



Executive Director Newsletter

The background of the newsletter is a collage of two photographs. The top-left photo shows three people in a room, with one man in a blue shirt and black jacket leaning over a table covered with many small white cards. The bottom-right photo shows a large audience of people seated in a conference room, looking towards a large screen displaying a video conference with a man's face. The text "January 2022" is overlaid on a white diagonal banner that cuts across the middle of the page.

January 2022

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

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A Message from Kate Mattice

With 2021 in the rear-view mirror, we can reflect on the important work we accomplished at NVTC. While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to dampen public transit in Northern Virginia, we saw signs of hope as people across the region lined up to get vaccinated and some sense of normalcy returned to life.

In July we resumed in person Commission meetings, allowing us to gather face-to-face for the first time since before the pandemic. And thanks to technology, we were able to provide new flexibility for commissioners to participate virtually, when needed.

Despite the changes the pandemic brought us to the way we work, they never stopped us from moving forward. As the grantee or agent, NVTC managed \$277 million in funding received during FY 2021. That includes more than \$15 million awarded as part of the Commuter Choice program.

At Metro we saw the selection of Paul Smedberg serve a third term a chair of the board and Matt Letourneau to lead the board's finance and capital committee. Through our board appointments, we continue to advocate for Virginia's interests. That includes the use of three rounds of pandemic relief federal funding to keep vital Metrobus and Metrorail service running.

It was an exciting year for our Transit Technology Program. We published the 2021 Northern Virginia Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan, a white paper on zero reduced-fares and hosted a symposium on zero-emissions buses.

We pushed forward with our Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit study, awarding a contract to implement the next phase of work.

We also welcomed several new staff members to help us accomplish even more in 2022.

As we approach the third year of the pandemic, we know there will be more uncertainty ahead, but I'm confident we are well positioned for continued success in the new year.

Executive Director

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Save the Date

January 9-13
Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting

January 11-12
Commonwealth Transportation Board

January 12
General Assembly Session opens

January 20
NVTC WMATA Committee

January 21
VRE Operations Board

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Commuter Choice highlighted at NoVa regional public meeting

Executive Director Kate Mattice joined transportation representatives from across Northern Virginia December 15 as part of an annual public meeting to showcase projects from across the region. It was an opportunity to highlight the work of NVTC's Commuter Choice program. The other agencies participating were the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and Virginia Railway Express. More than a hundred people registered for the virtual event which also gave elected officials and members of the public a chance to provide comment on the projects presented by each agency. There's still time to weigh in.

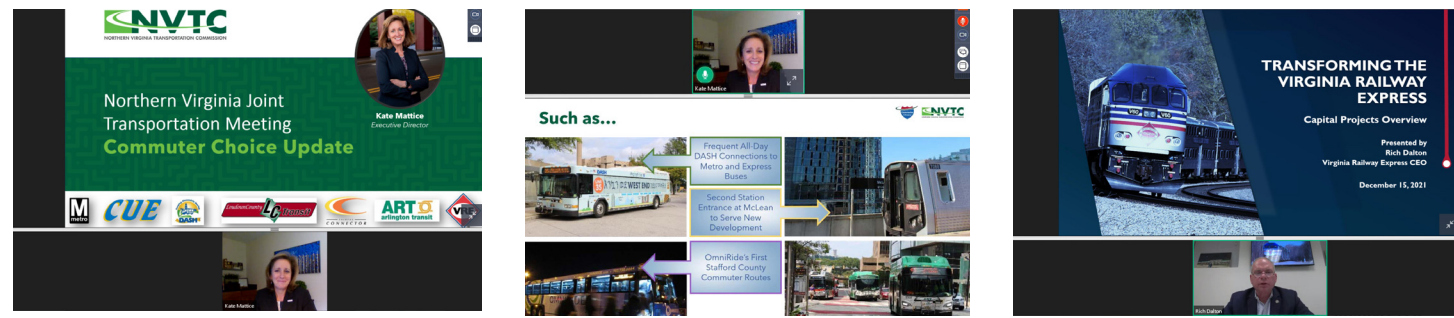
Comments may also be submitted through January 7, 2022 via this online [comment form](#), by voicemail to 703- 721-8270, by email to meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov (please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line) or by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, VDOT, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.



