



Executive Director Newsletter

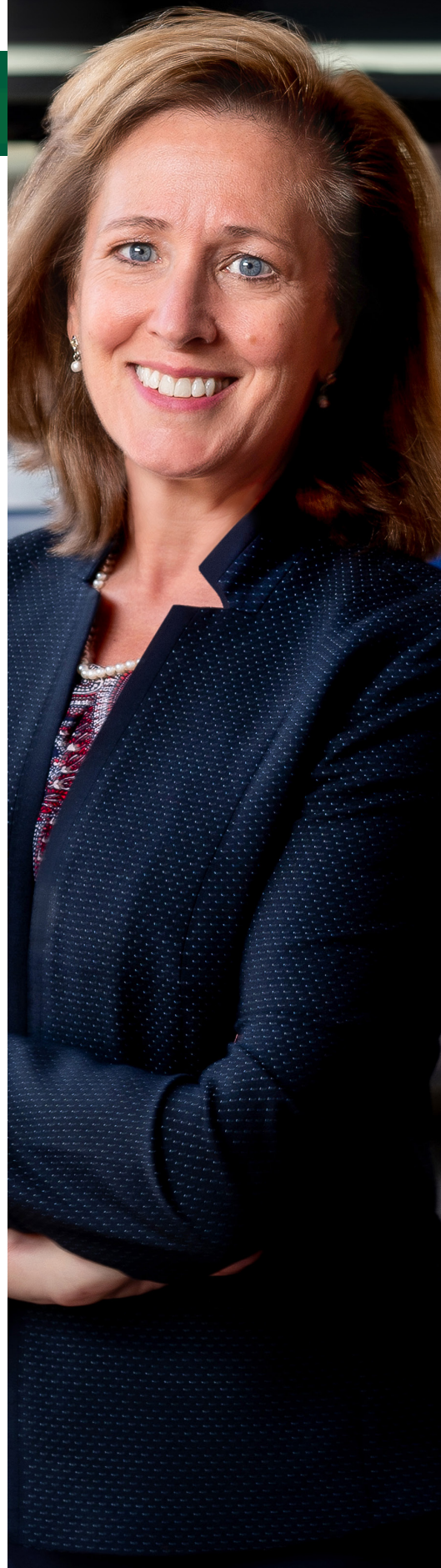


  @NoVaTransit

NoVaTransit.org
NoVaRides.org

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

July 2022



A Message from Kate Mattice

Access to transit in Northern Virginia is about to grow significantly and groundwork is being laid for future expansion and modernization. We look forward to the opening of seven new Metrorail stations—six as part of Phase 2 of the Silver Line and an “infill” station at Potomac Yard on the Blue and Yellow Lines. Both projects have been years in the making and Metro expects each will open this fall. In addition, DASH, Fairfax Connector and Loudoun Transit will realign bus service to complement the station openings.

Beyond the new stations, our Commuter Choice program will help make it faster to walk to two existing stations. Commuter Choice funding supports planned new entrances at Ballston-MU and McLean which will improve access and shorten walking distances. In addition, Arlington County is moving forward with a second entrance at Crystal City station close to the future expanded and relocated Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station.

Speaking of VRE, as we mark the 30th anniversary of the start of commuter rail service this summer, the celebration reminds us that the work we do now pays dividends for decades to come. The planning for VRE service began almost a decade before trains started rolling down the tracks. Nearly 40 years later we are on the brink of another major advancement for VRE. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VRPA) is holding [public meetings](#) and conducting a survey about the future Long Bridge, which will provide a dedicated bridge for passenger trains and allow for all-day and weekend service. As former Commissioner and VRE Operations Board Chair said at a recent event, VRE is, “The little train that thought it could, knew it could and did.”

It's shaping up to be an exciting year for transit in our region, as we continue to be a model for the nation.


