



While NVTC is not yet a household name in Richmond, it is clear we are making inroads with members of the General Assembly, their aides, committee staff and other elected and appointed officials. My interactions in and around the state capitol lead me to believe that the Commission's place in the alphabet soup of Northern Virginia transportation organizations is better understood than it was even a year ago. NVTC's tagline – the voice of transit in Northern Virginia – helps define our role and expertise in areas such as transit capital funding, WMATA reforms, and regional gas tax revenues.

Those issues are being taken most seriously this year, with several dozen transit-related bills and budget amendments having been filed over the past few weeks. NVTC has worked closely with members of the Northern Virginia delegation to ensure that legislation accurately and adequately addresses the needs of local bus and regional rail systems here and across the Commonwealth. (You can read more on NVTC's legislative-related activities on pages 2-3.)

Working in collaboration with leadership at the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Virginia Railway Express and our five local bus systems, NVTC has been instrumental in encouraging the development of mutual legislative priorities and ensuring a united front as we begin to analyze the costs and benefits of pending bills and budget amendments.

A legislative update is at the top of NVTC's agenda when it convenes Feb. 8 at 4 p.m. in the Patrick Henry Building, across the street from the capitol's grounds. Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine will share her legislative priorities and Department of Rail and Public Transportation Director Jennifer Mitchell will provide a status round-up of bills. We anticipate attendance by many Northern Virginia senators and delegates, as well as their aides.

Although there are only about five weeks left in this year's General Assembly session, there remain many opportunities for NVTC engage with lawmakers and remind them of the urgent need to support transit both in Northern Virginia and throughout the Commonwealth. NVTC's story is unique and I enjoy sharing it. If you know of someone who would benefit from hearing it, just let me know.



Executive Director

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Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
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Arlington, VA 22201
www.novatransit.org



Key Dates

- Feb. 1 [NVTA Monthly Meeting](#)
- Feb. 8 [NVTC Monthly Meeting in Richmond](#)
- Feb. 8 [WMATA Board Meeting](#)
- Feb. 13 [Crossover in General Assembly](#)
- Feb. 16 [VRE Operations Board Meeting](#)
- Feb. 20-21 [CTB Monthly Meeting](#)
- Feb. 21 [TPB Monthly Meeting](#)
- Feb. 22 [WMATA Board Meeting](#)
- Mar. 1 [NVTC Monthly Meeting](#)
- Mar. 10 [General Assembly Adjourns](#)

NVTC Shares Need for Transit Funding with State Officials

As the General Assembly settles in and begins tackling a significant number of transit-related bills, NVTC Chairman Paul Smedberg, Secretary-Treasurer Katie Cristol and Executive Director Kate Mattice met with state elected and appointed officials in late January, reminding them of the benefits that accrue from transit in Northern Virginia and the need for sustainable, dedicated funding. Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine, who will present at NVTC's Feb. 8 meeting in Richmond, listened to concerns and previewed her priorities pertaining to WMATA, VRE and local bus systems.

NVTC's role in the region, particularly in regard to transit funding, was the focus of [Mattice's presentation later that day to members of the Senate Transportation Subcommittee](#), which will consider many of the transit-related bills introduced this session. Secretary Valentine and NVTA Executive Director Monica Backmon shared their roles and responsibilities as well. The presentations

emphasized collaboration between the various agencies. Of most interest to legislators, however, was the loss of revenues Northern Virginia has experienced due to the lack of a floor on the 2.1 percent regional gas tax.

Earlier that week, NVTC staff attended [the Virginia Transit Association's \(VTA\) legislative day](#). Following a morning briefing from VTA leadership — which included NVTC Commissioner Dave Snyder, this past year's president — staff attended several meetings, among them the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee and the Northern Virginia Delegation Caucus. WMATA GM Paul Wiedefeld presented at both, sharing Metro's funding needs and responding to questions. [An evening reception at the newly renovated Richmond train station](#) gave NVTC staff an opportunity to speak with other transit professionals and elected officials from across the state.



NVTC's Kate Mattice talks transit with Governor Ralph Northam at the Virginia Transit Association's legislative reception at the Richmond Train Station.



From left to right: NVTC Secretary-Treasurer Katie Cristol, Senator Adam Ebbin, NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice and NVTC Chairman Paul Smedberg.



