



Executive Director Newsletter



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

December 2023



A Message from Kate Mattice

As we near the end of 2023, it's time to reflect on the successes and challenges of another year gone by. NVTC did amazing work and I want to thank our Commissioners and our staff for their dedication to sustaining and growing our vital transit network.

The Commuter Choice program set records, supporting 5 million trips on the I-66 and I-395 corridors, saving travel time, fuel costs and reducing emissions. The extension of the I-95 Express Lanes means even more people will enjoy smoother, faster rides when they board the region's commuter buses.

The long-awaited Potomac Yard-VT Metro Station opened in May, serving a fast-growing part of Alexandria and solidifying the National Landing corridor as a place to live and work, all connected by robust Metro, Virginia Railway Express and bus routes. Staff also played a vital role in coordinating transportation alternatives as Metro rebuilt portions of the Yellow and Orange Lines.

We released a key study examining the Value of Northern Virginia Transit, finding that the Commonwealth of Virginia receives \$1.5 billion in annual tax revenue as a direct result of the region's transit network.

Other studies took a deep dive into how the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit network would run through the City of Falls Church, how infrastructure improvements could move buses faster and how amenities at bus stops have improved over time.

We're also planning for the future, launching a Regional Zero-Emission Strategic Plan to identify challenges and opportunities in transitioning local bus fleets away from fossil fuels.

Finally, we were busy seeing you in person! Staff and I attended countless events this year, connecting and reconnecting with people in a way we hadn't been able to in the previous few years. I'm grateful for the opportunities to renew and cultivate relationships that will help all of us as we continue to work across artificial boundaries to make our region accessible for everyone.

Kate Mattice
Executive Director

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December 15
VRE Operations Board

January 4
Commission Meeting

January 10
General Assembly Session begins

January 16
Commonwealth Transportation Board

January 19
VRE Operations Board

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Kate Mattice Dalia Palchik James Walkinshaw Jen DeBruhl Victor Angry Kathy Hollinger

Legislative Forum highlights regional efforts, transformation of transit services

NVTC held its annual Legislative Forum in partnership with the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) on December 1, where speakers and panelists noted the importance of regional coordination for transit service and discussed how the transit agencies that serve Northern Virginia have adapted to post-pandemic travel patterns. Special guest speaker Jen DeBruhl, Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), said public transit ridership across Virginia has rebounded since the pandemic. However, she urged the federal government to return more workers to the office, saying the move would boost Metro and VRE ridership.

Keynote speaker Kathy Hollinger, CEO of the Greater Washington Partnership (GWP), spoke of her organizations' focus on the "super-region" from Baltimore to Richmond and the importance

of transit and transportation to businesses and other entities throughout that region.

Finally, our Transit Leader Panel talked about how Metro, VRE, OmniRide and the other local bus systems are serving riders. Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke and NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice also talked about the agency's fiscal cliff, efforts to adapt the 3% funding cap and efforts to make changes in the law.

You can follow [additional coverage](#) of the forum on X (formerly Twitter).

Photo: Tysons Community Alliance CEO Katie Cristol moderates the Transit Leaders Panel with VRE CEO Rich Dalton, Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke, NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice and PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider (left to right)



Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke, Tysons Community Alliance CEO Katie Cristol, NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice, PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider, VRE CEO Rich Dalton (left to right)

LEGISLATIVE FORUM



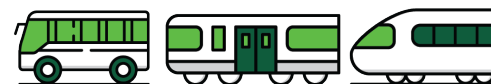


NVTC celebrates City of Fairfax Capital Bikeshare expansion

Executive Director Kate Mattice joined Mayor Catherine Read and our friends at the City of Fairfax November 8 to celebrate the opening of 10 new [Capital Bikeshare](#) stations. NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program funded four of the new stations near the Vienna Metrorail Station, providing residents with a new, convenient connection to Metro for travel along the I-66 corridor. Separately, Commuter Choice funded a 10-station bikeshare expansion that is currently underway in the nearby Dunn Loring-Merrifield area of Fairfax County. These [stations](#) are

collectively helping grow and fill in the region's bikeshare network, expanding the range of destinations served.

I-66 Commuter Choice has also funded improvements to CUE bus stops that are making the system easier and more comfortable to use. Installation of shelters, real-time information signs, lighting and seating at many stops is underway and will be completed by the end of the year. The improvements support the city's recent [rebranding](#) of the CUE system.