Executive Director

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Save the Date

July 15
Virginia Railway Express
Operations Board

July 19-20
Commonwealth
Transportation Board

July 21
Virginia Passenger Rail
Authority Board

July 21
WMATA Committee

September 1
Commission Meeting

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Virginia Railway Express (VRE) celebrated a milestone June 22 by marking 30 years since the start of commuter rail service. NVTC co-owns VRE with the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). During the commemoration at Manassas Station, longtime Commissioner and VRE Operations Board Chair Sharon Bulova [remarked](#) that the journey to start up the commuter railroad was sometimes bumpy. "Welcome to a celebration that many people 30 years ago would never have imagined would take place today. The VRE is a story of being resilient. It is a story of being knocked down, but always getting back up. It's the story of Commissioners from NVTC, PRTC and the Operations Board who never gave up, even when the obstacles looked impossible," said Bulova, who is known as "the mother of VRE." She added, "riders and operators of the service feel a special ownership of the little train that thought it could, knew it could and did."

NVTC started a feasibility study for a commuter railroad in 1984 and PRTC was founded two years later to help launch VRE. To this day, NVTC and PRTC support and appoint members to the VRE Operations Board. The two Commissions jointly own all the assets, including the rolling stock and stations. Looking toward the future, VRE is working with the [Virginia Passenger Rail Authority](#) and the [Transforming Rail in Virginia](#) initiative to build a new Long Bridge over the Potomac River, which will allow for expanded daily and weekend trains.







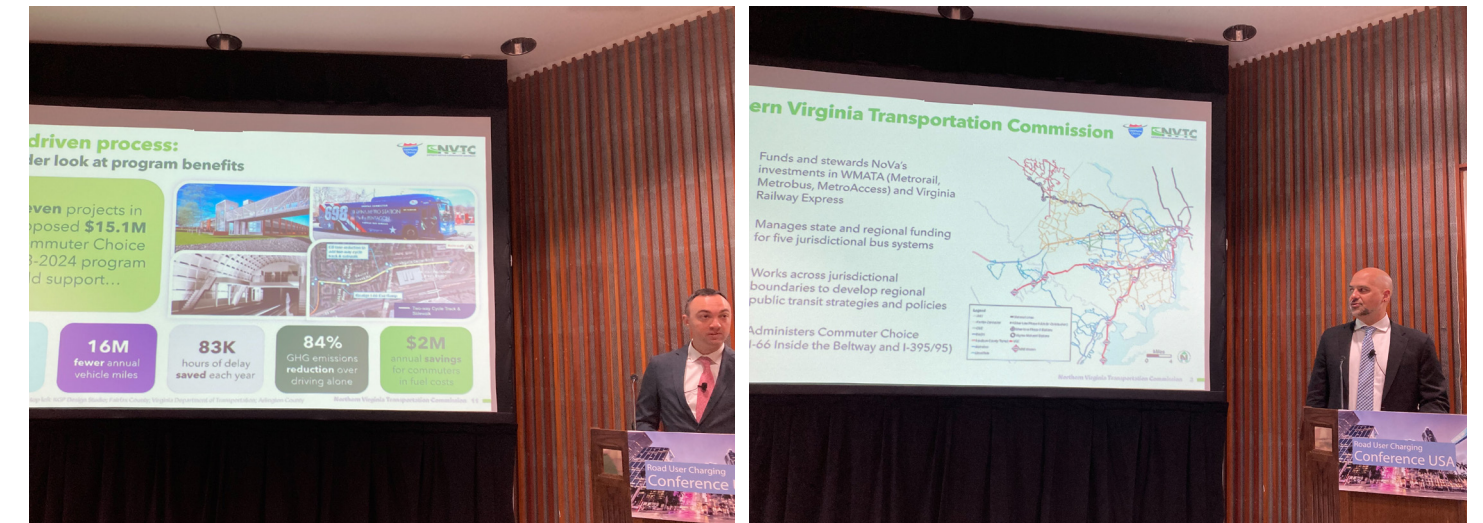
CTB approves I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2023-2024 Program of Projects

