

# ON THE MOVE

HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2023



HAMPTON ROADS  
TRANSIT



# HRT Reduces Fare for Former MAX Routes

HRT is helping riders keep more of their hard-earned money. On July 1, 2023, all adult one-way bus tickets were reduced to \$2.00, including all former MAX Routes. That's a savings of \$2.00 off the current price. With this move, HRT is making transit more affordable and accessible to more people. The price of an all-day pass also decreased to \$4.50, down from \$7.50.

This move also simplifies HRT's fare structure, bringing all base fares to \$2.00 regardless of mode. William Harrell, President and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit said, "We believe this will not only save our customers money, but it will help our daily riders when it comes to budgeting monthly transportation costs and potentially attract new riders to the service."



In October, the MAX service was rebranded to 757 Express. The fare was reduced to be consistent with the other routes under the 757 Express moniker. The affected routes include all 900-series routes – Routes 921, 960, 961, 964, 966, 967, 972 and 980.

Discounted tickets are still available to seniors, persons with disabilities and youth 17 and under. Students 17 and under can ride any mode free with a Student Freedom Pass. ■

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# Hampton Roads Transit Partners with Operation Lifesaver and the City of Norfolk

Hampton Roads Transit launched its Operation Lifesaver Safety Campaign at the beginning of June, just in time for a busy summer festival season in the City of Norfolk.

HRT received \$20,000 from Operation Lifesaver to complete various rail safety initiatives from June through September of this year. "It's the third time we've received this grant and we're very proud of that accomplishment," said William Harrell, President and CEO of Hampton Roads Transit at the campaign's kick-off event. Mr. Harrell added that HRT was one of only six agencies across the nation to receive this funding and received the highest award amongst all agencies.



The safety campaign kicked off with a full light rail wrap unveiling on Monday, June 5, at the Norfolk Tide Facility. This wrapped Tide train will run throughout the City of Norfolk until mid-September, sharing important safety reminders with riders, drivers, and pedestrians.

"We believe that railroad safety is so important for all of us in Virginia," said Virginia State Delegate Shelly Simonds (District 94), who spoke at the event. Tracey Lamb, Virginia State Coordinator for Operation Lifesaver and John Stevenson, Norfolk's Director of Transit also spoke. Representatives from American Red Cross, Virginia House of Delegates, DRPT and Visit Norfolk were also in attendance.

Public Outreach expects this wrapped train will help prevent any rail incidents during busy downtown events and everyday commutes. The goal of this campaign is to encourage visitors and residents of Norfolk to "See Tracks? Think Train!" ■

# HRT Hosts First Regional Transit Advocacy Day

On May 4, Hampton Roads Transit hosted its first Regional Transit Advocacy Day. This historic event brought together more than 60 leaders from business, community organizations and all levels of government, including Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-03), State Senator Aaron Rouse (District 7), Councilwomen Andria McClellan (Norfolk) and Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond (Virginia Beach), and Delegate Angelia Williams Graves (District 90).

Regional Transit Advocacy Day was an event months in the making. Members of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization asked for an opportunity to experience our various modes of transportation.

This “day in the life of a transit rider” experience included a ride on the Tide light rail, a visit to the Downtown Norfolk Transit Center, and a bus ride to HRT Headquarters on 18th Street in Norfolk. The event culminated with comments from Rep. Scott, Dr. Ross-Hammond, Sarah Jane Kirkland; Associate Vice President for Corporate Partnerships at ODU, Linda Peck; President/CEO Greater Norfolk Corporation, and Denise Johnson; Transit Riders Advisory Committee.



As Ms. Kirkland stated so succinctly, “Where transit goes, business grows.” The overarching theme of the day was that although HRT has made many improvements to our services and amenities, more needs to be done to expand regional transit service and to increase frequency of service on our regular routes. Rep. Bobby Scott also noted, “You can’t go to work, if you can’t get to work.” It’s clear that a robust public transportation system is essential to a thriving Hampton Roads economy.

Of course, none of this can be accomplished without sustainable funding from the state and federal government. A message repeated throughout the day from our guests, such as the Norfolk NAACP, Norfolk Transit Department, and Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance, is that more reliable service will translate into more riders.

Delivering more reliable service, improved amenities and increased frequency will move HRT closer to achieving its Vision of promoting prosperity throughout the region and toward fulfilling our Mission of connecting Hampton Roads.

Regional Transit Advocacy Day equipped those who took part with the knowledge they need to go back to their respective city and state leaders and advocate on behalf of HRT for ongoing and sustainable public transportation funding. ■

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## Light Rail Operators Win Hospitality Award

Hampton Roads Transit Light Rail Operators were given the Champions of Hospitality 2023 Award for Best Front-Line Employees by Visit Norfolk. The crew was presented with the award during National Travel and Tourism week at the end of April. Members of Visit Norfolk made a surprise trip to the Norfolk Tide Facility to deliver the award and some goodies and to thank the Operators. In addition to our visitors, many of the city’s hospitality workers who rely on the service of our public transit system can get to their restaurants and hotels for work on time, aiding in the success of the overall tourism industry for our community. ■



## 20 New HRT Paratransit Vans Now in Service

HRT has officially welcomed 20 new Chrysler Voyager vans fresh from the manufacturer to bolster its paratransit service. Each of the vehicles is ADA-accessible and has begun carrying passengers.

The Chrysler vans have been modified to comfortably fit up to one wheelchair and three ambulatory riders at a time. Customers with oversized wheelchairs should make note at the time of booking, as they will require a larger vehicle from the paratransit fleet.

“We are excited about the arrival of these new vehicles and the ease of mobility they will provide people with disabilities in our region,” said William E. Harrell, President, and CEO of HRT. “We look forward to using these vans to provide safe and reliable service to our paratransit customers going shopping, to medical appointments and other destinations.”



Six of the vans were paid for with money from the Hampton Roads Regional Transit Fund for fleet expansion. The remaining 14 were funded with FFY2020 formula 5339 funds through the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and serve as replacements for vehicles that are beyond their useful life benchmark as defined by the FTA. The current fleet consists of 97 vehicles, which includes a combination of StarCraft/Ford Cutaways, Ford Transits and now, these Chrysler Voyagers. There are also Mercedes Metris vans and Hyundai Elantra sedans dedicated for Paratransit service by Via Transportation, HRT’s contractor for daily operations. ■

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## Route 114 Launch

Hampton Roads Transit launched its newest 757 Express Route on May 15, 2023. The Route 114 is now serving Downtown Hampton to the NewMarket area. Customers can board every 15 minutes during the morning and afternoon rush hour.

The Route 114 is the second 757 Express service to launch on the Peninsula. Last October, the Route 112 began with increased service during peak hours in Newport News. It provides service to Newport News Shipbuilding, Riverside Regional Medical Center, and Patrick Henry Mall. Since it was launched, the Route 112 has seen a 20% increase in ridership.



The launch of the Route 114 coincided with the grand reopening of the Hampton Transit Center. Using a \$3.5 million Smart Scale grant, HRT was able to improve the efficiency of the facility by expanding park and ride access to support additional commuters, increasing the number of bus shelters, improving bike amenities and pedestrian crossings, and updating the landscaping.

The reconfiguration allowed for the addition of five new bus bays, which are a critical component as we look to expand regional transit service on the Peninsula.

Later this year, riders on the Southside can look forward to the launch of 757 Express service on Route 20, the busiest route in the Commonwealth, along Virginia Beach Blvd. It’s expected to begin in October. ■