

In recent months I've used this space to write about the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating effects on public transit and our efforts to shore up the service providers that serve Northern Virginia and the jurisdictions that help fund them. While adapting to rapid shifts in how we travel the region and how we work, the staff at NVTC have never stopped looking forward to what happens once society begins to return to normal.

We will dive into an ambitious agenda for the final months of 2020. We'll take important steps with our Commuter Choice program – soliciting public comment and selecting projects for Round Four of Commuter Choice in the I-66 Corridor and opening the Round Two call for projects for Commuter Choice in the I-395/95 Corridor. We'll produce and deliver the third Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA and the first-ever report from the 3% Cap Working Group. Throughout the summer, members of the WMATA program team will continue coordination efforts involving the Metrorail shutdown. They'll provide a summary report on the shutdown in the fall.

The NVTC Transit Resource Center will produce a host of reports, including the Annual Transit Performance Report. The Transit Resource Center will also be prepared to begin Phase 4 of the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit Study, pending a decision on funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The Transit Technology team continues to work with WMATA and other regional transit providers on new fare payment systems and will provide an update to the Northern Virginia Regional Face Collection Strategic Plan. On the legislative side, we will develop our state and federal legislative agenda for 2021 and cohost our annual legislative briefing with PRTC.

All of this groundwork ensures that NVTC will be prepared when people are ready to return to work, to school, to shops and restaurants and to the trains and buses that help get them there.

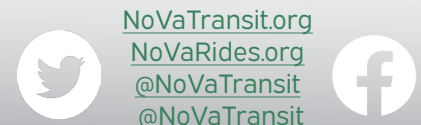


John A. Mathis
Executive Director

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



Key Dates

- July 15 - 16 Commonwealth Transportation Board
- July 16 - NVTC WMATA Committee
- July 17 - VRE Operations Board
- Sept. 3 - NVTC Commission

NVTC swears in new Commissioners

Four new Commissioners from the House of Delegates joined NVTC last month. At the June Commission meeting, Chair Katie Cristol swore in Virginia House Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn (Fairfax County), Del. Paul Krizek (Fairfax County), Del. David Reid (Loudoun) and Del. Rip Sullivan (Arlington-Fairfax County). Executive Director Kate Mattice and Board Secretary Rhonda Gilchest provided detailed orientation sessions for the new Commissioners prior to the Commission meeting.



Reconstruction of Orange Line Metrorail stations proceeding on schedule

Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld told the Metro Board of Directors that the rebuilding of four Orange Line stations in Northern Virginia is on schedule, despite the need for contractors to adopt physical distancing requirements due to COVID-19. The four stations, as well as five on the Silver Line, closed in late May as part of Metro's Platform Improvement Project. The stations will be closed for the summer, with the reopening date to be announced.

According to Metro, in the early weeks, construction crews focused on demolition work, including the removal of all tiles from the platforms, mezzanines and pedestrian bridges. They also prepared for the pouring of new concrete platform edges, which included the installation of supportive shoring.

Shuttle ridership levels were low during the first weeks of the shutdown. Metro says buses were not crowded and lines to board the buses were short. Bus shuttle ridership equaled 5% of normal rail ridership at the closed stations.

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Dunn Loring (top); West Falls Church (middle); Vienna (bottom). Courtesy: Metro



NVTC-led team wins VTA award

The Virginia Transit Association has named our NoVaRides marketing campaign as winner of the award Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing - Regional. Last year, NVTC partnered with VRE, DASH, OmniRide and Fairfax Connector for the first-ever joint transit marketing campaign in Northern Virginia. The campaign, known as NoVaRides, launched following the summer-long shutdown of six Metrorail stations and encouraged commuters to ride public transportation. NoVaRides was heard on radio, and seen in movie theaters, online and in social media. A new dedicated website with a trip-planning tool and links to all regional transit systems supported the ads. The campaign's advertisements directed people to "find their best route" at novarides.org. The award is scheduled to be formally handed out at a luncheon this fall.



NVTC and Alexandria host disadvantaged business enterprise event

Grants Manager and DBE Officer, Brittany Sumpter, partnered with the City of Alexandria, to host their first ever "Virtual DBE Public Consultation" event. As a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, NVTC is committed to ensuring that our sub-recipients continue to level the playing field by providing small businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals a fair opportunity to compete for their federally funded-transportation contracts.