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) unanimously approved the FY 2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program June 21, which included the \$15.1 million I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2023-2024 Program of Projects that the Commission adopted earlier in June. The program includes seven projects that support the I-66 corridor improvement goals of moving more people and creating viable, effective transportation options, as well as NVTC’s program administration and oversight activities for the two-year period. The Commuter Choice team has distributed draft Standard Project Agreements to the five funding recipients and is working to execute the agreements so that implementation of funded projects may begin promptly once the new fiscal

year begins July 1. The next Call for Projects in the I-395/95 corridor, for projects to be funded in FY 2024-2025, will open later this year. As a further improvement to our applicant engagement approach, the Commuter Choice team is beginning informal conversations with eligible applicants about capital projects that could be a good fit with Commuter Choice’s eligibility and goals. Capital projects can provide long-lasting benefits to I-395/95 corridor commuters and help the program maintain its support for high-performing transit services, given the limitation in the program [Memorandum of Agreement](#) that no more than 50% of available program funds may be allocated to transit operations over a nine-year period.

	Applicant	I-66 Commuter Choice FY 2023-2024 Application Title	Funding Request
1	City of Manassas Park	Manassas Park VRE Station Parking Garage	\$2,500,000
2	Arlington County	Ballston-MU Metrorail West Entrance	\$4,500,000
3	OmniRide	Renewal of Bus Service from Gainesville to Pentagon and Navy Yard	\$2,560,449
4	Fairfax County	Renewal of Bus Service from Vienna Metrorail Station to Pentagon	\$1,232,850
5	OmniRide	Renewal of Bus Service from Haymarket to Rosslyn	\$947,554
6	Prince William County	TDM Strategy - Fare Buy-Down on I-66 Commuter Bus Service	\$650,000
7	Fairfax County	Trail Access to Vienna Metrorail Station	\$2,200,000
	NVTC	Program Administration and Oversight	\$525,000
		Total	\$15,115,853

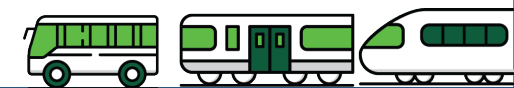
Commuter Choice team presents program to road user charging experts



Commuter Choice Senior Program Manager Ben Owen and Senior Program Analyst Adam Hager presented at the [Road User Charging Conference USA](#) in Miami on June 13 to a worldwide delegation of experts in the tolling, congestion pricing and intelligent transportation systems industry. They detailed how the Commuter Choice program operates, the public-private and state-regional-local partnerships involved, the program’s rigorous performance management framework and how NVTC ensures that the program delivers maximum value to toll payers.

Ben and Adam detailed how the program invests toll revenues defensibly into a broad range

of multimodal projects, a topic of particular interest to conference attendees and addressed questions from conference participants about the types of efforts that the program can fund and the potential transferability of elements of the program framework to other parts of the country. They, along with Director of Programs and Policy Allan Fye, learned the latest in how regions across the U.S. and Europe are implementing road user charging programs to reach climate goals, sustain and expand revenue for major transportation investments and develop more equitable transportation networks.





metro takes control of Silver Line Phase 2

Metro's Interim GM/CEO Andy Off [announced](#) June 23 that the agency had taken provisional control of Phase 2 of the Silver Line from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), which was in charge of construction. The [extension](#) includes six new stations, 11.4 miles of new track and a new rail yard. The agency will begin a series of tests and has not announced an opening day.

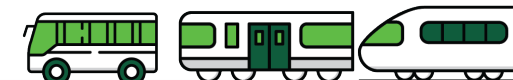
"We are one step closer to extending our service offerings to customers that have long awaited

access to Metro," said Board Chairman Paul C. Smedberg in a [statement](#). "While there is still more work to do, achieving this milestone towards opening the Silver Line Extension will create jobs, improve economic vitality and increase ridership for the region. We appreciate the support and understanding of our jurisdictional partners and customers as we work towards project completion."



Paul Smedberg elected to 4th term as Metro Board chair

The Metro Board of Directors [unanimously](#) reelected Paul C. Smedberg as Chair during its meeting June 23, extending the leadership role he's occupied since January 2019. Mr. Smedberg serves as the Virginia governor's appointee to the Board. Mr. Smedberg has served as an NVTC Commissioner since 2006 and chaired the Commission in 2014 and 2018. He first joined the Metro Board as an alternate in 2016. Our congratulations to him on his reappointment.



