



Labor Day, just a week away, marks the official end of summer and kicks off a fall that is perhaps busier than any in NVTC's recent history. Looking ahead I was struck by just how much is on our plate. Before year's end, the Commission will be asked to tackle several major actions, among them:

Reporting on WMATA to the General Assembly and Governor

NVTC is undertaking the research required for our first report on the performance of WMATA. The report, due November 1, will include key performance measures, including finances, operations, safety and ridership. Staff will present the report for Commission approval at our October meeting.

Issuing a Third Call for Projects through I-66 Commuter Choice

With two calls for projects under our belts, NVTC staff is preparing for another. Our I-66 Commuter Choice Commissioner working group will meet prior to our September Commission meeting to discuss project evaluation and scoring. I expect that the Commission will consider the fiscal year 2019 call for projects in October.

Reporting on Projects Funded through I-66 Commuter Choice

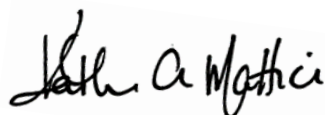
As required by our Memorandum of Agreement with the state, NVTC is working on an annual report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board that is due by October 31. The Commission will preview the report in October.

Developing an Administrative Agreement with VRE to Ensure Financial Accountability

The new Commuter Rail Operating and Capital (C-ROC) fund provides \$15 million annually in dedicated funding for the Virginia Railway Express. To ensure VRE's accountability in the use of these funds, NVTC will craft an administrative agreement between the two parties, which will need approval from the Commission and the VRE Operations Board.

Negotiating an Agreement with PRTC on Administering I-95/I-395 Express Lanes Toll Revenues

To implement a Commuter Choice program on I-95/I-395, similar to what we have on I-66, NVTC and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission will need to reach agreement on how the program will be run, as our Memorandum of Agreement with the Commonwealth calls for joint administration. The agreement will need approval from both Commissions.



Executive Director

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Key Dates

Sept 6	NVTC Monthly Meeting
Sept 7	TSDAC Meeting
Sept 13	WMATA Board Meeting
Sept 13	NVTA Monthly Meeting
Sept 17-18	CTB Monthly Meeting
Sept 19	NVTC Interim WMATA Committee Meeting
Sept 21	TPB Monthly Meeting
Sept 21	VRE Operations Board Meeting
Sept 21-22	Car Free Days
Sept 27	WMATA Board Meeting

I-66 Commuter Choice Agreements Underway, Call for Projects Planned



While NVTC continues to finalize grant agreements with the jurisdictions and transit agencies receiving funding through the I-66 Commuter Choice program, staff has begun work on a third call for projects. It is anticipated that the proposed fiscal year 2019 call for projects will come before the Commission at its October meeting. In the interim, NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice Commissioner working group will meet September 6 to discuss the project evaluation and scoring process.

NVTC is also working on an annual report to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) explaining, among other things, the benefits that were the basis for selecting the funded projects and the degree to which the expected benefits are being realized. The report, which will be shared with the Commission in October, is due to the CTB by the end of that month.

I-66 Commuter Choice has, to date, funded 25 projects totaling nearly \$22 million. The program is a 40-year partnership between NVTC and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Washington Post Highlights I-66 Commuter Choice Projects

“By the time heavy construction begins on the \$2.3 billion widening of Interstate 66 outside the Capital Beltway next year, commuters in western Prince William County will be able to sign up and pay for van-pool services through a smartphone app. Others will be able to tap their phones to summon a ride to a commuter bus lot.” So begins a July 7 [article in The Washington Post](#) exploring two app-based projects being developed by the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission with funding from NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice program.

The piece concludes with a focus on NVTC. “Part of the appeal of these programs is that they are nimble, flexible and targeted specifically toward the demographics and needs of Prince William County,” said Kate Mattice,

executive director of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which selects the projects to be funded with the I-66 toll revenue. ‘They should also provide a strong return on investment.’

Mattice said the initiatives are consistent with the goal of the I-66 Commuter Choice program to move more people through the corridor more efficiently.

‘Constraints — such as a lack of available parking or a work schedule that doesn't allow for joining a daily van pool — that prevent people from accessing transit make it more difficult for us to achieve that goal,’ she said. ‘PRTC's on-demand commuter lot shuttles and flexible van-pool program are great examples of using technology to tackle constraints and get more constituents out of their cars and onto transit.’”

Mobile Ticketing Discussions Move Ahead

Following the Commission's approval of the [Regional Fare Collection Strategic Plan](#), NVTC is moving forward with the actions outlined in the plan. NVTC's fare collection team is meeting with all six jurisdictions and their transit agencies to talk in greater detail about mobile ticketing. The purpose of the meetings is to:

- Update the current status of transit system activities related to fare collection
- Discuss WMATA mobile app initiative and mobile platform ideas
- Involve a broad group of organization stakeholders to discuss potential impacts of mobile platforms including senior management, marketing, transit planning, and operations

- Identify opportunities for coordination



NVTC's Interim WMATA Committee Dives into Action

The inaugural meeting of the Interim WMATA Committee on August 2 featured a discussion of the committee's role both within NVTC and as it pertains to WMATA. NVTC Chairman Paul Smedberg noted that the committee exists to discuss WMATA-related issues in order to inform NVTC's principal WMATA board member of areas of jurisdictional concern and to review and provide guidance on any NVTC products stipulated in the [Metro funding legislation](#).

