

Executive Director Newsletter

December 2017



Informing and engaging lawmakers is integral to NVTC's mission. On December 4, we will partner with the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) to present our annual joint Legislative Briefing. This year's briefing takes on

heightened importance, as there are several newly elected members of the House of Delegates attending and the transit funding issues facing lawmakers in Richmond have never been more pressing.

Two panels – one focused on the challenges facing our transit agencies and the other highlighting the importance of transit to the business community – will provide insight that will help our elected officials better understand what is required to keep our bus and rail systems operating safely and reliably. NVTC, PRTC and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) will share drafts of their legislative agendas as well as issue briefs on the regional gas tax, looming transit capital fiscal cliff, dedicated funding for WMATA, and the federal commuter transit tax benefit. [Additional details are on page 5.](#)

The Commission will be asked to adopt NVTC's 2018 Legislative and Policy Agenda at its December 7 meeting. The agenda's top priorities are establishing sustainable federal, state and regional funding for WMATA, VRE and local transit agencies and pursuing the reforms identified through NVTC's Governance and Personnel Committee. While the document may seem perfunctory, it is anything but. The agenda will inform NVTC's response to legislative and administrative actions over the next year. In addition to sharing it with lawmakers in Richmond, NVTC will provide the agenda to staff and elected officials in its jurisdictions and transit agencies and with the business community and media.

As we await the December 18 release of Governor McAuliffe's final budget and the January 10 deadline for the pre-filing of bills in the General Assembly, NVTC will be monitoring and analyzing activity and will apprise the Commission of items of interest. This will, by all accounts, be a busy winter and NVTC will continue to actively serve its constituents as the voice of transit in Northern Virginia.

Executive Director

Inside this Issue

I-66 Application Period Closing	2
I-66 Tolling Starts Dec. 4	2
NVTC Hosts Fare Collection Workshop	2
Official LaHood WMATA Report Pending .	3
WMATA to Contract Bus Service	3
Metro to Spruce Up Rail Cars	3
NVTC Holds WMATA Board Forum	4
Around Town: Local Headlines	4
Attend Dec. 4 Legislative Briefing	5
DRPT Launches Intercity Bus Service	6
NVTA Celebrates 15th Anniversary	6
I-66 Outside Groundbreaking	6
TPB Seeks Citizens for Advisory Group	6



Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 620
Arlington, VA 22201
www.novatransit.org



Key Dates

Dec. 4	NVTC/PRTC Joint Legislative Conference in Springfield
Dec. 5-6	CTB Monthly Meeting
Dec. 7	NVTC Monthly Meeting
Dec. 14	WMATA Board Meeting
Dec. 14	NVTA Monthly Meeting
Dec. 15	VRE Operations Board Monthly Meeting
Dec. 20	TPB Monthly Meeting
Dec. 22	Application Deadline for I-66 Commuter Choice Funding
Jan. 4	NVTC Monthly Meeting

Second I-66 Commuter Choice Call for Projects to Close Dec. 22

Applications for new transit and related projects that will improve the reliability and efficiency of travel along I-66 inside the Beltway are due to NVTC by December 22. This is the second call for projects under NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program. The Commission previously awarded \$9.8 million to 10 projects.

I-66 Commuter Choice uses tolls from the interstate to fund multimodal improvements. The program is designed to identify and fund projects that move more people, increase opportunities to connect from one mode of travel to another, improve transit service, reduce roadway congestion, and increase travel options.

I-66 Tolling to Start Dec. 4 Inside the Beltway

Changes are coming to I-66 inside the Beltway. December 4 marks the start of tolling on the interstate between I-495 and Route 29 in Rosslyn. Dynamic tolling is designed to keep traffic flowing and provide a more predictable trip. Solo drivers will now be able to use I-66 by paying a toll with an E-ZPass. Vehicles with two or

