In February, I was struck by the value of regional collaboration and top-notch technical knowledge in improving travel choices for Virginians.

Here’s what stood out:

- DRPT grant applications based on $893 million in eligible costs for WMATA, VRE and local systems.
- February’s standing-room-only, joint meeting with PRTC on regional bus; VRE; WMATA safety, service and reliability; and budget and financial management issues.
- Collaboration with the jurisdictions in Planning District 8 to launch a 40-year multimodal program for the I-66 corridor.
- Emergency planning for transit at the Pentagon, assessment of quarterly ridership data, and a financial plan for new transit service on a 14.5-mile stretch of Route 7.
- Two reports - Business Making the Case for Transit and Next Steps on BRT to Serve the region (coming soon).

With these activities and more, we will help make the ride better for more than a million commuters in the region and businesses from Spotsylvania to Loudoun.

Kelley Coyner
Executive Director
Executive Director Report

Transform 66 Multimodal Project

March Update

Governor McAuliffe announced a compromise that allows the Commonwealth to move forward with widening I-66 and maintains the multimodal component of Transform 66. NVTC will use toll revenues to increase transit service benefitting the users of I-66 Inside the Beltway and enhance carpool and other TDM strategies throughout the corridor.

The Commonwealth plans to start the environmental reviews and design work necessary to widen this spring. Construction of an additional eastbound lane is expected to start in 2018 and open to traffic in late 2019. VDOT reports that the construction will not take any homes or businesses and will be completely within the existing right of way. Widening will be funded with un-programmed funds, the result of increased revenues from the recently enacted federal FAST Act and an updated state revenue forecast. Toll revenues will not be used to fund the widening.

The Commission will take action on the Call for Components and related matters on March 3.

Read: VDOT’s Inside the Beltway Fact Sheet
      Governor’s I-66 Press Release

Transform 66 Design Public Hearings
(Hosted by VDOT)

Monday, March 7, 2016
Washington-Lee High School

Tuesday, March 8, 2016
Eagle Ridge Middle School

Wednesday, March 9, 2016
VDOT Northern Virginia District

Transform 66 Multimodal Project Timeline

March 3
Approval of:
• Evaluation criteria and prioritization scoring
• Call for Components
• Advertisement of public hearing

March 24
Applications due

April 4
Public hearing advertised

May 5
Public hearing
NVTC approval of FY 2017 component list

May 17
Component list to CTB

June 15
CTB approval of FY 2017 component list

July
Standard grant agreements executed
NVTC Programs and Projects Update

Envision Route 7

In April, NVTC Commissioners will be briefed on the recommended preferred alternative for Envision Route 7. The public will have an opportunity to review the recommended mode and alignment as well as the funding strategy at meetings tentatively scheduled for the week of April 11. The NVTC team is finalizing its analysis and funding strategy for the 14-mile stretch of Route 7 between Alexandria and Tysons. High quality transit on this historic thoroughfare will serve about 9,000 new riders.

Over the coming weeks, NVTC will further engage stakeholders through its Envision Route 7 website and social media and brief elected officials, transportation groups and staff in the affected jurisdictions. NVTC will also brief the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Transit Means Business

At its meeting in Richmond, NVTC released Business Making the Case for Transit, which provides an overview of the Transit Means Business program and its statewide importance. The report shares research into how transit supports economic competitiveness in Virginia, and tells the stories of businesses that value transit. Specifically, the document includes:

- Roundtable Report on Transit Means Business Forum
- Case Profiles
- Study: Transit & the NoVa Economy
- Study: Transit & Job Access in Northern Virginia

Financial / Grants Management

On Feb. 1, NVTC submitted grant applications to DRPT for operating and capital assistance based on $893 million in eligible costs. The grants – which would help fund WMATA, VRE and local systems – are essential to the successful operation and expansion of our transit systems. Here are key stats for FY 2016. We expect FY 2017 to be similar:

- $226M in total assistance
- 40 percent of the total is for capital funding for buses, railcars, fare boxes, hybrid bus batteries and bus shelters; the rest is for operating expenses
- $23M capital and $20M operating assistance for NoVa bus systems
- $14M capital, to match federal grants, and $9M operating assistance for VRE
- $61M capital and $99M operating assistance for WMATA

Emergency Preparedness

Station Plans

NVTC continues to develop station-specific plans. Eight stations have been reviewed to date. The Transit Emergency Preparedness Group continued work on Pentagon Station plan in February and March.

NVTC’s Fellows are mapping bus, bridge and pedestrian routes and gathering locations for each of the 25 stations in Virginia. These are key tools for planning and for a response. We aim to make these available electronically when they are complete.

Exercises and Training

WMATA and the City of Alexandria will conduct a full-scale emergency response drill on March 13 outside the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail (continued on page 4)
Station. The boots on the ground exercise will allow regional first responders to provide emergency response training and familiarization. Participation in such exercises integrates NVTC transit emergency preparedness plans into regional emergency planning efforts.

NVTC’s Kate Mattice and Laurel Hammig have attended tabletop exercises to test station-based emergency response plans for facilities in Alexandria and Fairfax.

Commission Work Session

NVTC, along with representatives from the emergency management community, will report on regional transit emergency preparedness at the April meeting. We will review progress made to date and preview activities designed to fully integrate the planning activities in emergency preparedness programs in NoVa and the National Capital Region.

