



William McCarty, Chair | Gordon C. Helsel, Jr., Vice-Chair
Robert A. Crum, Jr., Executive Director

December 20, 2024

Memorandum #2024-160

TO: Regional Transit Advisory Panel Members

BY: Robert A. Crum, Jr., Executive Director

RE: Regional Transit Advisory Panel Meeting Agenda – January 3, 2025

The next meeting of the Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) has been scheduled for Friday, January 3, 2025, from Noon to 2:00 PM. Lunch will be provided. The agenda is attached. This meeting will be held in person in Board Room A/B of the Regional Building located at [723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23320](#).

Additionally, the meeting will be live-streamed and available for viewing on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

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Attachments

**Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
Regional Transit Advisory Panel
Meeting Agenda**

**Friday, January 3, 2025
12:00 Noon**

**Board Room A/B
The Regional Building
723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake**

- 1. Call to Order and Introductions**
- 2. Approval/Modification of Agenda**

The Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) members are provided an opportunity to add or delete items from the agenda. Any item for which a member desires consideration by the RTAP should be submitted at this time, as opposed to under “Other Business.”

Recommended Action: Approve the agenda.

- 3. Public Comment**

Members of the public will be provided an opportunity to address the RTAP. Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker.

- 4. Minutes**

Minutes from the RTAP meeting held on September 30, 2024 are attached.

Attachment 4

Recommended Action: Approve the minutes.

- 5. Upcoming 2025 General Assembly Session**

The Regional Legislative Agenda, unanimously approved by the Commission and HRTPO Board, conveys to the General Assembly and Federal Delegation issues of regional significance that should be addressed on behalf of Hampton Roads. The 2025 Regional Legislative Agenda includes a request that the General Assembly preserve and consider increased funding support for adequate funding to support the three transit providers in the region: Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA), and Suffolk Transit.

In preparation for the upcoming General Assembly session, HRT staff will provide an update on legislative initiatives related to sustainable and predictable funding for the Tide light rail and increased statewide operating and capital funding. Opportunities to support these efforts will be discussed, and information on Transit Advocacy Day will be distributed.

Following the HRT staff update, Mr. Robert A. Crum, Jr., HRPDC/HRTPO Executive Director, will help facilitate a discussion with RTAP members on the message and outreach for the upcoming legislative session in support of regional transit funding.

Attachment 5: 2025 HRPDC/HRTPO Regional Legislative Agenda

6. Overview of Paratransit Services and Coverage Zones

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) provides paratransit service for certified users within the six cities it serves. Paratransit is a shared ride public service intended to serve as a “safety net” for individuals who, because of their disabilities, are unable to ride the ADA-compliant fixed route bus for some or all of their travel.

Ms. Amy L. Braziel, HRT Director of Contracted Services and Operational Analytics, will brief the RTAP on this item.

7. Other Business

RTAP members will be provided with an opportunity to share any information related to public transit in the Hampton Roads/757 region.

8. Next Meeting

9. Adjournment

Summary Minutes of the HRTPO Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) Meeting September 30, 2024

The meeting of the HRTPO Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) was called to order at 12:03 p.m. in the Regional Building Boardroom, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

RTAP Members in Attendance:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Garry Harris | Andria McClellan |
| Janice Taylor | Don Robertson |
| Gil Bland | Sonia Gopal |
| Brian Smith | Amy Braziel |
| Ray Amoruso | William Harrell |
| Sandra Brandt | Captain David Dees |
| Ellen Ruane | Linda Carroll |
| Denise Johnson | Monty Mason |
| Diane Kaufman | Kurt Krause |
| Captain Josh Appezato | Mark Perryman |
| Bob McKenna | CMDCM Mike Avallone |
| Captain Randy Buchanan | Julie Dixon |
| Steve Zollos | John Paul |
| Emily Larimore | Janetta Jatczak |
| Laura Chalk | Justin Nelson |
| Mary Kate Andris | Stephanie Gorham |
| Todd Nichols | Ben Green |
| Brad Martin | Peter Shaw |
| Angela Effah-Amponsah | Joel Rubin |
| Tiffany Dubinsky | Rick Dwyer |

HRTPO/HRPDC Staff:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Robert A. Crum, Jr. | Matthew Harrington |
| Rob Case | Quan McLaurin |
| Rob Cofield | Pavithra Parthasarathi |
| Jeff Raliski | John Mihaly |
| Greg Grootendorst | Joe Turner |
| Matt Klepeisz | Markay Hall |
| Jeff Raliski | Emma Corbitt |