Legislative Committee hears GA and Metro updates

NVTC's [Legislative and Policy Committee](#) met May 25 to reflect on the 2022 Virginia General Assembly session and initiate discussions on our 2023 Legislative and Policy Agenda. NVTC's government affairs liaison Aimee Perron Seibert reported on final FY 2023 budget deliberations leading up to its passage June 1. The committee was attuned any changes that may impact transit funding beyond the bill to eliminate the grocery tax, which passed earlier this year. The committee also discussed potential funding requests that could support Metro operations in the future.

Executive Director Kate Mattice also updated the committee on the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee ([TSDAC](#)) deliberations that will inform future formulas for the allocation of Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT). DRPT's changes will alter the schedule and scope of transit strategic plan, modify some elements of its MERIT discretionary capital program, and also examine reserving funding for matching federal grant awards.



Metro releases shuttle bus plan for upcoming Blue/Yellow Lines construction

Free Shuttle Service

Effective: September 10 - October 22, 2022

EXPRESS SHUTTLES

Blue Line Express: Franconia - Pentagon
Between Franconia-Springfield & Pentagon

Yellow Line Express: Huntington - Pentagon
Between Huntington & Pentagon

LOCAL SHUTTLES

Blue Line Shuttle: Franconia-Springfield - National Airport
Between Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St-Old Town, Braddock Rd, & National Airport

Yellow Line Shuttle: Huntington - Crystal City
Between Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St-Old Town, Braddock Rd, & Crystal City

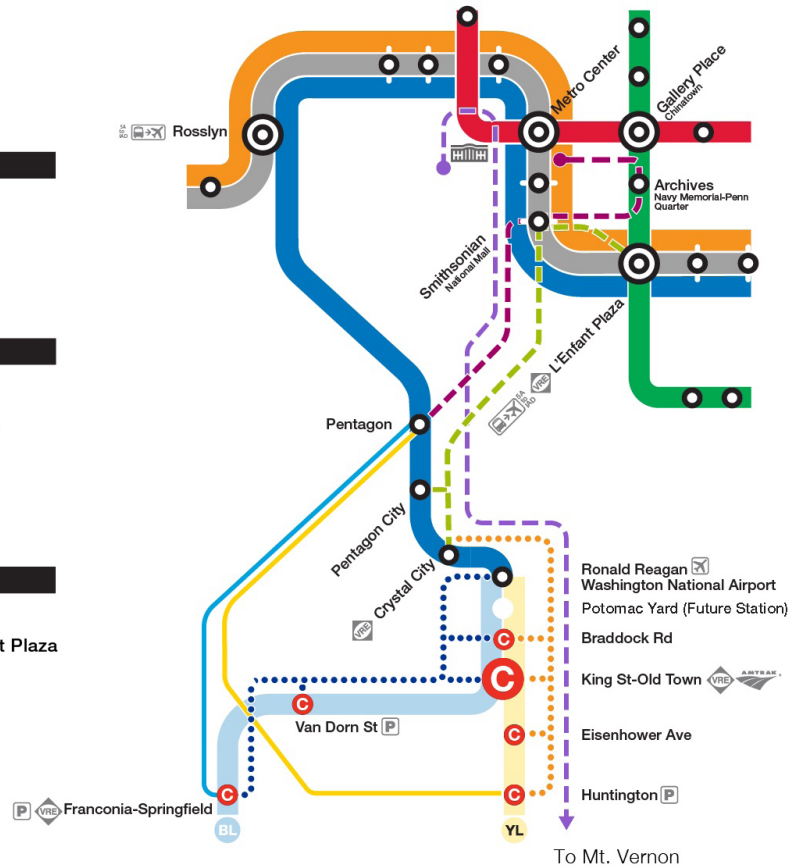
DC SHUTTLES (Weekday Rush Hour Only)