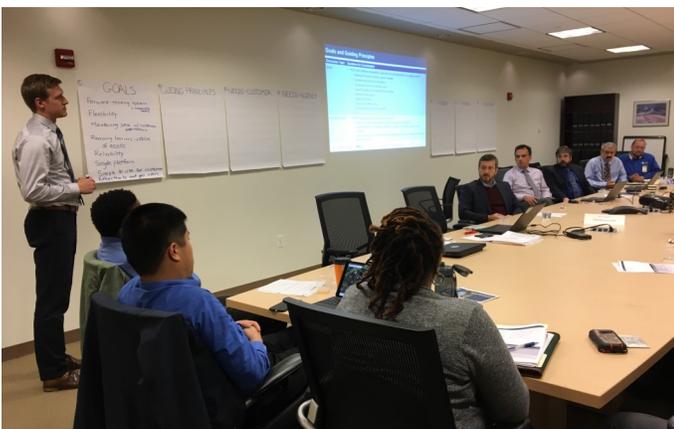
more people can continue to travel for free but must have an E-ZPass Flex switched to HOV mode. Tolling will be in effect weekdays from 5:30-9:30 a.m. eastbound and 3-7 p.m. westbound. A portion of the tolls will go to support NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program, which funds transit and related improvements in the corridor.



NVTC Hosts Fare Collection Workshop

Looking to the future of fare collection in the region, NVTC hosted a Next Generation Regional Fare Collection Visioning Workshop on Nov. 1. The idea was to educate our regional partners on current and emerging technologies and approaches to fare collection, identify current fare collection needs and issues, and develop a collective vision for a next generation fare collection system. Staff from NVTC's transit agencies, as well as WMATA

and the Federal Transit Administration attended. Participants expressed interest in implementing mobile ticketing and student passes. The workshop also included a presentation on the ongoing Fast & Flexible Fare Payment Study involving Arlington, WMATA, DDOT, and the Federal City Council. NVTC is following up with meeting participants to continue gathering input on a vision for the future of fare collection in the region.



Official LaHood Report on WMATA Still Pending

While former U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has yet to share his final recommendations on WMATA reforms with the Governor, an [October draft was published by The Washington Post](#) on Nov. 12. The draft aligned with what the Secretary shared with us at our October meeting.

A [follow-up piece in The Post](#), which garnered reaction from leaders in the region, quoted Paul Smedberg, who "...noted that six Northern Virginia jurisdictions provide funding for Metro and deserve a voice. 'I personally have found that elected and appointed members both bring value and different perspectives, and from my view, it's really helped the debate,'" he said.

WMATA Announces Competitive Contracting Opportunity in Lorton

Metro has issued a request for proposals seeking vendors to manage and operate bus service out of its new Cinder Bed facility under construction in Lorton. The bus facility is expected to open next year.

[In a statement](#), Metro said contracting bus service is a best practice among transit systems nationally. Metro is one of few agencies in the region that currently provides all regular-route bus service inhouse. Nationally, nearly one-third of all transit agencies outsource some or all of their bus service. This allows them to benefit from cost reductions, resulting from competitive wages, overhead, and no pension liability for new employees.

"Metro is exploring new ways to do business that save the region money, while continuing to improve the quality and safety of service for our customers," General Manager Paul Wiedefeld said in a statement. "The opening of Cinder Bed Road presents a significant opportunity to competitively contract for new services and is consistent with our 'Keep Metro Safe, Reliable and Affordable' plan."



Metro has already outsourced hundreds of jobs, including rail track bed cleaning and contract shuttle bus service.

Nine bus lines will operate out of Cinder Bed Road, which is roughly 5 percent of Metro's bus service. About 80 buses, which serve about 10,500 average weekday customers, will operate from and be maintained at the facility.

Metro Pilot Program to Spruce Up a Dozen Rail Cars

Metro is giving its 3000- and 6000-series rail cars a facelift. [In a video posted to YouTube](#), the transit agency announced it will upgrade some 3000- and 6000-series rail cars to mimic the look of the system's newest trains. The changes include installing a silver vinyl overwrap that mirrors the appearance of the 7000-series cars; replacing carpet with confetti-patterned, nonstick flooring; and outfitting them with blue padded seats. The changes will give the agency's rail cars a clean, uniform look. Twelve cars will receive the new treatment. Metro says the nearly \$60,000 pilot project will result in cost savings in the long run and reduce environmental waste.



