



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

Annual Organizational Meeting

January 12, 2023

Public Comments (Deadline: January 10, 2023 at 5 p.m.):

1) Jason Schwartz (Arlington County)

○ Written Comment Submission:

- I would like to see more funding for pedestrian, cycling, bus and rail projects. There is too much funding going to auto related projects. We do not need to widen any more roads in Northern Virginia.

2) Charles Grymes (City of Manassas)

○ Written Comment Submission:

- We need greater mobility for people, not just for vehicles. It is long past time for NVTA jurisdictions to propose projects that will upgrade bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Northern Virginia has great opportunities to create Safe Routes to Schools/Parks/Libraries/health facilities, as well as increase access to retail and job centers. It is also time to plan for e-bike transportation routes. They offer a great opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help meet the commitment to cut them to 50% of the 2005 level by 2030.

3) Allen Muchnick (Active Prince William and City of Manassas Resident)

○ Written Comment Submission:

- This is such a petty request. Verbal comments are limited to 3 minutes and subject to the audience's lapses in attention, whereas written comments can be longer, more detailed, and more precise. The two formats are complementary, and both should be encouraged. For staff compilation purposes, only the written format could be considered.

4) Ruth Woollette (Sierra Club and Arlington County Resident)

○ Written Comment Submission:

- This year, NVTA has the opportunity to change its approach. This year I ask NVTA to rededicate itself to its Core Values of Equity, Sustainability, and Safety While NVTA has supported many great projects about 60% of NVTA regional funding has gone to expanding highways and creating massive thoroughfares. We need a new approach in Northern VA. NVTA's Technology Strategic Plan actually lays out a better approach - focusing on moving people rather than expanding road capacity to move cars - this reduces congestion while supporting the core values. Member jurisdictions have also



pledged to meet COG housing targets, which would reduce congestion in the region by 20% by putting households closer to jobs and services, where they want to be. NVTA has an opportunity to work with its member jurisdictions on land use planning that shortens travel times, creates a safe system with less reliance on driving, and creates a more affordable transportation system. We believe such a system fulfills the congestion reduction mandates by giving residents travel options and reducing their driving distances. Climate We learned from the TransAction plan that this approach would mean climate disaster. Numerous studies all show that Electric Vehicles are not enough - even California - with the most ambitious program of vehicle electrification - must also reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by over 20% by 2045 to adequately cut greenhouse gas emissions. In our region, TransAction would increase per capita VMT by 3%, meaning the region could never meet its climate goals under that approach. NVTA's core values are Equity, Sustainability, and Safety: NVTA can and must do more to promote its core values A transportation system that in too many parts of our region emphasizes moving private cars at high speeds fails to live its core values Equity - car-dependent suburbs with sprawling development patterns that create even longer driving distances cause high family transportation costs Sustainability - NVTA's TransAction plan would increase per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled at a time when we must both adopt Electric Vehicles and reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by 20% to meet our climate targets Safety - Traffic fatalities in Northern VA have risen from 86 in 2019 to over 120 last year. NVTA needs to spend more on safety and less on building wider and wider fast roads Safety is especially a concern for pedestrians and bicyclists and people accessing transit in our region In Fairfax County alone, 30 pedestrians died last year on unsafe streets Too many roads with homes and businesses along and near them are 6-lane high-speed thoroughfares We can't continually widen every arterial and expect pedestrians, bus and rail riders, and cyclists to be able to comfortably, conveniently and safely cross these ever wider roads Support for NVTA's proposed Bus Rapid Transit study: I applaud NVTA for proposing a regional Bus Rapid Transit Network and ask you to support the proposed NVTA study in next year's work plan to further this BRT plan In addition to NVTA's own BRT study, it is very important that NVTA coordinate with NVTC and WMATA on their ongoing regional bus studies. New Biden Administration blueprint to decarbonize our transportation system: This week the Biden administration released a joint plan of the departments of Energy, EPA, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation. "The US National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization" provides a sensible and necessary approach, recognizing that electric cars alone won't save us from climate disaster and EVs alone won't provide the numerous community health, economic, and affordability benefits of walkable, mixed-use transit-friendly communities and denser activity centers. The first two priorities are creating walkable, mixed-use, transit-friendly communities and shifting travel to more sustainable modes. To meet this new federal guidance and to do what we already know must be done to meet our climate goals, NVTA and its member agencies need to coordinate on better land use planning, affordable housing near transit, and creating walkable, transit-friendly communities.