VA-DC Shuttle 1: Crystal City - L'Enfant
Between Crystal City, Pentagon City, Smithsonian, & L'Enfant Plaza

VA-DC Shuttle 2: Pentagon - Archives
Between Pentagon, Smithsonian, & Archives

VA-DC Shuttle 3: Mt. Vernon - Potomac Park (11Y Route)
Between Mt. Vernon, Alexandria, & Potomac Park (Peak Direction Only)

Station Closed | **Station Open** | **Transfer Station** | **No BL YL service south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport**
ADA shuttles available upon request between impacted stations



Northern Virginia Service

Plan your trip at NoVaRides.org

Metro Station Closed Sept 10 - Oct 22

DASH (Alexandria) Fare-Free

103 & 104 (Weekday Rush Hour Service Only)
35 (7 Days/Week)

Fairfax Connector

393/394 & 395/396 (Weekday Rush Hour Service Only)

OmniRide

D-100, D-200, D-300, L-100, L-200, RS South Route 1, MC Montclair (Weekdays Only)

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

Trains to L'Enfant Plaza and Union Station (Weekday Rush Hour Service Only)



Metro released its travel alternatives plan in June for the upcoming construction work that will shut down the Blue and Yellow Lines. There will be no rail service south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station for six weeks starting September 10 to allow for the tie-in of the Potomac Yard Station. Metro will provide a mix

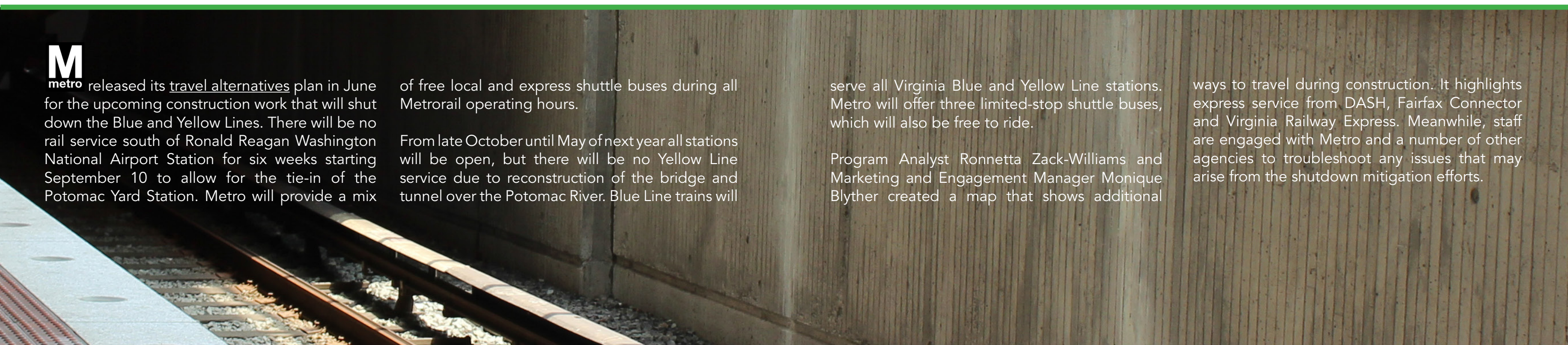
of free local and express shuttle buses during all Metrorail operating hours.

From late October until May of next year all stations will be open, but there will be no Yellow Line service due to reconstruction of the bridge and tunnel over the Potomac River. Blue Line trains will

serve all Virginia Blue and Yellow Line stations. Metro will offer three limited-stop shuttle buses, which will also be free to ride.

Program Analyst Ronnetta Zack-Williams and Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther created a map that shows additional

ways to travel during construction. It highlights express service from DASH, Fairfax Connector and Virginia Railway Express. Meanwhile, staff are engaged with Metro and a number of other agencies to troubleshoot any issues that may arise from the shutdown mitigation efforts.