NVTC Hosts 3rd “Getting Metro Back on Track”

Funding, fares and safety were among the issues Virginia's WMATA board members were asked to address during NVTC's forum in Arlington on Nov. 16. Similar events took place in Reston and Alexandria earlier this year. The [WMATA board members' initial presentation](#) focused heavily on funding. Riders questioned the General Assembly's seeming unwillingness to provide additional funds for WMATA, whether a sales tax is feasible in Virginia to fund WMATA, and whether fare increases contribute to a transit system's death spiral. Board members expressed a modicum of optimism on the region's ability to solve the funding issue. "If the region can come together to support Amazon HQ2, surely it can come together to support Metro, which is what made those bids viable," said Jim Corcoran.



Around Town: Headlines from/about NVTC Jurisdictions and Partners



[Crystal City BID proposes pedestrian walkway to Reagan National](#)



[Find out how Street Smart's new campaign, "shattered lives" was born](#)



[Slugging to Work for Long Commutes](#)

[Catalyzing development at Metro stations: Q&A with Falls Church Mayor & Prince George's Chair](#)

[Riders Tell All, Amazing Benefits of Vanpooling](#)



[DRPT Reports Ridership Increases on Virginia Amtrak Routes](#)



[How The New I-66 HOT Lanes Will Change Your Commute](#)



[Fairfax to Launch New I-66 Commuter Choice Express Bus Service](#)



[RIDE magazine \(November 2017\)](#)

[Bikeshare Marks First Anniversary in Fairfax County, More Locations on the Way](#)



Attend the NVTC & PRTC Joint Legislative Briefing

*Monday, December 4, 2017 from 9-11 a.m.
Hilton Springfield, 6550 Loisdale Road, Springfield, VA*

Join NVTC & PRTC Commissioners, General Assembly members, local elected officials, legislative staff, and area business leaders for an overview of federal and state issues affecting transit in Northern Virginia.

Learn about the critical funding and policy challenges facing our region from transit industry leaders and hear what transit-savvy business leaders have to say about the importance of bus and rail to our economy and quality of life.

Doug Allen
CEO
VRE



Paul Wiedefeld
GM & CEO
WMATA



Jennifer Mitchell
Director
DRPT



Jon Godsmark, Senior VP, Infrastructure, EY

Maggie Parker, VP, Communications/Community Outreach, Comstock Partners

David Touhey, President of Venues, Monumental Sports & Entertainment

Seema Wadhwa, Assistant VP for Sustainability and Wellness, Inova

[RSVP NOW!](#)

Dept. of Rail and Public Transportation



DRPT is partnering with Megabus to launch government-subsidized [bus service between Blacksburg and Washington, D.C.](#), with a

handful of stops in between. The Virginia Breeze route will start on Dec. 1, with the farthest one-way ticket costing roughly \$50. The bus will make additional stops along the way in Christiansburg, Lexington, Staunton, Harrisonburg, Front Royal, Dulles International Airport and Arlington. The route is a pilot program that aims to boost Virginia's intercity bus options, specifically in rural and college towns.



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority



NVTA celebrated its [15th anniversary on Nov. 9](#) with an evening event that provided opportunities to reflect on Northern Virginia's transportation problems, policies, and funding solutions. The celebration at the City of Fairfax's Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center was led by WTOP reporter Max Smith. Guests heard from speakers, including U.S. Congressman Gerry Connolly and Justice William C. Mims of the Virginia State Supreme Court. NVTA Chairman Marty Nohe noted the Authority's many accomplishments would not be possible without tremendous regional collaboration and coordination with its member jurisdictions and transit agencies, members of the General Assembly and stakeholders, all of whom worked tirelessly to help NVTA grow over the past 15 years.



Virginia Department of Transportation



Governor Terry McAuliffe Terry McAuliffe led a [ceremonial groundbreaking on Nov. 20](#) for

\$3.7 billion expansion of I-66 to 10 lanes outside the Beltway — three regular lanes and two Express Lanes in each direction. Express Mobility Partners (EMP) has been designated to design, build, operate and maintain the Express Lanes in exchange for the toll revenue over at least 50 years. EMP provide the Commonwealth with \$579 million to fund additional transportation improvements in the corridor, of which \$128 million will be used to expand some of the Virginia Railway Express' busiest stations.



Transportation Planning Board



The TPB is soliciting [applications for its Citizen Advisory Committee \(CAC\)](#), a 15-member panel representing diverse viewpoints on long-term transportation policy. Nine members of the CAC are appointed annually by the TPB. The other six members are elected by the previous year's CAC. The membership is evenly divided among the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month, preceding the regular meetings of the TPB.