5) Kevin O'Brien (Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Washington, D.C. Resident)



○ **Written Comment Submission:**

- I am writing on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and its more than 7,000 members across the Washington Metropolitan area and Northern Virginia. This year, NVTA has the opportunity to fundamentally change its approach to transportation with an eye towards the future, and WABA implores NVTA to rededicate itself to its Core Values of Equity, Sustainability, and Safety. While NVTA has supported many great projects in our region, including important bicycle and active transportation infrastructure, about 60% of NVTA regional funding continues to go to expanding highways and creating massive thoroughfares. We need a new approach in Northern Virginia. NVTA already has the blueprint - its Technology Strategic Plan lays out a better approach, focusing on moving people rather than expanding road capacity to move cars. This reduces congestion while supporting the core values. Member jurisdictions have also pledged to meet MWCOC housing targets, which would reduce congestion in the region by 20% by putting households closer to jobs and services, where they want to be. NVTA has an opportunity to work with its member jurisdictions on land use planning that shortens travel times, creates a safe system with less reliance on driving, and creates a more affordable and flexible transportation system. We believe such a system fulfills the congestion reduction mandates by giving residents travel options and reducing their driving distances. Failure to change course regarding land use will inevitably lead to climate disaster. Numerous studies have shown that electrification alone is not enough - even California, with the most ambitious program of vehicle electrification, must also reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by over 20% by 2045 to adequately cut greenhouse gas emissions. In our region, current plans like NVTA's TransAction would increase per capita VMT by 3%, meaning the region could never meet its climate goals under that approach. NVTA can and must do more to promote its core values of Equity, Sustainability, and Safety. A transportation system that in too many parts of our region emphasizes moving private cars at high speeds fails to live its core values. Equity - car-dependent suburbs with sprawling development patterns that create even longer driving distances cause high family transportation costs. Sustainability - NVTA's TransAction plan would increase per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled at a time when we must both adopt Electric Vehicles and reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by 20% to meet our climate targets. Safety - Traffic fatalities in Northern VA have risen from 86 in 2019 to over 120 last year. NVTA needs to spend more on safety and less on building wider and wider fast roads. Safety is especially a concern for pedestrians and bicyclists and people accessing transit in our region. In Fairfax County alone, 30 pedestrians died last year on unsafe streets. Too many roads with homes and businesses along and near them are 6-lane high-speed thoroughfares. We can't continually widen every arterial and expect pedestrians, bus and rail riders, and bicyclists to be able to comfortably, conveniently and safely cross these ever wider roads. WABA applauds NVTA for proposing a regional Bus Rapid Transit Network and we ask you to support the



proposed NVTA study in next year's work plan to further this BRT plan. In addition to NVTA's own BRT study, it is very important that NVTA coordinate with NVTC and WMATA on their ongoing regional bus studies. Finally, we would note that just this week the Biden administration released a joint plan of the Departments of Energy, EPA, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation aimed at decarbonizing our transportation system. "The US National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization" provides a sensible and necessary approach, recognizing that electric cars alone won't save us from climate disaster and EVs alone won't provide the numerous community health, economic, and affordability benefits of walkable, bikeable, mixed-use transit-friendly communities and denser activity centers. The first two priorities are creating walkable, mixed-use, transit-friendly communities and shifting travel to more sustainable modes like bicycling. To meet this new federal guidance and to do what we already know must be done to meet our climate goals, NVTA and its member agencies need to coordinate on better land use planning, affordable housing near transit, and creating walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly communities.