Others Recorded Attending:

Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky, Steve Jones, Sheri Neil, and Tracy Black

Approval/Modification of Agenda

The meeting agenda was accepted as distributed with no changes or amendments.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Minutes

Mr. Robert Crum, HRTPO Executive Director, asked if there were any changes or corrections to the RTAP minutes of the August 31, 2023, meeting which were both included in the Agenda packet. Hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Bus Stop Vicinity Audit Pilot for 757 Express and Multimodal Connectivity Toolbox Study Update

HRTPO staff presented the results of the Bus Stop Vicinity Audits Pilot for 757 Express System and also provided an update on the related Multimodal Connectivity Toolbox effort presently advancing. Both work tasks were included in the HRTPO Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP) over the last two fiscal years. The Bus Stop Audit effort also supports a key RTAP recommendation advocating for improved infrastructure supporting the regional bus network and has been organized so that it can be replicated and applied to additional locations in the future if requested.

The Bus Stop Audit project reviewed five individual locations, representing a variety of conditions and land use contexts that are common across the region's bus network. Each review examined the existing environment around these bus stop locations in terms of a number of key factors such as area walkability, pedestrian accessibility, safety, and the availability of bus shelters and other related passenger amenities. Findings and potential improvement options for each site have been shared with both HRT and the individual localities.

The Multimodal Connectivity Toolbox (MCT) effort focuses on identifying both the total population served within a ½ mile radius of bus stops and transit centers and also the essential services available near these locations. The primary outcome of the analysis will be to provide information in determining the highest priority locations for additional bus stop infrastructure through coordination with locality stakeholders and transit operators. The draft MCT report is expected to be presented to the Technical Committee for review and discussion in November.

Additional discussion included the following points:

- Mr. Crum related that many of the proposed improvements often represent only small investments.
- Mr. Harrell thanked the HRTPO for highlighting this issue and also noted that all such improvements always require local review and approval and sometimes additional financial support.
- It was suggested that flooding and resiliency factors could possibly be added to future location audits.
- Bus stop locations near higher volumes of older adults may need special considerations and additional accommodations to help address their mobility challenges.

- It was confirmed that ridership information was available and collected for each of the audit locations, since bus stops with higher usage will likely be prioritized for investments as the 757Express service expands across the region.
- Locating bus shelters on public property can often be a balancing act given the limitations of available space and also the need to maintain American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accesses and clearances. Mr. Amoruso reported that HRT has three different available shelter models to help respond to the varying conditions encountered from location to location.
- It was emphasized that pedestrian safety and crash concerns need to be an important factor in all such reviews, especially since drivers often do not follow and heed traffic control measures designed to aid pedestrians.
- Mr. Crum highlighted that the bus stop audit process also helped to confirm that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities abound along the 757Express system and should be fully considered by local governments in their future planning efforts.
- Mr. Perryman stated that the extension of transit services to Norfolk International Airport is a critical need, especially for the employees of service providers. Mr. Amoruso reported that HRT is presently reviewing options for new transit service to the Airport and will be in contact to discuss options in the near future.

Hampton Roads Transit Base Express Update

Ms. Braziel of Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) provided an update on the Norfolk Naval Base circulator service that has been operating on Naval Station Norfolk for just under two years. The proposal for an on-base circulator service at Naval Station Norfolk was another key RTAP recommendation, and the implementation of new transit option has been supported through a three year State Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) grant.

Two routes currently operate on the Naval Base, with one connecting to the larger HRT bus network outside of the gates at the Naval Exchange complex. It was reported that approximately 86,000 passengers have utilized the service to date, and there has been a demonstrated positive growth trend in ridership over time, with additional peaks in ridership around ship movements. HRT staff also noted that there have been requests for the expansion of this well received service, and that the agency will be applying to the State for another 2 years of funding for the Naval Base shuttle operation.

Captain Dees added that a key outcome of this pilot testing of a transit shuttle at the Naval Station is proving that transit can be successful at the facility if it is well planned and constructed. Central to this idea was making hard decisions upfront, particularly concentrating on serving primarily key locations with frequent and reliable service over trying to extend service to all possible areas and destinations across the sprawling facility over much longer intervals and travel times.

Regional Transit Sustainability Study and Upcoming 2025 General Assembly Session

Dr. Smith provided a brief overview of the new Regional Transit Sustainability Study that has been recently initiated which is seeking to address long-term and sustainable funding for public transportation capital and operating needs in Hampton Roads. This effort is targeted to be wrapped up in time for the 2026 Virginia General Assembly session and is aimed at positioning the Hampton Roads region to compete for and receive its fair share of resources.

