

**Delegate David Yancey, 94th District - Meeting Notes**  
**11009 Warwick Blvd., Suite 212**  
**Newport News, VA**  
**Monday, October 8, 2018**  
**Time: 11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.**  
**Ended 12:22 P.M.**

**Transit Advocates' Meeting with Members of Virginia General Assembly**

**Attendees:**

- Delegate David Yancey, 94th District Representative, Transportation Committee Member. Newport News representative for the HRTPO and HRTAC.
- Denise Johnson, HRT Transit Riders' Advisory Committee (TRAC) Chair
- Janice Taylor, HRT Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC) Chair
- Keith Johnson, Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), Manager of Paratransit
- Darcy Sink, League of Women Voters (LWV), South Hampton Roads, Transportation Committee

\*The meeting was originally scheduled with Del. Yancey's Chief of Staff Gretchen Heal, but Delegate Yancey was able to host us himself.

**Introductions, Attendees tell their experiences and concerns**

Ms. Johnson introduced herself as a longtime transit user in Hampton Roads and noted a concern for reliable and efficient service. She departed at 7:00 am to travel from Norfolk and arrive for the 10:00 am meeting.

Ms. Taylor introduced herself as new to the area and also relatively new user to paratransit services as a recent disabled person. Although she referenced using transit in New York City. She emphasized Paratransit as a lifeline to its users independence, existence, connectivity to the outside world, to avoid isolation and for social stimulation. Paratransit and transportation is also key to a healthy community to travel to doctors appointments, therapy, dialysis, shopping (clothing and grocery) and the pharmacy to get much needed prescriptions.

Ms. Sink introduced herself a citizen who grew up in the 94th district. She would like more transportation options to support efficient movement of people and goods and to improve quality of life and connectivity between our cities. Multi-modal options are key to truly mitigating traffic congestion (highways can only be widened so far), stemming environmental impacts, and planning for future growth.

**Delegate David Yancey's Viewpoint**

Del. Yancey explained that he has spoken with HRT leadership and advises more efficient bus routes that are based on ridership data to make the most of limited transit funds.

The attendees explained that they and HRT are aware of that constraint and HRT is pursuing a Bus Rapid Transit option for the peninsula corridor study.

1. Inconsistent service, his opinion they need to hone in the routes. More predictability. The Tide is not used. NSU students use it. He believes the light rail comes in second as the least used transit system in the state. And, has observed only 8-people on a train during rush hour periods.  
He sees it as a failed project. He elaborated light rail is also not possible on

the peninsula because CSX will not share right of way. Norfolk Southern trains does not want to run next to light rail either.

He suggested MARTA system.

He discussed with HRT that HRT needs to create more excitement about future plans to engage riders and and build a public mandate for initiatives.

2. Big challenges. This is not a traditional city. Like NYC. Never built for transportation.
3. Had cable cars.
4. Improve rail system for the Peninsula? No. The people here are a car dominated system.
5. Challenges for the law. Did not adjust gas tax for inflation. Thinking is take port money for transit.
6. 2012 bill 2313 - get away from gas tax to sales tax. Gas tax is regressive. Sales tax affects everyone. Internet sales tax.

The thought is/was we have enough money for transportation. The decision was infrastructure is not good.

Del. Yancey noted possible revisions to the “gax tax” bill (HB2313) that may impact transportation. He also expressed support for a measure to use a tax on commerce through the Port of Virginia to support infrastructure improvements that would benefit road transportation in and out of the port and in the region overall.

Del. Yancey gave an in-depth report of his work on the transportation committee particularly regarding the expansion of the I-64 Fort Eustis corridor and the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. HRTO the projects need funding.

HRBT is that it has to be done to improve transportation.

I64 to I664 to Outer Banks. Culturally, speaking is slower here.

He also spoke of upcoming projects on interstates in the Hampton Roads Region through 2040.

## **7. What other forms in the future?**

Del. Yancey also gave a detailed explanation of the mechanics of the transportation committee, its interactions with other committees, and the competing interests and projects throughout the state.

Long Bridge. Ex. Potomac River a train bridge. Uneasy between railroad, federal government. A service a time to run through. Mandarin Hotel - train runs under an upscale hotel.

He noted that the Long Bridge project in Northern Virginia will impact transportation funding.

I81 corridor. Port of Virginia. HRBT has to be completed 2021.

8. Container traffic competing. Savannah/Atlantic

Attendees noted that one of HRT’s main hurdles is the lack of dedicated funding that disrupts continuity of service and inhibits long range planning. They asked Del. Yancey whether a measure supporting dedicated funding for public transit would be possible in the next 5 years. Del. Yancey explained that it would be possible, but reminded attendees of the competing interests for transportation dollars and of public sentiment that heavily favors spending to support personal vehicles.

Attendees asked Del. Yancey whether he supports HRT’s study for high capacity transit on the Peninsula. He supports the measure but believes dollars are wasted on studies. The peninsula’s geography (long and narrow) only leaves only a few viable options for fixed guideway routes. A study could be done with local resources (HRT experts and city traffic engineers) instead of a few consultants who get rich off of a study to create a product that could

have been produced in-house. Attendees explained that the studies (such as DEIS and EIS) are required to compete for federal dollars, to which he did not have a reply.

**None of this matters if we can't figure out how to move people around. Get people to work. How do we help Sunday church people?**

Delegate Yancey discussed.

Appropriation. Transportation budget. Split into committees. Hiccup has been the cities argument. States perspective where are you spending money. HR Planning Committee. Everyone is aware transportation issue.

He encourages us to our officials. Talk to them to see what they want and would get them to work together...He reached out to others to work out agreements.

**He spoke briefly about Project Patriot. Patriots Crossing comes out of navy yard. Nothing could done until Army Core of Engineers signs off.**

**LWV: How do we put together a deal where everyone benefits? Get localities together.**

Del. Yancey gave attendees a tutorial on deal making and drafting legislation. He noted that sometimes advocacy groups become so focused or embattled on an issue that they cannot look beyond it. He encourages the League of Women Voters to speak with every locality in the region to identify common interests and propose phased legislation that everyone gets something out of and is thus invested in. He suggested sharing this homespun legislation at the HRTPO and posited that perhaps it will gain advocates among the electeds and city staffs. He advised us to study the various bills related to transportation and the consolidated financial statements so that we can “speak intelligently and not be fooled.” Attendees pointed out that this meeting is an example of the LWV forming a coalition with other transit advocates (TRAC and PAC) to propose transit issues to legislators. Del. Yancey also suggested that LWV remain aware of other transit initiatives in the state, such as the push to create a Roanoke Valley transportation authority which might free up transportation dollars for other areas.

**Long process to fix transportation**

**What is the most immediate thing to fix.**

**Build on immediate successes.**

Del. Yancey concluded the meeting noting that he agrees that public transportation needs to be better funded and more efficient so that it is a reasonable alternative.