Joint Legislative Briefing returns in person, sounds hopeful note on future of transit

This year's NVTC-PRTC [Joint Legislative Briefing](#) took place at a time when public transit agencies in our region and across the country are reevaluating how to best serve riders as they continue to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly a hundred people gathered in Springfield December 6 to hear from Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation Carlos Monje, Virginia Deputy Transportation Secretary Nick Donohue, Metro Board Chair Paul Smedberg, VRE CEO Rich Dalton and PRTC Executive Director Bob Schneider. Under Secretary Monje gave a breakdown of how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) boosts transit and other transportation infrastructure.

Deputy Secretary Donohue spoke of the significant transportation investments and policy decisions made during the administrations of Govs. Ralph Northam and Terry McAuliffe while Board Chair Smedberg, CEO Dalton and Executive Director Schneider detailed the service changes and financial challenges presented by the major shift in commuting patterns. Schneider called out a new focus on "purpose driven travel" designed to serve all riders who use transit for all trips, not just for those going to and from work. I also want to thank Chair Katie Cristol, as well as PRTC Chair Margaret Franklin for their help in kicking off the event, as well as the many staff folks who worked hard to create and host the briefing.



NVTC receives 'clean' audit findings

Commissioners met with representatives from PBMAres as part of December's Executive Committee and December Commission [meetings](#) to review the results of NVTC's annual audit. PBMAres issued an unqualified (clean) opinion that NVTC's financial statements, in all material respects, fairly and accurately present the financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the remaining fund information, and changes in financial position of NVTC.

PBMAres also issued a clean report on the internal control of NVTC's financial reporting, compliance and other matters. Because NVTC received federal assistance during FY 2021, PBMAres also performed a Single Audit and issued a report on the compliance with the requirements of each federal program, and internal control over compliance related to those federal funds. That report identified no findings. Further, PBMAres did not identify any internal control deficiencies or other findings.



NVTC's recommendations for Metro as the agency recovers from the pandemic

NVTC released the 2021 Report on the Performance and Condition of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in December, which includes key recommendations to leverage federal pandemic relief aid and communicate and encourage a safe return to public transit. This year's report includes 18 recommended strategies for Metro to become more financially sustainable and a more effective transit system and mobility provider. Each of these strategies are framed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an understanding that altered travel patterns will likely linger in the years ahead.

NVTC's 2021 recommendations to Metro include:

- Leverage federal coronavirus relief aid to prevent layoffs, sustain and improve service levels throughout a multi-year recovery period and position WMATA for a sustainable long-term ridership and revenue recovery.
- Communicate and encourage a safe return to transit by highlighting and promoting enhanced safety efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and developing a long-term, post-pandemic marketing and communications strategy to rebuild ridership.
- Implement fare and parking policy changes that improve revenue and ridership, remove barriers to access and retain newly returning riders
- Adapt rail service to anticipate demand during the COVID-19 pandemic and the region's subsequent recovery period while maintaining an equitable, baseline level of service across all Metrorail lines.
- Continue focus on ongoing initiatives to reduce the growth in operating costs and improve operational efficiencies using NVTC's previously recommended strategies in past annual reports on the performance and condition of WMATA.

Major capital accomplishments

The report also notes that Metro's FY 2021 Capital program was the largest in history. Dedicated capital funding has allowed Metro to continue its aggressive ramp up and delivery of capital projects to address long overdue state of good repair needs.

- Platform rehabilitation program nearly complete. The four-year project to rebuild 20 outdoor Metrorail station platforms is nearly complete. Major construction work at Arlington Cemetery and Addison Road stations concluded in the summer with 17 stations completed in total by the fall of 2021
- Metrorail and Metrobus fleet reliability were at an all-time high. Prior to the October 2021 Blue Line derailment, Metrorail and Metrobus saw their highest fleet reliability performance in FY 2021, mainly due to the state of good repair program
- Mobile App and new fare technology introduced across the system. Metro expanded its mobile app to include Android and began installing new faregates at rail stations in FY 2022

This is the fourth annual report in response to NVTC's responsibilities for Metro oversight as established in the Code of Virginia and was made possible by the team lead by Senior Program Manager Andrew D'huyvetter with major contributions from Program Analysts Sophie Spiliotopoulos and Ronnetta Zack-Williams, and Legislative and Administrative Assistant Tenley O'Hara. Read the full report here.