Election changes House control

The November 7 [general election](#) in Virginia saw Democrats retake control of the House and maintain control of the Senate. It was the first election with new district boundaries following the redistricting process adopted by voters in 2020 and resulted in historic turnover due to a record number of incumbents who decided to retire.

The election and retirements also mean new leadership in both chambers. Sen. Scott Surovell of Fairfax County takes over as Senate Majority Leader while Del. Don Scott of Portsmouth becomes the Speaker of the House. Leadership of key committees that work on issues related to transportation have also shuffled. Sen. Barbara Favola of Arlington will be the new Senate Transportation Committee Chair and Del. Dolores McQuinn of Henrico takes over the House Transportation Committee.

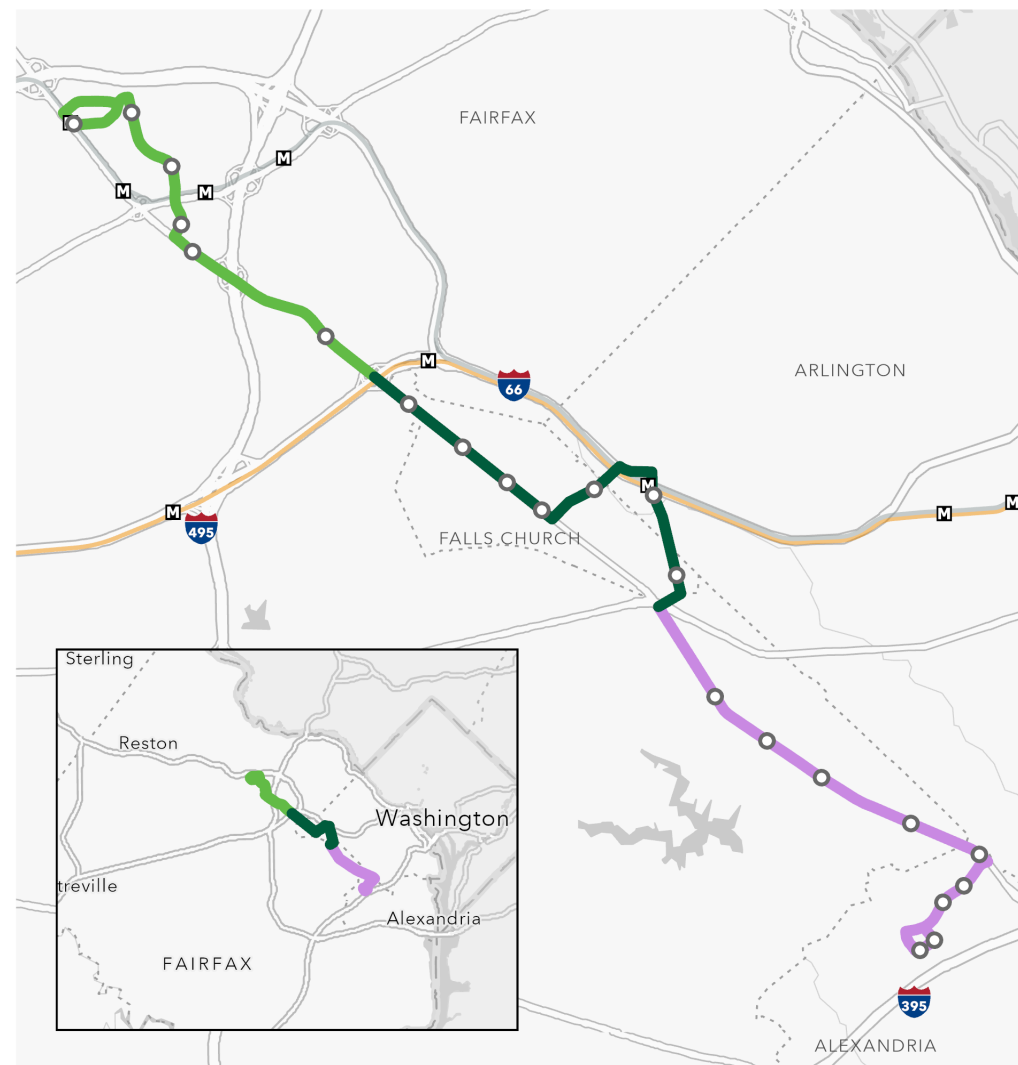
MetroNow names Kate Mattice, NVTC 'transit champion'



The [MetroNow](#) Coalition named NVTC and Executive Director Kate Mattice as its transit champion for October, adding "We applaud Kate and the NVTC team's efforts to map the value of transit in Virginia and to develop practical proposals for improvements through its WMATA Operating Funding and Reform Working Group." The MetroNow Coalition is made up of regional leaders from the business, non-profit and advocacy communities who believe that transit is designed to bring us together.