Regional Bus Gap Analysis

To better understand how bus transit is serving the region and to assess future opportunities for high capacity bus service, NVTC is conducting a series of geospatial-based analyses. Last fall, NVTC mapped job accessibility in the region, showing the number of jobs within a 45-minute commute by transit as well as regionally defined activity centers. New NVTC maps will help the region visualize opportunities for Bus Rapid Transit. These maps highlight the current, planned and proposed Bus Rapid Transit networks in Northern Virginia and identify the current, planned, and proposed managed lane (HOT) facilities where there are opportunities for expanded commuter and express bus services.

Next Generation Fare Payment

Following the February 12 receipt of cost estimates, NVTC met first with its regional partners and then with WMATA and Accenture to evaluate the cost estimates and proposed implementation schedule. WMATA has accepted two elements of the NEPP pilot - Metrobus and Metrorail. Full acceptance of all elements of the pilot is a prerequisite for WMATA to proceed with the project. NVTC continues to detail concerns regarding the cost effectiveness and regional implementation of the project.

Concurrently, NVTC is exploring possibilities for an interim solution to address the immediate need for functional fare boxes. WMATA is looking to pilot an interim solution and is researching the implications of that pilot on the quantities and costs that were quoted to the regional partners last fall.
Transportation Planning Board

In February, the Transportation Planning Board reviewed additions to the Constrained Long Range Plan, including the Transform 66 Multimodal Project and the I-395 HOT lanes extension from Duke Street to Eads Street. Virginia TPB board members voiced strong support for using dedicated revenues from the extension of the HOT lanes on I-395 to fund transit and TDM projects in the corridor. Maryland submitted changes to HOV policies on I-270 and US 50.

Project submissions for the Transportation Land Use Connection (TLC) program are due April 1. The program funds small studies or projects between $30,000 and $60,000, such as Loudoun County’s 2015 station access project. A recent evaluation documents TLC program benefits and recommends that the Board increase funding for it.

Commonwealth Transportation Board

The Commonwealth Transportation Board met February 17 and heard presentations on:

- FY2016 Transportation Alternatives Program applications
- Issuance of Series 2016 Capital Projects Revenue Bonds
- I-395 Express Lanes extension
- State of Good Repair Prioritization Process
- HB2 projects and scores

The CTB affirmed the Commonwealth’s support of the Virginia Beach Light Rail project and encouraged the Virginia Beach City Council to authorize vehicle purchases and execute a MOU by April 30. If these actions are not taken, the CTB may reconsider its $155 million commitment.

TransAction

NVTC staff’s collaboration on TransAction will ensure that the long-range plan includes a regional transit investment strategy. Slated for completion in 2017, the plan will contain a needs assessment, now underway. The assessment involves both a review of all jurisdictional plans and public engagement.

View the new TransAction video

Upcoming TransAction Meetings

Thursday, March 17, 2016, 5pm
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
1 Harrison St. S.E., Leesburg

Monday, March 21 at 7:30pm
Falls Church City Council
300 Park Ave., Falls Church

Monday, March 28 at 7:30pm
Leesburg Town Council
25 West Market St., Leesburg

Tuesday, April 5 at 7pm
Herndon Town Council
765 Lynn Street, Herndon
VRE: Gainesville to Haymarket
As part of VRE’s plans to extend its Manassas Line 11 miles through Gainesville to VA Route 15 near Haymarket, Norfolk Southern, which owns the existing tracks and right of way, is undertaking a ground survey along the rail line. Survey work will continue through July 31.

VRE’s next community meeting on the extension is Apr. 27 at Gainesville Middle School, 8001 Limestone Drive, Gainesville.

NVTC Welcomes New Staff
Jen Deci comes to NVTC from the United States Senate Banking Committee where her portfolio included the public transportation title of the FAST Act. She joins NVTC as a policy analyst.

Patricia Happ joins NVTC as a Transit Projects and Policy Manager. As an engineer and planner, Patricia will lead research and planning projects and serve as NVTC’s coordinator of VRE matters.

NVTC & PRTC Meet in Richmond
The Speaker’s Conference Room was filled to capacity with NVTC and PRTC Commissioners, legislators and other state officials interested in the details of the I-66 compromise and updates on transit services and programs. The joint NVTC/PRTC meeting on February 11 featured the release of NVTC’s Business Making the Case for Transit and the screening of a video featuring testimonials in support of PRTC bus service. Presentations included:

Regional Bus
Frank Principi, PRTC Chair
VRE
Gary Skinner, VRE Operations Board Chair
WMATA
Jim Corcoran, WMATA Board Member
DRPT
Jennifer Mitchell, DRPT Director
I-66
Nick Donohue, Dep. Sec. of Transportation

Mark Your Calendar
Mar. 3   NVTC Monthly Meeting
Mar. 7-9  I-66 Toll Design Public Hearings
Mar. 10   NVTA Monthly Meeting
Mar. 13-15 APTA Legislative Conference (DC)
Mar. 15-16 CTB Meeting
Mar. 16   Transportation Planning Board
Mar. 18   VRE Operations Board
Mar. 24   I-66 Component Applications Due
Apr. 7    NVTC Monthly Meeting
Apr. 26   GMU 3rd Annual P3 Forum
Apr. 27   VRE GHX Community Meeting
May 24-25 VTA Annual Conference

Link to NVTC’s Annual Calendar