WMATA Committee sets strategy for annual report

The NVTC WMATA Committee convened [June 16](#) for the first of two work sessions on the 2022 Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA. WMATA Senior Program Manager Andrew D’huyvetter presented NVTC staff’s proposal for the Commission to focus this year’s report on five strategies to reduce the growth in costs and improve efficiencies at Metro:

- New financial operating model
- Labor costs
- Role of Metrobus and local transit operators
- Fare evasion
- Rider confidence

After the presentation, committee members provided feedback on the five proposed strategies, recommended two additional strategy areas, and requested that staff include a discussion of the more immediate challenges

in the FY 2024 Metro budget as well as longer-term structural issues with Metro funding. Staff will further refine and develop the strategies for committee feedback at their July meeting. The committee also received an overview of the peer transit agency funding research effort that NVTC transit fellow Jonathan Bonilla is conducting within the NVTC WMATA Program and a preview of Metro’s mitigation plan for Yellow Line bridge/tunnel rehabilitation and Potomac Yard track tie-in from Program Analyst Ronnetta Zack-Williams.

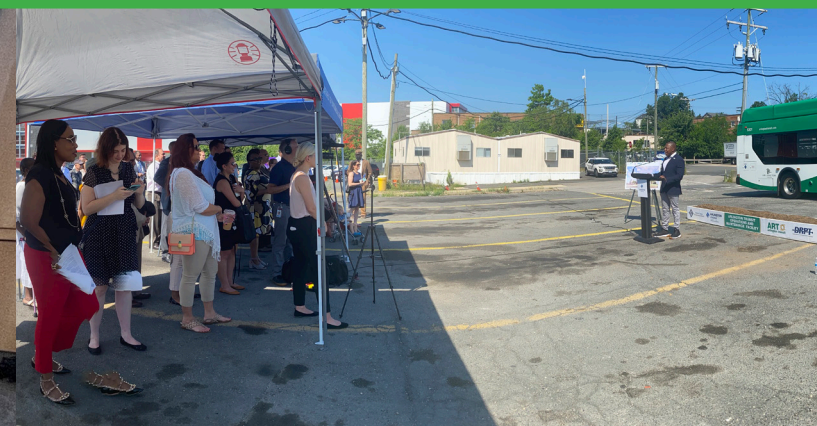


Groundbreaking to help ART's continued growth

Arlington County [broke ground](#) for an Arlington Transit (ART) [operations and maintenance facility](#) June 15 that will allow the transit agency to continue growing in a sustainable manner. The ceremony marked the culmination of eight years of work. ART has significantly increased routes and hours of service in the last ten years and county officials say the agency will continue to grow of the next two decades. The future facility in the Green Valley neighborhood will include maintenance, operations, an administration building, a surface

parking lot for the buses and an employee parking garage. Construction is expected to wrap up in 2025.

NVTC Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther and Transit Resource Center Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony were on hand as officials from the county, ART, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority celebrated the groundbreaking.





NVTC receives marketing award at VTA conference

Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther accepted NVTC's second Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Transit Marketing – Large System award at the 45th annual [VTA conference](#) in downtown Roanoke June 1. The award, honoring NVTC's 2021 "[Moving Forward Together](#)" marketing campaign, comes just two days after the launch of our regional "[Re-Discover Your Ride](#)," campaign. The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provided a grant for the early 2021 campaign, which included local matches from the

cities of Falls Church and Fairfax, Arlington and Fairfax Counties, OmniRide and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). DASH, Metro and OmniRide were also recognized during the event. Former Metro GM/CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld received the Transit Professional Distinguished Service award, OmniRide was recognized for best Community Program and DASH walked away with two honors, one for special marketing and community outreach and the other for unsung hero, bus operator Jovan Jones.

Executive Director Kate Mattice participated in a discussion about Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) at the board of directors meeting. Attendees also heard from VTA President and City of Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson, Roanoke City Councilman and Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) Chair Joseph Cobb and American Public Transit Association (APTA) Vice President Art Guzzetti.