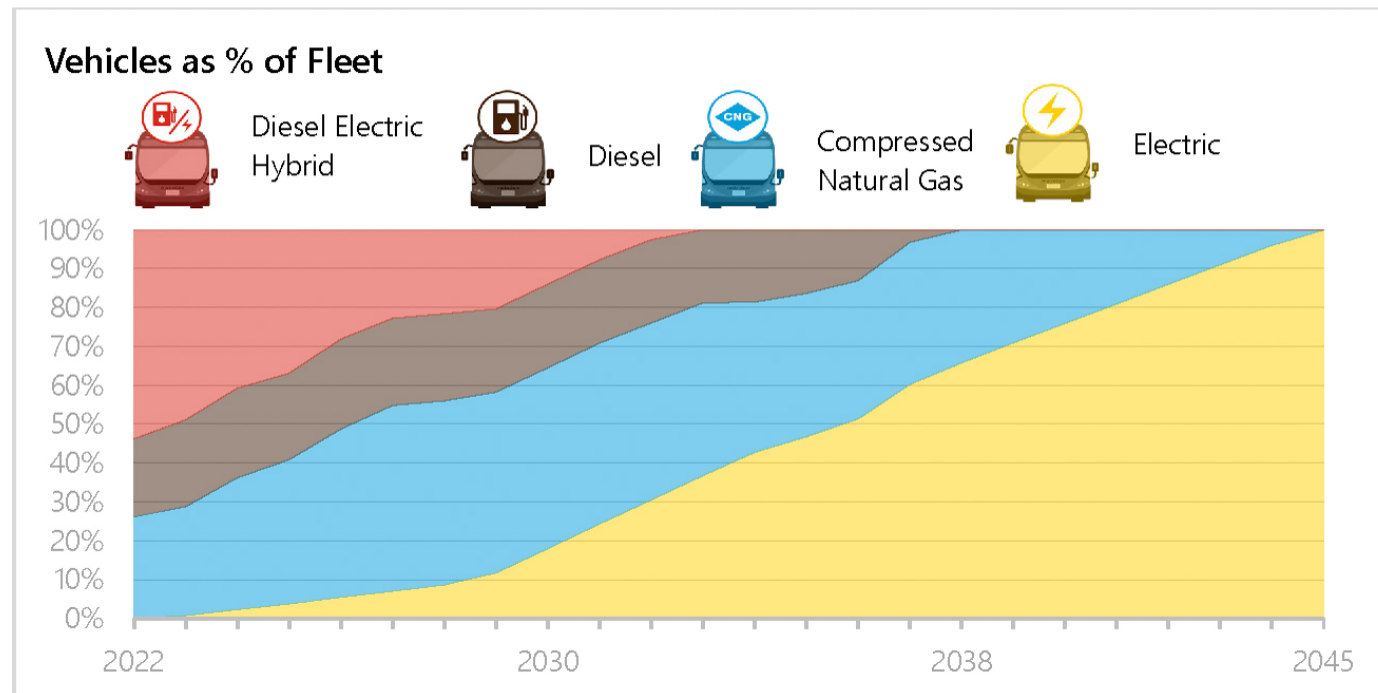
Metro Board adopts new Metrobus, Metrorail fleet plans, Metrorail service standards

The Metro Board of Directors approved several measures December 9 designed to reduce carbon emissions and expand Metrorail service.

Highlights of the Metrobus and Metrorail Fleet Management Plans and Metrorail service standards:

- The Metrobus Fleet Management Plan includes a phased transition to a 100% zero-emission fleet, an expanded articulated bus fleet and a total fleet size of 1,593 vehicles
- The Metrorail Fleet Management Plan outlines the investments required to move to 100% eight-car train operations and 7-minute headways system-wide by 2030, which would include fleet expansion through purchase options in the 8000-Series railcar procurement as well as storage and shop capacity expansions and reconfigurations
- Updated Metrorail service standards set minimum train frequencies, update passenger load standards and direct staff to strive to operate 100% eight-car trains in passenger service

Figure E-3: Projected Share of Vehicles in Metrobus Fleet by Propulsion Technology



NVTC staff swap cookies, presents at holiday celebration

After taking a break last year, we were able to gather staff December 9 to celebrate the holidays. The event featured a cookie swap and the always-fun white elephant gift exchange. We even had a surprise visit from Chair Katie Cristol who celebrated alongside staff. After nearly two years working through the pandemic, it was nice to take a few minutes to celebrate our successes and look forward to a brighter new year.



WELCOME Adam Hager



I want to welcome Adam Hager who joined our staff in December as Senior Program Analyst. Adam most recently served as a Transportation Planner at FAMPO, the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, where he managed their most recent long range transportation plan update and coordinated FAMPO's SMART SCALE applications. Adam will be supporting both day-to-day operations as well as strategic planning for our growing Commuter Choice Program and joins us as we work our way through the I-66 Round Five application period.

Chair Katie Cristol and
Commissioners pose
for a group photo
December 2021



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