



News on the transit funding front, at both the federal and state levels, is mixed. While we have taken several steps forward to resolve funding issues for Metro and Virginia Railway Express, we have lost ground – though perhaps only temporarily – in our efforts to ensure continued financial support for local bus systems.

I am encouraged that both chambers of the General Assembly approved Metro funding bills prior to crossover, but recognize that there are concerns with the approaches. While there are significant differences to be ironed out, it appears that there is consensus among legislators that Metro not only drives Northern Virginia’s economy but that of the Commonwealth and, therefore, deserves additional financial support. Whether that support is tied to reforms, and what those reforms might entail, remains to be seen. We also want to see how dedicated funding for VRE and a fix to the gas tax floor will be deliberated in conference.

On a somewhat positive note, the White House’s fiscal year 2019 budget does not axe dedicated funding for Metro, as some Northern Virginia Congressional leaders had expected. Instead, it reduces next year’s proposed federal contribution from \$150 million to \$120 million (see page 3). That said, there are bills pending in the U.S. House that would increase the amount the feds currently provide to Metro.

Of concern, however, are the administration’s proposed cuts to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant programs. The cuts would not only eliminate funding for transit projects that are competing for, but have yet to receive, grants under the FTA’s New Starts and Core Capacity programs but significantly reduce what is available for projects that are already moving toward construction. “The president’s budget paints a bleak picture for the future of transit in America,” said Rep. Gerry Connolly to a reporter from The Hill.

It’s too early to tell to what extent the FTA’s grant programs will be reduced and how that would affect local bus systems here in Northern Virginia. What will influence the ability of our transit providers to maintain and upgrade their bus fleets is Virginia’s looming transit capital fiscal cliff, which the General Assembly was unable to reconcile this year. There is still time, though not much, before our local transit agencies begin to feel the pinch from a loss in bond revenue estimated at \$110 million annually.

Clearly, NVTC’s work is not done. We must continue to reach out to our state legislators and local elected officials, as well as their constituents, to ensure that we all understand the ramifications of such a loss in funding. Transit is the backbone of our economy, getting residents to jobs, students to school, and tourists to Northern Virginia hotels and attractions. We ignore this at our peril.



**Executive Director**

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Northern Virginia Transportation Commission  
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Arlington, VA 22201  
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## Key Dates

Mar. 1	<a href="#">NVTC Monthly Meeting</a>
Mar. 8	<a href="#">NVTA Monthly Meeting</a>
Mar. 10	<a href="#">General Assembly Adjourns</a>
Mar. 8	<a href="#">WMATA Board Meeting</a>
Mar. 14	<a href="#">NVTA’s NOVA Transportation Roundtable</a>
Mar. 16	<a href="#">VRE Operations Board Meeting</a>
Mar. 20	<a href="#">I-66 Commuter Choice Public Hearing in Reston</a>
Mar. 20-21	<a href="#">CTB Monthly Meeting</a>
Mar. 21	<a href="#">TPB Monthly Meeting</a>
Mar. 22	<a href="#">WMATA Board Meeting</a>
Apr. 5	<a href="#">I-66 Commuter Choice Public Hearing in Arlington</a>
Apr. 5	<a href="#">NVTC Monthly Meeting</a>

## NVTC Convenes in Richmond

Less than a week before crossover in the General Assembly, Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine and Department of Rail and Public Transportation Director Jennifer Mitchell briefed Commissioners in Richmond on the status of pending legislation in the House and Senate. Following the NVTC meeting, staff and several Commissioners attended a meeting of the Senate Finance Committee.



Three Commissioners — Loudoun County Supervisor Matt Letourneau (on behalf of NVTC), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova (on behalf of Fairfax County) and Falls Church Council Member Dave Snyder (on behalf of Virginia Transit Association) — testified before the committee regarding SB856 (Saslaw), which would provide \$154 million annually in dedicated funding for Metro.



## NVTC Publishes 2017 Year in Review

2017 was a banner year for NVTC. Whether inaugurating transit service in the I-66 corridor; pursuing sustainable, dedicated funding for transit throughout Northern Virginia; or advocating for reforms at the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, NVTC used its voice and expertise to ensure the availability of high-quality, high-capacity transit. NVTC's words and actions advanced public transportation at the local, state and regional levels throughout 2017.