In the more immediate term, it was noted that a Joint Legislative Subcommittee Studying transit funding needs in the Northern Virginia area (SJ 28) is currently meeting, and its work is being monitored. More generally, conversations among all transit agencies statewide were initiated after agencies saw the State operating assistance reduced for Fiscal Year 2025, and a potential budget amendment is being considered for the 2025 General Assembly session to help deal with this situation.

Mr. Crum indicated that the region is scheduled to host the Hampton Roads General Assembly Caucus on October 28th. Further, another RTAP meeting could be scheduled for the November timeframe to help craft and finalize the region's outreach and message for regional transit funding support. Mr. Mason added that the Hampton Roads delegation is well placed to advance a budget amendment but will need to understand well what is driving the current decrease in funding to the region.

Mr. Krause added that funding support for the major events being planned in the region around both the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the United States and also the major Sail250 event will need to be addressed in the upcoming General Assembly session as well.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Outreach

Mr. McLaurin provided a summary overview of the new Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program now underway in Hampton Roads. The CPRG is a new EPA program funding both the development and implementation of plans to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). The region has received a \$1M planning grant with a December 1, 2025 deadline for completion of a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for Hampton Roads. At this point, Hampton Roads has not received implementation grant funding under the CPRG program.

Mr. McLaurin detailed that the next steps for the Hampton Roads CPRG effort include the development of both a more detailed current GHG inventory and also future projections in the region, the collection of regional and local government ideas for GHG reduction actions, and conducting additional outreach gathering input from communities through an upcoming survey and other actions. It was noted that the assistance of RTAP members in helping to connect to organizations throughout the region during the CRPG process will be an important asset to be maximized.

Other Business

"Around the Table" updates and general comments from RTAP members are noted as follows:

1. Mr. Crum stated that the Sustainable Parking lot demonstration project currently being constructed at the HRPDC headquarters building is due to be completed by the end of November.
2. The Atlantic Avenue Association at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront loved the Freebee ride service that recently concluded and is looking at options to extend similar operations.
3. Mr. Harris noted that the transit connection to the Atlanta airport is a great community service and asset.

4. In response to a question from the Panel, Mr. Crum confirmed that transit buses will be able to use the new express lanes under construction at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel for free, thereby providing reliable cross harbor travel times for the first time.
5. Ms. Braziel stated that HRT's next microtransit pilot projects will be launching in 2 weeks in the Bayside Area of Virginia Beach and also around the Mariners Museum in Newport News.
6. Ms. Dubinsky noted that the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) will meet next on October 8, 2024. Transit funding support issues will be discussed at the session, and registration and connection information for this session is available at the Department of Rail and Public Transportation website.
7. It was requested that a future RTAP meeting includes a discussion of Paratransit services and coverage zones.
8. Mr. McLaurin stated that the draft update to the region's Public Engagement Plan will be posted for comment soon.
9. Mr. McLaurin reported that the next Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on October 10, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.
10. Mr. McLaurin also advised that the draft report on the recent federal Quadrennial Review of the HRTPO organization is due to be received by late October, with the final version expected before the end of the year.

Adjournment

There being no more business before the groups, the meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Regional Legislative Agenda

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The following Regional Legislative Priorities were unanimously approved by the HRPDC and HRTPO. We will actively advocate to advance these items on behalf of the Hampton Roads Region.

State Funding for Planning District Commissions

Restore state funding to Planning District Commissions to the levels provided over two decades ago

- HRPDC serves as the hub for regional cooperation in Hampton Roads and provides services and promotes collaboration that results in cost savings and tremendous return on investment for the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- State funding for the Hampton Roads PDC has continuously decreased over the past two decades from just over \$366,000 in 2001 to \$190,943 in 2024.
- This decrease has not allowed the HRPDC to keep pace with basic inflationary costs and has created challenges with employee compensation and retention.
- When the Peninsula and Southside PDCs were merged, the HRPDC was reduced to one PDC funding share from the state.
- We request that the General Assembly take action to return \$190,000 in state funding to HRPDC, that was lost when the Peninsula and Southside PDC merger occurred.