The consultation solicited feedback and criticism of Alexandria's FY 2021 – 2023 Proposed DBE Goal Methodology from representatives of minority, women's, and community organizations in the area, which is required by FTA. Among



those in attendance were representatives from the Alexandria Small Business Development Center, Northern Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, WMATA Small Business Programs Department and VDOT Business Opportunity Development Center. The input received from this consultation will be taken into consideration and used to support Alexandria's FY 2021 – 2023 DBE Goal, which NVTC will bring before the Commission in July for consent to submit to FTA.

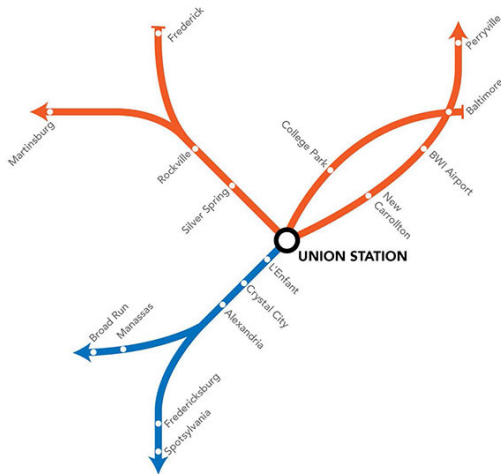
Working group assembled on 3% WMATA budget cap

The recently-enacted Virginia budget directs the chair of NVTC to convene a working group to review the impact of Virginia's 3% cap on WMATA's operating assistance payments. In response to the budget provision and consultation with the NVTC WMATA Committee, NVTC Chair Katie Cristol invited local government representatives, private sector stakeholders and DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell to participate in the working group. The working group is tasked with providing a report on the usefulness of the cap and identifying additional items that could be excluded from the cap to the chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Appropriations Committees by November 10, 2020.

The working group will meet over the summer to discuss its recommendations on the cap. Prior to the report's transmittal to the appropriate committee chairs in the General Assembly, the working group's efforts and findings will be presented to the NVTC WMATA Committee for review prior to consideration by the Commission this fall.

Study examines Virginia-Maryland commuter train connections

A study looking at the demand for what's known as "run-through" service for VRE and MARC commuter trains found that such rail service could attract up to 16,200 trips per day by 2030. This represents an increase of 2,300 trips over the 13,900 "run-through equivalent" trips taken today by VRE and MARC riders. The analysis suggests that the largest commuter rail run-through market exists between the Penn & Camden lines and VRE Shared Line. By 2030, run-through service could attract approximately 11,600 trips along this corridor between Baltimore and Alexandria, increasing to 12,400 by 2040. The analysis suggests limited demand for run-through service south of Alexandria. NVTC's Dan Goldfarb sits on the technical committee for the study commissioned by the Transportation Planning Board and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



Stickers show which seats to avoid on a VRE train (above) and where to stand at a station (right) to ensure proper distancing. *Courtesy: VRE*

passengers should sit and stand in railcars. Decals will guide riders to window seats in every other row to ensure proper distancing.

Hand sanitizer dispensers will soon be available on trains and at stations. Passengers will find them on platforms, in station waiting rooms, and near the priority seating on trains. VRE will continue to remind riders of the importance of good hand hygiene through social media and signage on trains and at stations. Face coverings remain mandatory under the Governor's recent executive order.

While ticket vending machines at VRE stations are cleaned twice daily, the [VRE Mobile](#) app is an ideal option for riders who prefer not to use the machines. VRE Mobile, which supports SmartBenefits, makes it easy to purchase, validate and display tickets on a smartphone. Individual assistance setting up a VRE Mobile account is available.

Decals lead the way for distancing on VRE platforms and trains

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is taking additional precautions to ensure the health and safety of its passengers and train crews. VRE is working to make social distancing on its platforms and trains as simple as possible, providing hand sanitizer, and promoting VRE Mobile as an alternative to ticket vending machines.

VRE will install platform decals to support social distancing. On-board graphics will indicate where