



Executive Director Newsletter



2021 Year in Review



February 2022



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

NoVaTransit.org
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A Message from Kate Mattice

Welcome to February, the shortest month of the year, but one that can be particularly intense for those keeping an eye on what's happening down in Richmond. The 2022 General Assembly Session is well underway amid a shifting political environment. We look forward to learning more about Gov. Glenn Youngkin's transportation priorities and we continue to focus on the great strides in dedicated and sustainable transit funding and performance-based funding approaches enacted during the 2018 and 2020 sessions. In addition, we are pleased to see former NVTC policy analyst Jen Deci named as Virginia's deputy secretary of transportation, and we look forward to working with her and others in the administration.

Legislation typically moves quickly through the Virginia House and Senate and we actively monitor any proposed bills that may impact the work we do. We continue to watch for any legislation that changes regional or state taxes that fund transportation, changes priorities for state funding of public transportation or threatens the health of our transit systems. To that end, we partner with agencies around the Commonwealth with similar interests including the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission. We also work closely with the talented legislative staff who support our jurisdictions and engage with the Virginia Transit Association and other trade associations.

We have a brief overview of the bills we're tracking inside this issue. By the time we reach "crossover day" in the middle of the month, however, we'll have a better sense of any bills that have survived the legislative process as that is the deadline for each chamber to send bills to the opposite chamber.

Through all the ups and downs of the General Assembly session, we continue to be fortunate to have a Northern Virginia delegation committed to our priorities that advocates for them during this hectic process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate A. Mattice".

Executive Director

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Save
the
Date

February 15-16

Commonwealth
Transportation Board

February 17

NVTC Legislative and Policy
Committee

February 18

VRE Operations Board

February 23

NVTC Program Advisory
Committee

March 3

Commission Meeting

Northern Virginia
Transportation
Commission
2300 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 230
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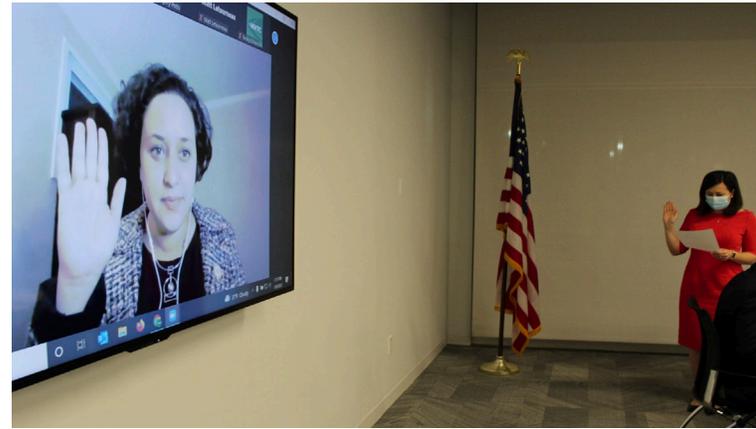
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New year, new chair, new commissioner

After two years at the helm, Immediate Past Chair Katie Cristol passed the gavel to Canek Aguirre at the January [Commission meeting](#). Mr. Aguirre of Alexandria has served on the Commission since 2019 and has also served as Chair of the NVTC WMATA Committee. Dalia Palchik, who represents the Providence District in Fairfax County, was sworn in as Vice Chair. She has served on the Commission since 2020 and is also a member of the Executive Committee. The appointments mark the first time in NVTC history that the body has a Latino Chair and Latina Vice Chair.

Matt de Ferranti of Arlington has served on the Commission since 2020 and was sworn in as Secretary-Treasurer. He has also served on the NVTC WMATA and Executive Committees. The Commission also welcomed one new member. Sarah Bagley of Alexandria. NVTC thanks Katie Cristol for her steadfast leadership over the last two years as we navigated the ups and downs of the COVID-19 pandemic while keeping the work of NVTC moving forward.



Presenting our 2021 NVTC year in review video



For the first time we produced a [video](#) to showcase the work of NVTC in 2021. Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther conceived and produced the video, with an assist from Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman.