Transportation Funding

Create a Primary and Secondary Road Fund for the Hampton Roads region that provides funding to advance critical and unfunded transportation projects

- The Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC) has used the Hampton Roads Transportation Fund (HRTF) to finance and construct a generational package of transportation improvements in Hampton Roads. The HRTF is funded by a regional sales and use tax and a regional gasoline tax. The regional sales and use tax is the primary funding source for the HRTF, and currently stands at 7/10 of a penny.

- We ask that the General Assembly create a Primary and Secondary Road Fund to advance transportation projects that are necessary to support/address economic development, the Port of Virginia, military/federal facilities, resiliency/flooding, public safety and other issues in Hampton Roads.
- We request that the General Assembly consider a variety of options to support the Primary and Secondary Road Fund, such as a direct budget appropriation, increase of the regional sales and use tax from 7/10 of a penny to a full penny, or other available funding options.
- The HRTF monies have been used by HRTAC to address congestion relief along the region's interstate highway network and have been fully leveraged. However, needs exist on our region's adjacent primary and secondary roads, and the HRTPO has identified over \$3 billion of unfunded needs on these facilities. A funding mechanism such as increasing the sales and use tax to a full penny would allow nearly \$1.5 billion of our unfunded primary and secondary road needs to be delivered between the years 2029 and 2034.
- The projects to be advanced by the Primary and Secondary Road Fund will be identified through the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization's (HRTPO) federally designated transportation planning and prioritization process. The monies provided by the Fund would be managed and leveraged by HRTAC, which is a national model for the financing of regional transportation projects.
- Since the current Hampton Roads Transportation Fund (HRTF) is fully leveraged to support debt service for over \$5 Billion of regional transportation projects, it is important that the HRTF is not used as a funding source for the Primary and Secondary Road Fund to ensure that HRTAC's credit rating is protected.

Flooding

Provide adequate funding through the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) to meet the flood preparedness and resilience needs of the Commonwealth

- The Hampton Roads region has successfully accessed CFPF funding to assist with the costs of completing vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented approaches to bolster flood preparedness and increase resilience.
- We request that the Commonwealth allocate a minimum of \$200 million per year to the CFPF to assist localities with their efforts to reduce the impacts of flooding.
- We also request that the CFPF continue to be structured as a grant rather than a loan program.

Develop a state funding program to provide the non-federal match for federal grants to support large-scale flood relief projects.

- Localities cannot afford the non-federal local match to unlock federal funding for flood mitigation projects.
- A substantial amount of federal money is available for flood mitigation efforts; however, localities cannot access these resources without providing a non-federal match. For example, the Army Corps of Engineers Coastal Storm Risk Management program provides 65% federal funding with a 35% non-federal match.
- In the case of Norfolk, a non-federal match of \$900 million is needed to access \$2.6 billion of federal funding.
- Since there is a significant return on investment and cost savings for the Commonwealth if our communities can access federal funding, we request that the state develop a funding program to contribute to the required non-federal share.

Provide funding to maintain and operate a regional flood sensor network across the Hampton Roads region

- The HRPDC has rolled out a Flood Sensor Pilot Program consisting of 20 installed flood sensors.
- These sensors inform motorists and residents of flooded roadways and are an important tool for promoting public safety and mobility in our communities.
- The goal is to expand this pilot program to install as many as 200 sensors across the region.
- Currently, there is no funding for the maintenance of this flood sensor network.
- We request that the state provide \$3 million of funding over a five-year period for a flood sensor maintenance program in Hampton Roads.

Enact state legislation that provides for the transparent disclosure of past flooding experiences during the real estate transaction process

- The current statute does not provide clear or adequate information on past flooding for potential buyers.
- We request that the state enact clear legislation that provides knowledge of past flood damage, and whether the subject property is in a special flood hazard area.

Trails

Provide state funding to help support an interconnected regional biking and walking trail network in Hampton Roads

- Community surveys demonstrate that biking and walking trails are economic drivers, promote alternative and environmentally sustainable transportation choices for all residents, and contribute to a community's quality of life.
- The Hampton Roads region has unanimously endorsed a regional trail network that will interconnect the region.
- We request funding to assist our region in advancing the following biking and walking trails in Hampton Roads:
 - Dismal Swamp Trail VA Section (\$3 million)
 - 5 miles of trail to complete the gap between the Virginia and North Carolina sections
 - Elizabeth River Trail (\$50 million)
 - Approximately 7 – 10 miles planned eastern expansion
 - South Hampton Roads Trail (\$25 million)
 - Complete sections of trail in Portsmouth
 - Trail757 (\$300 million)
 - Approximately 60 miles of trail that would extend the 52-mile Virginia Capital Trail to over 100 miles connecting the Hampton Roads region and Richmond
 - Virginia Beach Trail (\$55 million)
 - Funding for the design and construction of a critical 7-mile segment of the VB trail