Over the course of the 90-minute meeting, the five committee members reviewed an outline of the annual report that NVTC must send to the General Assembly by November 1 and discussed possible recommendations for the required section on strategies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies. The group also reviewed a draft CTB policy document that will guide implementation of legislatively mandated governance and funding reforms for WMATA. A resolution pertaining to that policy document will come before the Commission in Sep-

tember. A discussion of WMATA's parking pilot program, during which some of our jurisdictions expressed concerns about charging for Saturday parking, wrapped up the meeting.

Going forward, the committee will meet the third Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in NVTC's office.



Arbitration Panel Rules in Metro Wage/Benefit Case

An arbitration board ruled that Metro must provide \$82 million in wage increases to thousands of union workers by summer 2020. [Metro's Arbitration Board member dissented from the award](#) because it failed to address pensions for future employees represented by AFL-CIO ATU Local 689 (L689), which could worsen the agency's operating structural deficit. Changes to employee healthcare benefits, however, will help Metro with cost containment.

Metro GM/CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld said he is not inclined to appeal because the award provides relief on near term healthcare costs, and he wants closure so Metro workers can focus on safety and customer service.

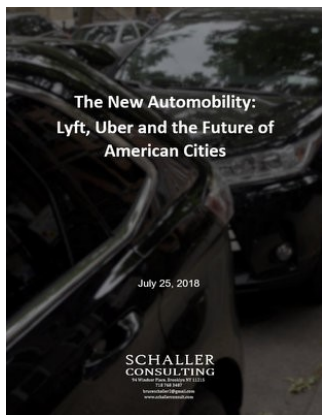
The award raises wages for employees of Metro's largest union by an annual average of 1.6 percent over four years, which increases operating expenses by \$82 million. WMATA expects to save \$21 million from the award's increase to employee healthcare coverage contributions from 17 percent to 20 percent, and increases in deductibles and prescription copays. For example, employee copays for retail generic drugs will double from \$5 to \$10.

Metro sought, but did not receive, an arbitration award that would allow it to continue pensions for current employees but enroll future L689 employees in 401k accounts, to begin to address an unfunded pension liability of \$2.8 billion, including unfunded healthcare costs for retirees. The award also remained silent on an overtime cap, leaving WMATA as the only large transit agency in the country with no overtime limit toward pension calculations.

"After two years of bargaining and a year of making our best case through binding arbitration, Metro's structural operating deficit remains completely untouched," said Wiedefeld.

The award is effective retroactively to July 1, 2016 (FY2017), but the first year wage increase is 0 percent. WMATA will pay L689 employees the 1 percent increase awarded for last fiscal year and the 2.5 percent increase for the current fiscal year as soon as payroll changes are made this fall. The decision also provides an average 2.3 percent wage increase in FY2020. Healthcare benefit changes for active employees are effective January 1, 2019.

Study: Ride-Hail Services Responsible for Transit Ridership Declines



As we grapple with [transit ridership declines](#) in Northern Virginia, [a report by Schaller Consulting](#) points blame at Uber and Lyft. It examines how these ride-hail services are making traffic congestion worse, constructs a detailed profile of the typical ride-hail user and issues a stark warning to cities. Among its findings are:

- Transportation Network Companies (TNC) transported 2.61 billion passengers in 2017, a 37 percent increase from 1.90 billion in 2016.
- Combined TNC and taxi ridership is likely to surpass local bus ridership in the U.S. by the end of this year, making them among the largest urban transportation providers.
- About 60 percent of TNC users in large, dense cities would have taken public transportation, walked, biked or not made the trip if TNCs had not been available for the trip, while 40 percent would have used their own car or a taxi.
- 70 percent of Uber and Lyft trips are in nine large, densely-populated metropolitan areas (Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington D.C.)
- TNCs added 5.7 billion miles of driving in the nation's nine largest metro areas at the same time that car ownership grew more rapidly than the population.
- Shared ride services such as UberPOOL, Uber Express POOL and Lyft Shared Rides, while touted as reducing traffic, in fact add mileage to city streets. Even with these shared services, TNCs put 2.6 new TNC vehicle miles on the road for each mile of personal driving removed, for an overall 160 percent increase in driving on city streets.
- TNCs and microtransit can be valuable extensions of – but not replacements for – fixed route public transit.