From left to right: NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice, Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine, NVTC Chairman Paul Smedberg, NVTC Secretary-Treasurer Katie Cristol and DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell

State Legislative Update

The first few weeks of the 2018 General Assembly session have been marked with the filing of bills plug the transit funding gap, adopt WMATA reforms and provide dedicated funding, add a floor to the 2.1 percent regional gas tax, and modify tolling on I-66. The Virginia Public Access Project website, which is easy to search, categorizes bills by keyword, such as [fuel tax](#), [transit](#), [transportation funding](#), and [tolls](#).

NVTC staff is tracking and analyzing more than three dozen transit-related bills and budget amendments.

Two pieces of legislation – [HB1319 \(Sullivan\)](#) and [SB856 \(Saslaw\)](#) – reflect the Governor’s transit funding proposal. Among other bills of interest to NVTC are [HB1137 \(Sickles\)](#) and [SB683 \(Stuart\)](#), which would create a Commuter Rail Operating and Capital Fund for Virginia Railway Express, and [HB1083 \(Filler-Corn\)](#), which would set the floor for Northern Virginia’s 2.1 percent gas tax at the regional, rather than statewide, price average. Commissioners will be briefed on pending legislation at NVTC’s Feb. 8 meeting in Richmond.

Federal Legislative Update

Bills by two U.S. Representatives from Virginia call for extending and increasing the current \$150 million federal subsidy for Metro that is set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2019. Rep. Barbara Comstock’s [The METRO Accountability and Reform Act](#), introduced in December, and Rep. Gerald E. Connolly’s [Metro Accountability and Investment Act](#), filed in late January, present two different approaches to Metro funding and reforms.

Funding

Connolly’s proposal would double the federal contribution to Metro to \$300 million a year for 10 years and earmark funds for operations. Comstock’s bill would increase the amount from the federal government by 50 percent to \$225 million annually with funds only being authorized for capital expenditures.

Half of Connolly’s \$300 million would reauthorize existing funding under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA). As such, matching contributions from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia would remain at \$50 million a year. His bill also would provide an additional \$50 million annually in federal PRIIA funding, \$40 million for operations and \$10 million for Metro’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG), with no jurisdictional match required. Comstock’s bill would increase federal PRIIA funding to \$225 million and the jurisdictional match to \$75 million annually.

The Connolly proposal would establish two new sources of funding. The first would provide \$500 million over five years, beginning in fiscal 2020. It would be contingent on a 50 percent local match and Metro’s ability to meet targets – to be developed by the U.S. transporta-

tion secretary, in collaboration with the jurisdictions – for safety, reliability, and operation cost efficiency. The second, to begin in fiscal 2025, would provide \$1.5 billion over 15 years. It carries the same two conditions and adds one more – that jurisdictions establish a dedicated funding source that raises at least \$300 million per year.

Reform

Establishment of five-member reform board, with the power to revise union contracts and supplier agreements, would eventually lead to a nine-member governing board under Comstock’s bill, which calls for amending the WMATA Compact. To help hold down labor costs, it would amend a federal law known as the Wolf Act, so that the agency’s financial condition would be considered during arbitration – a change included in [NVTC’s Principles for WMATA Reform resolution](#). Her bill also would give the transportation secretary additional authority over the board and funding.

Connolly’s bill, which does not address board composition, would strengthen the OIG by giving it new powers, an independent budget, and procurement and hiring authority so that it could hold Metro more accountable. The bill also would require that WMATA meet performance targets – and, later, receive dedicated funding by Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia - as a condition for new funding.

NVTC staff will track the two bills, as well as [one introduced almost a year ago by Maryland Rep. John Delaney](#) and [another by Reps. Jamie Raskin and Anthony G. Brown](#) in November, as they move through the House.

I-66 Commuter Choice Receives \$36 Million in Funding Requests



The 18 applications submitted for funding under [NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program](#) are undergoing review. Those applying to [the program's second call for projects](#) were Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties; the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church and Manassas; the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission; and Virginia Railway Express. The combined amount requested exceeds \$36 million.

A list of the eligible projects and details about each request for funding will be posted online in February. NVTC will hold two public hearings, one in late March and one at the April 5 Commission meeting. Funding recommendations from the I-66 Commuter Choice working group, which consists of 15 jurisdictions and transit agencies, will be presented for action at NVTC's May meeting and then forwarded to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for approval in June.