Numerous NVTC initiatives made clear the need for Northern Virginians to have access to safe, reliable and adequately funded transit options. The value of transit to the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia became apparent through NVTC research and data analysis. In 2017, NVTC identified opportunities to strengthen the region's bus network, developed a tool to assist member jurisdictions in evaluating and planning local bus service, examined the economic benefit of rail transit to the Commonwealth, and refined emergency plans Virginia's Metrorail stations.

[Learn more about NVTC's accomplishments online.](#)

## 2017 Year in Review



## State Legislative Update

While there are significant differences in the House and Senate versions of WMATA funding legislation, it is encouraging that both chambers passed legislation prior to the Feb. 13 crossover deadline. The Senate bill [[SB856 \(Saslaw\)](#)] includes \$154 million annually for Metro, while the House measure [[HB1539 \(Hugo\)](#)] provides \$105 million a year. The Senate bill, unlike the House legislation, would create an operating and capital fund for Virginia Railway Express. A proposal that would have taxed Uber and Lyft services to help fund transportation projects other than Metro was removed from the Senate legislation. NVTC's [side-by-side comparison of the two transit omnibus bills](#) looks at how they address issues such as state funding and transit capital project prioritization, WMATA funding and governance, VRE funding, and a gas tax floor.

Two Senate bills of note also moved to the House. [SB896 \(Wagner\)](#) would establish a regional gas tax floor and [SB683 \(Stuart\)](#) would create a dedicated funding program for VRE. And one House bill of interest [[HB1285 \(LaRock\)](#)] — requiring NVTC, NVTA, VRE and CTB to hold an annual joint public meeting on projects proposed for funding — crossed to the Senate.

Budget amendments were released earlier this week by the [House Appropriations](#) and [Senate Finance](#) committees. NVTC has culled amendments pertaining to the regional gas tax, statewide transit, WMATA, VRE, and I-66 inside the Beltway. Those transit and related [budget amendments from both the House and Senate](#) are available online.

## Federal Legislative Update



[President Trump's budget](#), released last week, would trim Metro's federal subsidy from \$150 million to \$120 million rather than eliminate it, as had been previously reported. The

federal funds are used for capital expenditures and are provided as part of the 10-year Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA).

The [Metro Accountability and Investment Act](#) was filed by U.S. Rep. Gerald E. Connolly at the end of January. The bill would extend and increase the current \$150 million PRIIA subsidy for Metro, which will expire at the end of fiscal year 2019. Under Connolly's proposal, the

federal contribution to Metro would double to \$300 million a year for 10 years and some funds would be earmarked for operations. The bill establishes two new sources of funding, which are predicated on WMATA meeting specific safety, reliability, and operation cost efficiency targets and jurisdictions creating a dedicated funding source. It does not address WMATA board composition but, rather, strengthens the Office of Inspector General.

NVTC staff will track the bill, as well as those introduced by [Virginia Rep. Barbara Comstock](#), [Maryland Rep. John Delaney](#), and [Maryland Reps. Jamie Raskin and Anthony G. Brown](#) as they move through the House.

## Route 7 Alternatives Analysis, Engineering Study Move Forward

A [Route 7 alternatives analysis](#) received approval from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, which earmarked up to \$950,000 for the project. The study will focus on Route 7 between the Beltway and Route 123, ultimately determining how the planned widening of Route 7 will be implemented and providing guidance on how to integrate bus rapid transit (BRT) in the corridor. The alternatives analysis will complement a Route 7 BRT conceptual engineering study for which NVTC will issue a request for proposals in March.



## I-66 Commuter Choice Public Hearings Scheduled

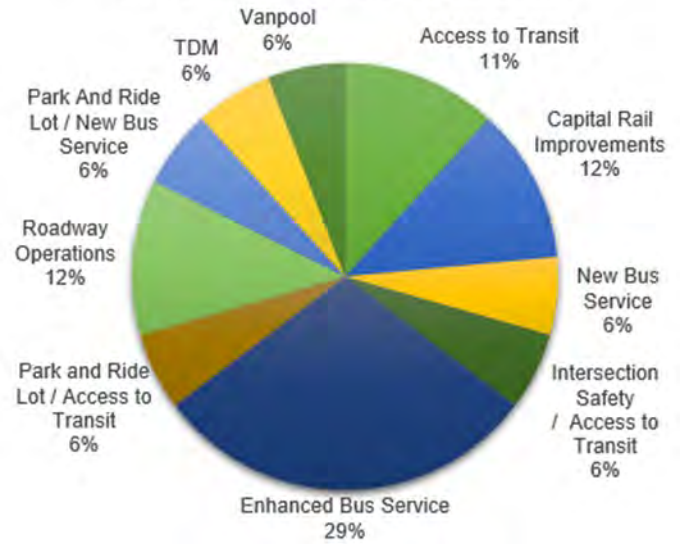
As the I-66 Commuter Choice Working Group finalizes its evaluation and prioritization of eligible applications submitted during the second call for projects, NVTC staff has scheduled two public hearings. They will take place Tuesday, March 20 at the [Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce](#) offices and Thursday, April 5 in the [Navy League Building](#) prior to the NVTC monthly Commission meeting. Both hearings start at 7 p.m.



