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice leads the team that manages over \$350M in state and regional funding for Northern Virginia transit and provides coordination, technical assistance, and policy guidance. In her 30+ years of public service, Kate has mentored staff, launched innovative programs, and shaped policies that have improved both transit and quality of life in our region and beyond.



**KATE MATTICE**

*NVTC Executive Director*



## Women's History Month Spotlight

Chair Andrea Bailey, Potomac District Supervisor for Prince William County, is the Virginia Railway Express Operations Board chair for 2026. An active transit champion, Bailey has long supported transformative transit and transportation.



**ANDREA BAILEY**

*Virginia Railway Express Operations Board Chair, Prince William County Supervisor*



## Women's History Month Spotlight

Katie Choe, CEO of Virginia Railway Express, is leading the nation's 13th largest commuter rail service into the future. She will oversee the implementation of VRE's 2050 Service Plan and Vision, which will expand and enhance its ability to provide safe, reliable, convenient and comfortable service.



**KATIE CHOE**

*Virginia Railway Express CEO*

# CHARTING TRANSIT

## Bus service on Columbia Pike

Did you know that Columbia Pike, running east to west across Arlington County, is one of the most-traveled arteries in our region? The local bus lines serving the area move so many people with such high collective frequency that the Pike has become Northern Virginia's busiest transit corridor. The ART and Metro buses along Columbia Pike help Northern Virginians travel to work, home, doctor's appointments, restaurants and recreation, as well as connect them to the broader regional transit network—and the places beyond it. Charting Transit is a regular feature from our data team, led by Data Visualization Program Manager Sophie Spiliotopoulos, using visual storytelling to highlight transit facts and statistics.





# NoVa's Busiest Bus Corridor

Tracking Service Frequency on Columbia Pike

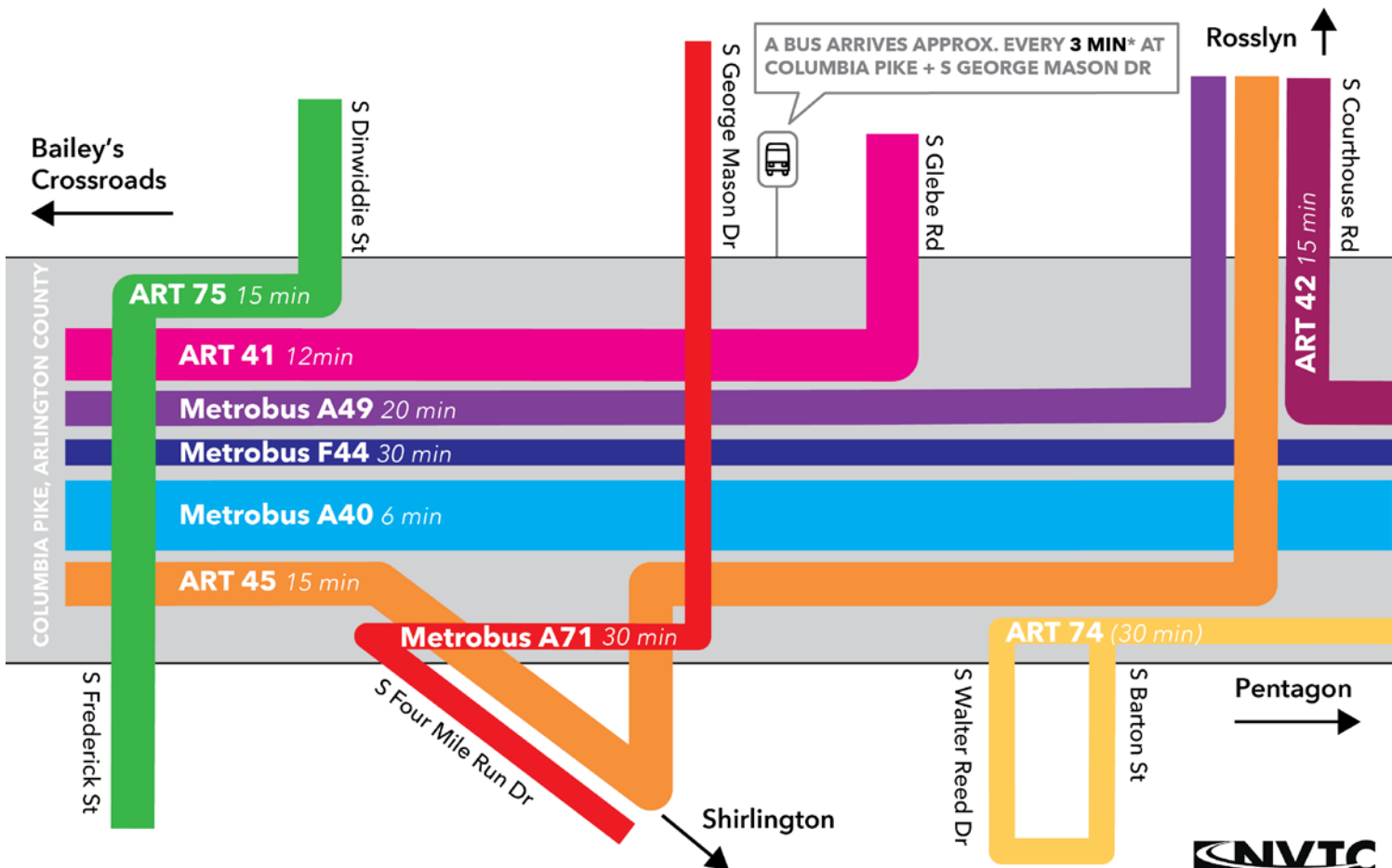
Route Name bus arrives every X min

█ More Frequent Service

█ Less Frequent Service



NOT TO SCALE



\*During rush hour





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