○ Stops
— Route + Study Phases

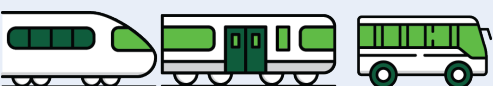


Envision Route 7 mobility study for Falls Church complete

NVTC staff, led by Transit Resource Center Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony and assisted by our new Envision Route 7 Senior Program Manager Vikram Sinha, have completed the latest phase of the study for [Envision Route 7](#), focusing on the segment planned to run through [Falls Church](#). The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project aims to address the anticipated traffic congestion along the corridor and improve overall mobility by providing high-speed, high-frequency, and reliable transit service and connections across multiple jurisdictions and between multiple

Metrorail stations. The corridor has the second busiest bus ridership in Northern Virginia, at 114% of pre-pandemic ridership versus the regional bus average of approximately 90%.

This study evaluated and determined the mobility benefits and impacts resulting from the proposed BRT from Tysons to Seven Corners. The next phase of NVTC's Envision Route 7 BRT project is the Phase 4-2 Mobility Analysis Study that examines the segment from Seven Corners in Fairfax County to the Mark Center in Alexandria.





Metro opens Integrated Command and Communications Center in Alexandria

Funding constraints may impact Metro's capital program



Courtesy: Metro

Executive Director Kate Mattice was on hand as Metro Board Chair Paul Smedberg, Metro GM/CEO Randy Clarke and elected officials cut the ribbon on Metro's Integrated Command and Communications Center (MICC) October 27. The new 14-story building, located near the Eisenhower Avenue Station, will support more than 1400 employees and serve as a technology hub. In addition to the MICC, the building will be home to the data center, cybersecurity operations, bus and rail video

teams and communications and administrative support. Metro says it selected an existing underutilized property in an area of Alexandria that has seen dramatic growth in the past several years, including commercial and residential development. The building is the third and final to be completed as part of Metro's Office Consolidation Plan approved by Metro's Board of Directors in 2018.