 [WATCH NOW!](#)

DRPT transit funding to jump from early forecasts

The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) presented updated revenue and recommended funding allocations in January that reflect a major increase in available funding compared to early projections. The revised FY 2022 Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF) revenues and recommended allocations were discussed as part of this week's [Commonwealth Transportation Board](#) meetings. An additional \$185.5 million will be allocated to DRPT transit

programs over what was included in the Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) that was approved in June 2021. This additional funding will be made available to grantees during the remainder of FY 2022. That includes state money for Metro that NVTC disburses and the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), which Fairfax County and Alexandria are considering to be able to offer zero or reduced transit fares.

DRPT FY 2022 State-Wide Allocations

	Approved FY 2022 SYIP	Additional Funding	Total FY 2022
Transit Operating	\$103.6M	\$56.8M	\$160.4M
Transit Capital	\$97.8M	\$26.3M	\$124.1M
NVTC-WMATA Capital / Operating	\$177.1M	\$88M	\$265.1M
TRIP	\$20.9M	\$10M	\$30.9M
Special Programs	\$8M	\$4.4M	\$12.4M
Total	\$407.3M	\$185.5M	\$592.8M



NoVA General Assembly delegation hosts transportation discussions

Executive Director Kate Mattice traveled to Richmond January 25 to take part in meetings hosted by the General Assembly's Northern Virginia Delegation, with a special focus on transportation. Metro Board Chair Paul Smedberg briefed members of the Senate and House on agency issues.

Ms. Mattice also attended a meeting of a House transportation subcommittee where former Commissioner and now Del. [Elizabeth Bennett-Parker](#) presented [a bill](#) to update language

regarding NVTC and PRTC appointments to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. Commissioner James Walkinshaw, who also serves as the Vice Chair of the VRE Operations Board testified on behalf of the bill.

Another bill which NVTC tracked concerns modernizing the law governing [electronic meetings](#) for government bodies. It passed out of committee with unanimous support. NVTC continued to monitor any legislation that changes regional or state taxes that fund transportation.



General Assembly gets to work in 2022 Session

The two-month General Assembly [Session](#) got underway January 12 with a change of control in the House of Delegates. Republican Todd Gilbert of Shenandoah became Speaker of the House where the GOP holds a two-seat majority. NVTC staff monitor each session for relevant legislation and have been reviewing bills related to the regional gas tax, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and Freedom of Information Act/Open meetings." We also await confirmation of Gov. Glenn Youngkin's nominee for Secretary of Transportation W. Sheppard "Shep" Miller III and

other appointments for high level transportation posts in the Commonwealth. They include former NVTC staff member, Jen Deci, nominated as Deputy Secretary of Transportation. Ms. Deci worked as a policy analyst for NVTC in 2016 and 2017, tracking legislation, managing federal grants and engaging in Vanpool Alliance efforts. Both before and after her time at NVTC, she worked on public transit policy at the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.



Proposed Metro Budget aided by federal funding, which will run out next year

Metro's Finance and Capital Committee conducted a work session January 13 on the proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget which relies on federal aid to offset declines in farebox revenue from reduced ridership and maintains current budgeted service levels on Metrorail and Metrobus. The proposed budget also includes several permanent and temporary fare discounts meant to drive ridership.

Board member Matt Letourneau also [highlighted](#) the looming problem facing the agency beyond FY 23. "As we've been discussing, as I think we should continue to discuss, the challenges will come for us in FY 24 when that federal support runs out, Letourneau said. "We are looking at roughly a \$500 million shortfall in funding when we expend all of that federal assistance we've been using."

Metro has also set the [public comment](#) period on the FY 2023 budget, which includes a hearing in Virginia that Board Chair Paul Smedberg is scheduled to attend. It will include options for in-person and virtual participation:

February 7, 2022 at 6:00 pm

Ellen M. Bozman Government Center
County Board Room
2100 Clarendon Blvd #307
Arlington, Virginia

NVTC will submit a letter, based on NVTC WMATA Committee and Commissioner guidance, as part of the public comment period.



NVTC WMATA Committee reviews proposed 2023 Metro budget

NVTC's WMATA Committee met January 20 to discuss its work plan for 2022 and to provide staff with comments and guidance on the FY 2023 budget. Committee members supported proposed work plan areas on providing comments on the Metro budget, providing guidance to staff on the update to the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA, and receiving updates on initiatives related to the Bus Transformation Project and other studies at Metro. In light of Metro's anticipated exhaustion of federal coronavirus aid, committee members expressed a strong interest in discussing and engaging on Metro's projected FY 2024 operating gap as soon as possible.