I-66 Commuter Choice Success Story



Open 7 months, the 300-spot Stone Ridge II park-and-ride lot in Aldie, VA, funded through I-66 Commuter Choice, routinely exceeds capacity. Similarly funded Loudoun County Transit express buses from Aldie to D.C. provide about 100 more daily passenger trips than when service started in July.



The I-495/I95 Express Lanes is [piloting a loyalty rewards program](#). Eligible drivers will receive free travel rewards. The pilot program has a limited number of participants. [Registration is required](#). Questions? Call 1-855-495-9777.

Join NVTC in Richmond

for Its Monthly Meeting & an Update on Legislation Pertaining to Metro, Virginia Railway Express, & Transit Funding from

Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine &
DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell

Thursday
February 8, 2018
4 p.m.

East Reading Room
Patrick Henry Building
1111 E Broad Street
Richmond, VA

Around Town: Headlines from/about NVTC Jurisdictions and Partners



[County to Receive \\$17 Million in State Grants for Transit Projects](#)

[Transit proximity to work more important than home for Arlington commuters](#)

[Could Amazon's HQ2 end up in Rosslyn?](#)

[Metro to implement host of new parking fees throughout Fairfax County](#)

[Fairfax supervisors OK funding for Merrifield bike-sharing initiative](#)

[Another Tysons developer vying to land Amazon's HQ2](#)

[Loudoun-Fairfax Proposal Makes First Cut for Amazon HQ2 Consideration](#)



[I-495/I-95 Express Lanes to Test Loyalty Rewards Pilot Program](#)



[Metro Board approves Rush Hour Promise](#)

[Silver Line Phase 2 Construction is Nearly 76 Percent Complete](#)



[Letourneau Elected Chairman of Regional Council of Governments Board](#)

[Toll lanes over Potomac, DC Streetcar changes, road widenings: Big projects inch forward](#)



[Florida man faces charges in VRE incident](#)



[New Leadership Announced for the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment Leadership](#)

MetroNow



The recently formed [MetroNow coalition](#) is a group of regional leaders from organizations representing businesses and non-profit advocates who have come together to ensure that action is taken to put Metro – the backbone of Greater Washington’s transportation infrastructure – on a safe, smart and sustainable path forward in 2018 and beyond. They are dedicated to securing comprehensive improvement of Metro’s governance, funding and operational structures in 2018. MetroNow is comprised of nine organizations, including the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Federal City Council and Greater Washington Partnership. The NOVA Chamber’s Mike Forehand is representing the coalition in Richmond, recently meeting with the NOVA Delegation Caucus.



Fairfax Connector



“Ride Stress Free to D.C.” is the slogan for Fairfax Connector’s new express bus service. Funded through NVTC’s [I-66 Commuter Choice](#) program, [Fairfax Connector Route 699](#) began operating Dec. 4. The route provides express service from the Fairfax County Government Center, via I-66, directly to major regional employment and educational centers in downtown Washington, D.C., including the U.S. Department of State, the World Bank and The George Washington University Campus. The service provides 10 morning inbound and 10 afternoon outbound trips. The regular express fare is \$4.25. Older adults and people with disabilities pay \$2.10



WMATA



Almost 600 riders received refunds following Metro’s first day of its [Rush Hour Promise](#) on Fri., Jan. 26 and another 1,073 qualified for a credit on Mon., Jan. 29. Whenever a Metrorail or Metrobus customer using a registered SmarTrip® card is delayed by 15 minutes or more, Metro will credit the customer’s SmarTrip® card for future travel. Prior to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) board’s approval of the refund program, Metro estimated about half of delayed rush-hour riders would not qualify since their cards were not registered with the agency online. When looking at all times of day, Metro said 92.6 percent of rail rider trips were on time and 98.1 percent arrived within five minutes of the expected time that first Friday. On Monday, 90.2 percent arrived on time and 96.9 percent arrived within five minutes.

Was your Metro trip delayed 15 minutes or longer ?

You may get a **Rush Hour Promise** credit.

wmata.com/promise 

Transportation Planning Board



Two bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, endorsed by the TPB at its January meeting, join the five generated by the TPB’s [Long Range Plan Task Force](#) to form the basis for [Visualize 2045](#)’s aspirational element. The two initiatives are regional in scale and would play a big role in connecting many parts of the region’s transportation system. One would complete a network of bicycle/pedestrian trails encircling the region’s core. The other would make it easier for people on foot or bike to access Metro or other transit stations.

Achievable Next Steps