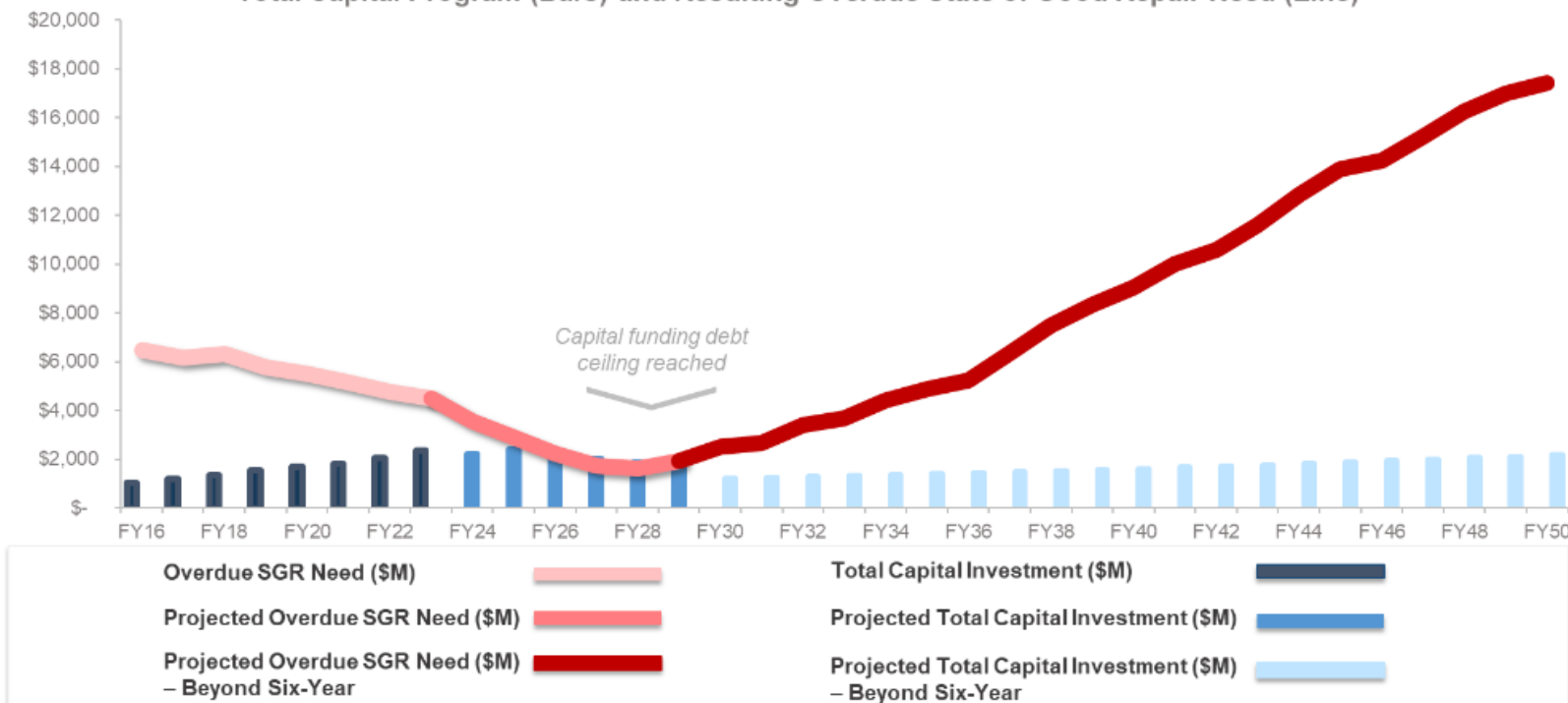
Members of the Metro Board heard [an update](#) November 16 regarding the agency's capital program and the proposed FY 2025-2030 [Capital Improvement Program](#) (CIP), which focuses on state of good repair and safety projects. Dedicated capital funding debt drives the amount of money available for the draft capital program. Inflation and market conditions have eroded the ability for the agency to float new bonds and staff expect bond capacity to be exhausted during the six-year capital improvement program. Metro will continue to reduce the backlog of state of good repair projects throughout the six-year program, but its ability to do so will shrink as it reaches the capital funding debt ceiling.

As part of the development of the FY 2025 budget, Metro staff also provided a preliminary recommendation for how to maximize the

amount of eligible preventive maintenance funds shifted to the operating budget from the capital budget in order to help close the operating budget funding gap.

Staff also outlined the potential impacts to the capital program from maximizing that transfer in FY2026, since doing so reduces the capacity of the capital program. Metro staff provided examples of what this reduced capacity could mean for planned improvements, including procurement of 8000-series railcars, advancement of the Zero-Emission Bus program, construction of the Metrorail heavy repair and overhaul facility, and other capital needs. We expect GM/CEO Randy Clarke to deliver a proposed budget in December. NVTC staff will engage the NVTC WMATA Committee and Commission to provide feedback at key points during the budget process.

Total Capital Program (Bars) and Resulting Overdue State of Good Repair Need (Line)



Welcome Commissioner Kornhoff

Chair Dalia Palchik swore in NVTC's newest Commissioner at the November Commission meeting. Speaker of the House Todd Gilbert appointed Joseph Kornhoff to the Commission. He replaces Nick Clemente.



2023 Commissioners

(F-B): Chair Dalia Palchik, Libby Garvey, Immediate Past Chair Canek Aguirre, Vice-Chair, Matt de Ferranti, Aimee Gilroy, Sarah Bagley, Adam Ebbin, Secretary-Treasurer David Snyder, Jeffrey McKay, John Foust, Walter Alcorn, M. David Skiles, John C. Tuck III, Paul Smedberg, Katie Cristol, (not pictured) Joseph Kornhoff, James R. Walkinshaw, Michael R. Turner, Daniel Storck, Jon R. Stehle, Jr., Catherine S. Read, R. Kirk McPike, Matthew Letourneau, Takis Karantonis, Phil Duncan, John J. Bell, Jennifer DeBruhl



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