Offshore Wind

Support legislative efforts that continue to advance Hampton Roads into a hub for the Offshore Wind Industry

- Significant economic activity continues to occur around the offshore wind industry in Hampton Roads, including the LS GreenLink announcement to invest \$680 million to build the world's largest high-voltage direct current submarine cable facility in the City of Chesapeake.
- The region's geographic location in the Mid-Atlantic region, our harbor with no vertical obstructions, and a specialized workforce all position Hampton Roads to be the hub to support wind turbines planned for construction along the East Coast.

- We request the support of our state and federal partners to continue the momentum around offshore wind in Hampton Roads and capitalize on this significant job creation opportunity.

Passenger Rail

Support faster and more reliable passenger rail service between Hampton Roads, Richmond and the Northeast Corridor

- We offer support for projects that will reduce passenger rail travel time from the Norfolk and Newport News train stations to the Richmond/I-95 corridor and Washington, DC.
- With the location of modern passenger rail stations in both Newport News and Norfolk, now is the time to continue improvements to reduce travel time and make passenger rail a competitive choice of travel.
- We request that the Hampton Roads to Richmond corridor be examined to identify projects that can decrease passenger rail travel time.

Transit Funding

Support adequate funding for Hampton Roads three transit providers

- We request that the General Assembly preserve and consider increased funding to support Hampton Roads Transit, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority and Suffolk Transit.

Elizabeth River Crossing Toll Relief

Continue efforts to mitigate the impact of tolls at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels

- We applaud the work of the Virginia General Assembly to continue to expand toll relief efforts at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels.
- We support and encourage continued collaboration to explore all options to further reduce toll rates for our residents and businesses.

REGIONAL POSITION STATEMENTS

The HRPDC/HRTPO will monitor the following Regional Position Statements during the General Assembly session and support and oppose proposed legislation as appropriate.

Housing

We support policy decisions that assist in providing housing opportunities for all Hampton Roads residents. The HRPDC is leading the preparation of our region's first housing assessment to identify

housing gaps and needs and determine strategies to address our housing challenges. We request support for the recommendations and strategies produced by this regional housing assessment. We also support the continuation of funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

Economic Development Site Readiness

We continue to support state funding programs and policies that assist local governments with preparing shovel-ready economic development sites.

Jefferson Lab

We offer unanimous regional support for efforts to advance the Department of Energy's High Performance Data Facility at Jefferson Lab.

Transportation Network Maintenance and Repair

Costs for transportation system maintenance continue to rise with inflation. The Commonwealth should consider increased assistance to address these maintenance needs.

Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) Monitoring Wells

The Sustainable Water Initiative for Tomorrow (SWIFT) program is an innovative water treatment project designed to further protect the region's environment, enhance the sustainability of the region's long-term groundwater supply and help address environmental issues such as Chesapeake Bay restoration, sea level rise and land subsidence. We request funding for enhanced HRSD monitoring wells around the James River SWIFT injection site to monitor the impact of groundwater injection on the aquifer and land subsidence.

Protect Local Land Use Authority

We support maintaining and expanding local authority to plan and regulate land use and oppose any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.

Reject Unfunded Mandates

We ask that the General Assembly oppose any proposals that would impose new unfunded mandates and fiscal responsibilities on local governments.

Affordable and Qualified Childcare

The rising cost of childcare is having a significant impact on our region's families. These concerns are shared by military leadership who have identified affordable childcare as a critical priority. We support actions by the General Assembly that increase access to affordable and qualified childcare for our residents.

Virginia Barrier Crime Statute

Many times, individuals who have paid their debt to society have the opportunity to be trusted advisors who can help guide and assist our youth. The current Statute does not allow our communities to leverage these credible mentorship opportunities. We support amendments to this Statute to allow more individuals with applicable life experiences to serve as credible messengers and youth mentors

Speed Camera Use by Localities

We ask the General Assembly to support the use of speed cameras by our localities to promote public safety within our communities.

K-12 Public Education School Construction Funding

Investments in K-12 public education are critical to the health of our communities. We support efforts by the General Assembly to restore state funding to ensure our public education facilities support our K-12 public education needs.

Workforce Development

We support the efforts of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council to prepare and enhance our regional workforce capabilities, and ask for the General Assembly's continued support of these efforts.