NVTC staff provided an overview of Metro's proposed FY 2023 operating budget and FY 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and drafted comments for committee consideration to include in a letter to Metro.

Committee members supported staff's proposed comments including but not limited to:

- Implement temporary and permanent fare changes that balance ridership and revenue, accommodate increased telework and don't lose significant revenues
- Opening and implementing full revenue service for Silver Line Phase 2 and Potomac Yard Station
- Continuing the acceleration of the capital program and CIP to advance the goals of safety, reliability and state of good repair

Committee members urged the safe and timely return of the 7000-series railcars to service and continued efforts to improve safety culture and rebuild customer confidence. Commissioners emphasized that – to the extent practical – Metro should look for budget savings in the FY 2023 budget that can preserve federal aid as long as possible and be carried over into FY 2024.

NVTC staff will work with committee Chair Walter Alcorn to generate a letter of comment which will be shared with Commissioners prior to its submission as part of Metro's [public comment](#) process on the FY 2023 budget.



Commuter Choice team presents program performance framework

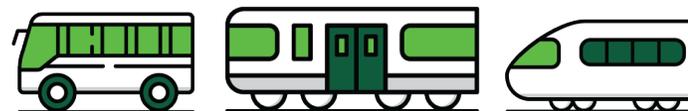
Such as...



Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager Ben Owen presented the program's performance framework and 2021 annual report highlights to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' [Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee](#) January 25. The subcommittee aims to improve transit across the Washington region by coordinating planning and programming at the staff level among agencies and jurisdictions. Ben reviewed how Commuter Choice projects are evaluated and performance targets and measures established. He also highlighted Commuter Choice performance outcomes to date, how the program depicted 2021 performance in the context of significant disruptions to historical regional travel patterns and steps the program has taken to maximize the benefits that funded projects provide to I-66 and I-395/95 toll payers.

Meanwhile, applications for Commuter Choice on the I-66 Corridor Round Five (FY 2023-FY 2024) funding were due January 28.

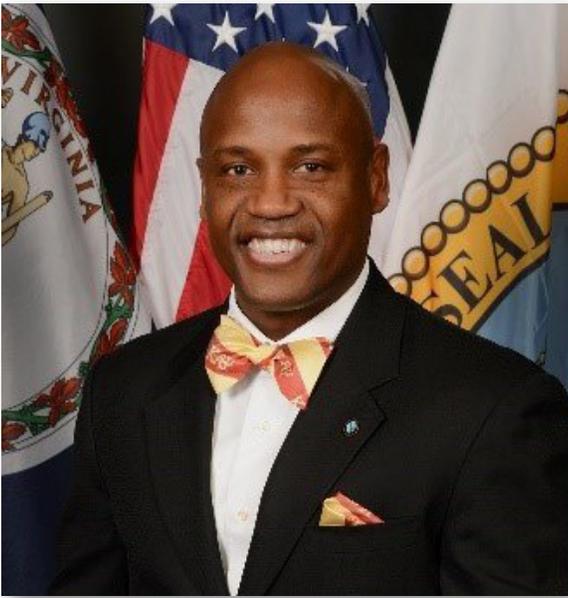
The Commuter Choice team conservatively anticipates that \$12 million will be available to fund new projects, with the possibility of more depending on how much and how durably I-66 Inside the Beltway toll revenues rebound over the next two years. NVTC's Program Advisory Committee will meet on February 23 at 4 p.m. to identify a high-level programming approach to inform FY 2023-FY 2024 programming in light of the revenue complexities. Staff will also review the submitted applications for eligibility during February before moving into technical evaluation of the eligible applications in March and opening public comment on these in April. The Commuter Choice team anticipates approval of a (potentially initial) program of projects by the Commission and Commonwealth Transportation Board in June.





POTOMAC & RAPPAHANNOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Supervisor Victor S. Angry to Lead PRTC Board in 2022



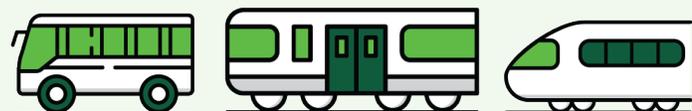
Prince William County Supervisor Victor S. Angry has been elected Chairman of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) Board for 2022. Supervisor Angry was elected in April 2019 to represent the Neabsco Magisterial District for the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and is the first African American to ever serve as a Supervisor on the Board of County Supervisors.