Arlington Considers Sewage to Fuel Buses

Arlington County's recently adopted [Solids Master Plan](#) holds forth the prospect that a new sewage treatment facility would generate a product that could fuel ART buses. The new cleaning process would create two by-products, a fertilizer-like biosolid that could be used by the public, the county, or commercial entities for soil treatment, and a biogas compound that could be converted into compressed natural gas. The plan identifies the Arlington Transit bus fleet, conveniently parked across the street from the treatment facility, as a potential customer. The county will implement the new solid waste handling method in 2027.

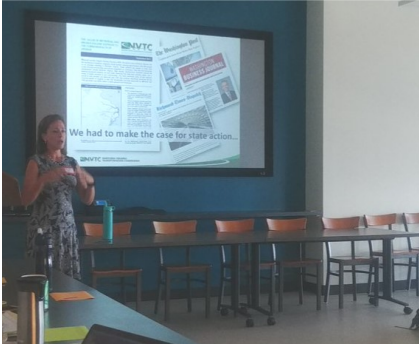


U.S. Senate Passes Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill

The U.S. Senate on August 1 passed four appropriations bills, including the annual Transportation-HUD bill. Passed by a roll call vote of 92 to 6, the package provides \$154 billion in discretionary funding, \$130 billion in mandatory funding and \$60 billion in obligation limitations on transportation contract authority. The House

of Representatives, which has yet to consider the Transportation-HUD bill, is expected to take it up when members return from August recess. There were 14 amendments to the transportation portion of the Senate's Transportation-HUD bill. Among them were one banning Chinese railcar and bus procurement and another preventing Amtrak from shuttering the Southwest Chief.

Sharing Lessons Learned from Efforts to Win Dedicated Funding for WMATA



The fight for dedicated funding in Virginia was the title of my presentation at a mid-July seminar in Nashville, Tennessee that focused on how to generate state legislative support for transit by build-

ing broad-based coalitions and being open to compromise. The three-day seminar was organized by Transit Center, a group that facilitates the sharing of information and strategies that support transit. I was joined by transit advocates from across the country, many of whom face challenges and obstacles similar to those we experienced in Virginia.

TSDAC Continues Work on State Transit Funding Prioritization

The [Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee](#) (TSDAC) has wrapped up discussions on how the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) would competitively allocate transit capital funding for major projects. DRPT will present its proposed approach for prioritizing transit capital funding to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in September.

Now the committee has turned its attention to a proposed approach for transit operating funding. During an

August 29 webinar, DRPT staff provided an overview of operating assistance and a briefing on [state appropriations for public transportation](#). TSDAC will continue exploring the prioritization of transit operating funds at a September 7 meeting in Richmond. NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice, a TSDAC member, is working closely with jurisdictional staff to ensure their concerns and recommendations are heard. In regard to both capital and operating assistance, DRPT intends to implement new approaches for the fiscal year 2020 funding cycle.

Metro Awards Bus Facility Contract

Metro has [awarded a contract](#) for the maintenance and operation of buses from its new Cinder Bed Road bus facility in Lorton, Virginia, in a move expected to control cost growth while delivering quality service and preserving current employees' jobs. The contract was awarded to TransDev, the largest private provider of multiple modes of transportation in North America. To ensure safe and reliable service for customers, the Cinder Bed Road facility contract includes 15 key performance metrics that will be used to measure TransDev's performance.



Capital Bikeshare



[Bike Angels](#) are Capital Bikeshare riders who improve the availability of bikes and docks for fellow riders and earn rewards along the way. Angels earn points for taking bikes from crowded stations and bringing them to empty ones or stations expected to soon become empty. They can rack up points by cycling from a full station to an empty station. Points can be redeemed for a 24-hour pass for a friend or for one-week membership extensions.



Commuter Connections



Register now for the region's annual Car Free Day event. This year, Commuter Connections has extended the event to two days, Fri., Sept. 21 and Sat., Sept. 22, to allow more people to participate and qualify for prize drawings by taking the free pledge to go car free and be counted for helping make the air cleaner and the roads less congested. [Take the pledge](#) and be entered to win great prizes. Last year, more than 11,000 commuters took the Car Free Day pledge.



Transportation Planning Board



The TPB continues to discuss how to support projects, programs, and policies to implement the seven initiatives it endorsed in the winter. Board members recently held an open discussion of ideas from each jurisdiction with the goal of finding out what it would take to implement the seven ideas throughout the region.

The discussion focused primarily on planning ahead for the future. The importance of thinking beyond current conditions was stressed, as retrofitting new infrastructure so that they can accommodate possible future uses.

Another theme was the importance of bringing everyone across sectors of the government together. Transportation can touch education, environment, and everything that is built.

[The discussion can be heard online.](#)



Virginia Railway Express



VRE recently hosted the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for a canine training at the Broad Run train yard in Prince William County. During the event, explosive-detecting canines swept train equipment and a nearby station to help familiarize the dogs and their handlers with railroad operations. For the past several years, the railroad has partnered with the FBI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, local law enforcement agencies, CSX and Norfolk Southern Railway to host training activities to detect narcotics and explosives.