NVTC Chair Canek Aguirre, Commuter Choice Senior Program Analyst Adam Hager, Transit Resource Center Senior Program Manager Xavier Harmony, Program Analysts Ronnetta Zack-Williams and Sophie Spiliotopoulos and transit fellow Silas Sullivan joined me at the conference and participated in live transit technology demos, round table discussions and a tour of the [Virginia Museum of Transportation](#). Finally, a special thanks to Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman, for serving on the judging panel for this year's VTA awards.



Ep. 8: The Future of Transit

think REGIONALLY



with
Robert McCartney



Paul Smedberg



Kate Mattice



Joe McAndrew

Kate Mattice discusses bus innovations on regional podcast

Executive Director Kate Mattice detailed plans to develop Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines in Northern Virginia and how bus systems are adapting to pandemic-related travel changes on a [podcast](#) published by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). Kate spoke with retired Washington Post writer Robert McCartney, who now hosts the "Think Regionally" [podcast](#) for MWCOG. Kate noted that, "Bus was the shining star of a transportation alternative during the height of COVID. It continued to serve people in Northern Virginia, D.C. and our region."

The same episode also includes a discussion with Metro Board Chair and NVTC Commissioner Paul Smedberg and Joe McAndrew from the Greater Washington Partnership.

TSDAC weighs statewide transit funding formula

Executive Director Kate attended the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee ([TSDAC](#)) meeting in Richmond June 10. Ms. Mattice serves as the representative for the Virginia Transit Association. We have been convening monthly since March to evaluate the Commonwealth's Capital and Operating funding allocation strategies. This month the committed continued discussion of proposed changes to the MERIT Capital policy and the Transit Strategic Plan guidelines. Members also considered possible MERIT Operating Assistance scenarios. The Committee's final findings and recommendations will be brought to the Commonwealth Transportation Board for approval later this year.



Re-DISCOVER YOUR RIDE

marketing campaign launches

A new regional marketing campaign to encourage riders to return to transit launched May 30, encouraging people to "re-discover" their ride as The campaign can be heard on radio stations WAMU and WTOP and, for the first time in Spanish, on WLZL "El Zol." The campaign also includes online and social media ads, video and radio streaming, email marketing and WAZE. Marketing and Engagement Manager Monique Blyther and Communications and Public Affairs Manager Matt Friedman worked with staff at the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to localize the ads for the Northern Virginia market. DRPT provided a grant to support the campaign, which includes a 20% match from our partners at the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, the counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudon, and OmniRide and Virginia Railway Express.

The ads encourage viewers to visit novarides.org, which IT Manager Melissa Walker recently redesigned to match the look of the campaign. You can watch the video ads in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) on our [YouTube channel](#). Don't forget to hit "subscribe" while you're there.



Plan Your Trip



We've got this.
So you can relax and ride!



Two fellows join NVTC for the summer

NVTC recently brought on two transit fellows for the summer – Jonathan Bonilla and Daniel Segura. Jonathan is working on his Master of City and Regional Planning degree at Rutgers University. While at NVTC, he will be conducting research on various funding models for transit agencies across the United States and the world. This effort will support ongoing research in NVTC's WMATA Program. Daniel is working on his Bachelor of Arts in Public and Urban Affairs degree at Virginia Tech. During his tenure at

NVTC, he will be documenting existing and planned bus priority efforts, such as transit only lanes, transit signal priority and queue jump lanes, within the NVTC district. This research will support ongoing efforts within NVTC's Transit Resource Center.

We also thank the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for their ongoing support of our transit fellow program which helps train the next generation of transit professionals.

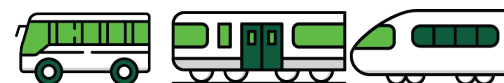




Wishing good luck to Patricia Happ

After working at NVTC for over six-and-a-half years, Transit Technology Senior Program Manager Patricia Happ announced that she is leaving NVTC to work for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation. Throughout her tenure, Patricia led NVTC's Commuter Choice Program, Transit Technology Program, as well

as Regional Fare Collection and zero-emission bus efforts while serving as a mentor for other NVTC staff and interns. Patricia recently became a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). We wish her the best of luck and I am sure our paths will cross again.



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