6) Kristin Rosenthal (Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions and Fairfax County Resident)

- **Written Comment Submission:**

- To protect pedestrians and cyclists, to reduce fatalities of people sharing the roads with cars and trucks, to reduce—not increase—our area's greenhouse gas emissions, a number of things need to happen, and quickly. We must reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled by 20% to meet our climate targets. This also reduces the risks of individual travel. Planning that optimizes rapid transit buses, pedestrian friendly streets, and city planning that reduces congestion are desperately needed. NVTA's Technology Strategic Plan actually lays out a better approach - focusing on moving people rather than expanding road capacity to move cars - this reduces congestion while supporting the core values. We have a good plan: NVTA's Technology Strategic Plan--: let's use it. The opportune moment is here. This week the Biden administration released a joint plan of the departments of Energy, EPA, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation. "The US National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization" provides a sensible and necessary approach, recognizing that electric cars alone won't save us from climate disaster and EVs alone won't provide the numerous community health, economic, and affordability benefits of walkable, mixed-use transit-friendly communities and denser activity centers. The first two priorities are creating walkable, mixed-use, transit-friendly communities and shifting travel to more sustainable modes. To meet this new federal guidance and to do what we already know must be done to meet our climate goals, NVTA and its member agencies need to coordinate on better land use planning, affordable housing near transit, and creating walkable, transit-friendly communities.

7) Paul Atelsek (Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions and Vienna, VA Resident)

- **Written Comment Submission:**

- This year I ask NVTA to rededicate itself to its Core Values of Equity, Sustainability, and Safety. About 60% of NVTA regional funding has gone to expanding highways and creating massive thoroughfares. We need a new approach in Northern VA. NVTA's



Technology Strategic Plan is better because it focuses on moving people rather than expanding road capacity to move cars - this reduces congestion while supporting the core values. NVTA should work with its member jurisdictions on land use planning that shortens travel times, putting households closer to jobs and services (where they want to be), and creating a safe and more affordable system with less reliance on driving. Such a system fulfills our congestion reduction mandates by giving residents safe travel options and reducing their driving distances. The TransAction plan shows that the approach we're on would mean climate disaster. Numerous studies show that Electric Vehicles are not enough—we must also reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled to cut greenhouse gas emissions. In our region, TransAction would increase per capita VMT by 3%, meaning the region could never meet its climate goals under that approach. I applaud NVTA for proposing a regional Bus Rapid Transit Network and ask you to support the proposed NVTA study in next year's work plan to further this BRT plan, and coordinate with NVTC and WMATA on their ongoing regional bus studies. These new approaches are also needed to increase safety, because the current “widen and broaden approach” is literally killing us. Our roads, designed for vehicle speed rather than safety, are making it increasingly dangerous to be a pedestrian or cyclist. In Fairfax County alone, pedestrian casualties are skyrocketing, having more than doubled in just the past year to 30 pedestrian deaths and 207 injuries. Three of the deaths were minors, and 11 were folks over 60 years old. I used to commute by bicycle to SE DC, and I have nearly been hit dozens of times. NVTA needs to spend more on safety and less on increasing throughput with wider and faster roads. It's time for some fresh thinking about how to move people in and through Northern VA, and I know the NVTA has the vision to lead us to a safer, cleaner, and more sustainable transportation system.

Registered to Provide In-Person Public Comment:

- 1) Bill Pugh (Coalition for Smarter Growth and City of Alexandria Resident)
- 2) Malcom Gregory (Chantilly Resident) – **No show**
- 3) Fred Hussain (Town of Dumfries Resident)

Registered to Provide Virtual Public Comment:

- 1) Allen Muchnick (Active Prince William and City of Manassas Resident)
- 2) Mark Scheufler (Prince William County Resident)