NVTC received 18 applications, totaling \$36.3 million in requests, for projects de-

signed to expand transportation capacity in the I-66 corridor inside the Beltway. Following the public hearings, the Commission will select projects that will comprise the fiscal year 2018 program at the May meeting. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will then consider the projects in June.

Composition of FY2018 I-66 Commuter Choice Applications



## I-66 Commuter Choice Success Story



*Ridership nearly tripled on OmniRide's Gainesville to Pentagon express bus service, funded through I-66 Commuter Choice. From 1,798 riders in Dec. 2016 to 5,217 in Oct. 2017, this bus route demonstrates transit's ability to move more people thru the I-66 corridor .*



## Around Town: Headlines from/about NVTC Jurisdictions and Partners



[What's left to build on Arlington's piece of Potomac Yard? Not much.](#)

[Columbia Pike 'Premium Bus' Service to Streamline Routes](#)

[Pentagon City Pedestrian Tunnel To Open This Spring After Years of Delay](#)



[Big transportation changes could be coming to Richmond Highway](#)

[Transportation, revitalization key to future of McLean](#)



[Loudoun Supervisors Hold Little Hope of Metro Funding Fix from State](#)



[Why we should all get behind the MetroNow coalition](#)



[Metro prepares for busy tourist season](#)

[Metrorail Safety Commission members gather for the first time](#)

[Metrorail is no longer the second-busiest rapid transit system in the country](#)

[Fewer Metro riders doesn't always mean less crowding](#)

[Metro to Retire System's Worst Performing Rail Cars](#)

[Metro sends crews to Baltimore to help during subway shutdown](#)

[AU's free transit pass is a success, and the idea is slowly spreading](#)

[White House budget trims Metro subsidy instead of killing it, as feared](#)

**LET'S TALK  
TRANSPORTATION**

Mon., Feb. 26 from 7-9 p.m.  
Navy League Building @ Court House

*"Arlington has been the national model for the urbanizing suburb: is it time for rethinking your direction?"*  
- Chris Leinberger

**RSVP TODAY!**

## Arlington Transportation Partners



NVTC was a special guest at the Arlington Transportation Partners Champions Breakfast in early February.

Staff members Patricia Happ and Karen Finucan Clarkson received a shout out for NVTC's work on I-66 Commuter Choice. The event [included a video](#) that demonstrated the importance of mobility options for those who commute into or out of Arlington.



## WMATA



Metro met or exceeded performance targets in 13 of 27 areas, according to its [most recent Performance Report](#), which covers July 1-Dec. 31, 2017. Five measures were near target and nine measures were either not met or worse than last fiscal year. WMATA's performance reports compare fiscal-year-to-date performance to targets that WMATA has set or, when applicable, to previous fiscal-year-to-date performance.



## Northern Virginia Transportation Authority



[Register now](#) for the 3rd annual NoVa Transportation Roundtable, sponsored by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Virginia. This

year's focus is on self-driving vehicles and emerging transportation trends. The March 14 event, which runs from 8 a.m.-12 p.m., will take place at NVTA's offices at 3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA.

## Virginia Railway Express



Each month Virginia Railway Express, which is co-owned by the Northern Virginia and the Potomac and Rappahannock transportation commissions, sponsors an [online forum](#) and publishes a [magazine](#). These communication vehicles keep passengers, vendors and staff informed of upcoming issues, topics of importance, and schedule changes. You can follow VRE on Twitter at [@VaRailXpress](#).

**3RD ANNUAL**  
NoVa Transportation Roundtable

**Self-Driving Cars**  
UTOPIA OR DYSTOPIA?

MARCH 14 8AM - 12PM  
NVTA 3040 WILLIAMS DR  
SUITE 200, FAIRFAX VA 22031

ITVA  
Intelligent Transportation Society of Virginia

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