MAC advises regional staff of upcoming NVTC work

NVTC's Management Advisory Committee (MAC) met January 18 to advise local jurisdictional staff of upcoming Commission actions and discussion topics. These monthly gatherings give staff time to ask questions and helps them brief elected officials prior to Commission and NVTC committee meetings. While there will be no February Commission meeting, due to the ongoing General Assembly Session in Richmond, two key committees will meet in February, while the WMATA Committee met January 20.

The Legislative and Policy Committee meets Thursday, February 17 at 5 p.m. The meeting comes just after what's known as "crossover day" in Richmond, the last day for a bill to pass out of the chamber in which it was introduced and move forward for consideration in the opposite chamber.

The Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meets the following week, Wednesday, February 23 at 4 p.m. Staff will brief the PAC on the applications received for Commuter Choice on the I-66 Corridor Round Five (FY 2023-2024) funding. The PAC will also identify a high-level programming strategy for Round Five in light of the \$12 million currently and conservatively anticipated to be available and the possibility that more revenue will become available during the FY 2023-2024 period.



Staff attend Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting

Program Analysts Sophie Spiliotopoulos and Ronnetta Zack-Williams attended the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) [101st Annual Meeting](#) at the Washington Convention Center. The event, held in-person after a virtual event last year, brings together transportation professionals from across the country to connect and share research.

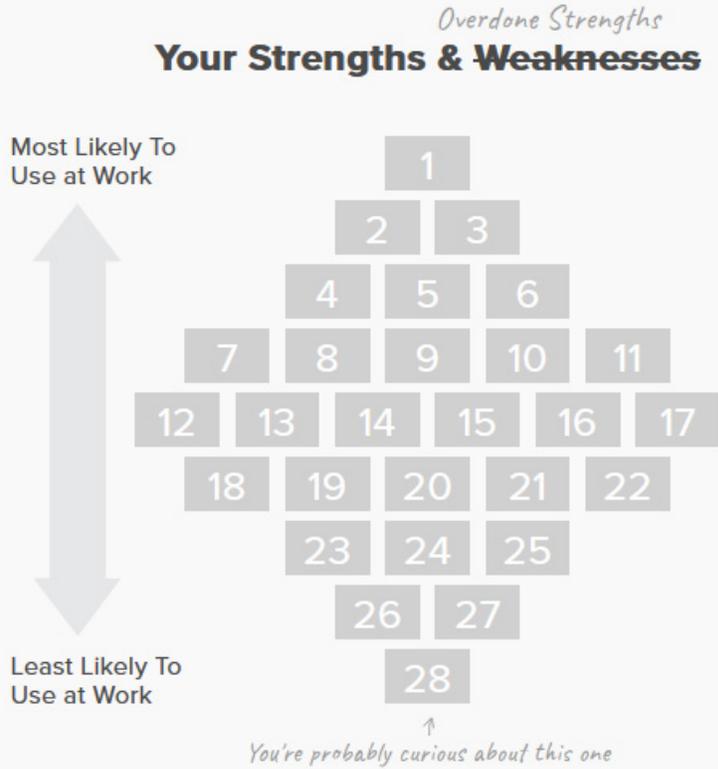
Secretary Pete Buttigieg, this conference is a forum for a wide range of transportation research. Sophie and Ronnetta heard about current research and planning efforts on topics such as micromobility, transportation demand management, big data and zero emission vehicles. It was great to start the year off at TRB learning and connecting.

Through posters, lectern sessions, and a keynote address and fireside chat by U.S. Transportation



NVTC team learns about core strengths at training

The entire NVTC staff gathered virtually January 10 to learn about our individual and team [core strengths](#). The all-day training gave us an opportunity to learn how we each work best and as a group. The analysis and discussion will allow our staff to work together more closely and understand our individual motivations.



Amtrak locomotive marks 50 years of railroad safety

A specially-painted Amtrak P-42 diesel locomotive, emblazoned on both sides with the message, "See Tracks? Think Train!" was released into service January 12, 2022 during a special ceremony at Washington Union Station. The black-and-yellow locomotive commemorates

the 50th anniversary of Operation Lifesaver, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing railroad safety education and awareness nationwide. Virginia Railway Express also maintains a strong partnership with Operation Lifesaver.





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