



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes
Wednesday, January 15th, 2025
Hampton, VA
1:30 PM

Commissioners in Attendance:

Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, Chair ELAC
Commissioner Roland White, Hampton

Attendees:

Michael D. Hawthorne, Squire Patton Boggs
Sheri Neil
Janice Taylor

HRT Staff:

Alexis Majied, Chief Communications Officer
Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer
Petra Jovanovic, Executive Assistant
Thomas Becher, Communications Manager
Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning and Development Officer
Anthony Clemmons, Sr. Client Technology Specialist Technology

The meeting began at 1:30 pm with Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, Chair, calling the meeting to order.

Chairman Goodwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4th, 2024, External and Legislative Advisory Committee (ELAC) meeting. Commissioner Roland White made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Chairman Tony Goodwin. The minutes were approved by the committee.

Federal Legislative Update:

Michael Hawthorne, Squire Patton Boggs, provided the federal legislative update reporting that President Trump will be sworn into office on January 20th. The Senate Commerce Committee has scheduled a confirmation hearing for Secretary of Transportation Nominee former Rep. Sean Duffy on January 15th, which could set up a confirmation vote as early as the following week. The Federal Transit Administrator (FTA) nominee is still to be determined.



President Trump and the Department of Transportation are expected to take a variety of executive/regulation actions on or soon after January 20th, including:

- Repeal of Biden-era Executive Orders on Justice40, environmental reviews, and climate policies.
- Numerous other Executive Orders are expected during the first weeks of the Trump Administration on priority topics (e.g., immigration, Tariffs, etc.)

House and Senate leaders are currently negotiating subcommittee allocations and legislative strategies for Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills prior to the March 14th federal funding deadline. Several minibus packages have been considered. The earmark process is likely to remain despite unified Republican control of Congress.

It is expected that there will be close alignment between Congress and President Trump on the Surface Transportation Reauthorization. The House of Representatives will likely move on reauthorization bill before the Senate; House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) may hold hearings in 2025 to establish Republican priorities/evaluate Biden-era programs/provisions in the IJA to justify significant changes. The Senate is unlikely to take significant action on reauthorization in 2025.

Congress may consider major tax, energy, immigration, and debt limit legislation under the budget reconciliation process before May 2025, but these efforts may have little impact on surface transportation programs.

State Legislative Update:

- HRT is supporting a \$50 million budget amendment to provide a one-time infusion of funding into the statewide Operating and Capital program (MERIT).
- HRT has requested a much smaller budget amendment that would provide modest resources to help offset the tolling expenses that HRT is incurring.
- Senator Rouse and Delegate Askew have introduced SB1097 and HB1982 respectively that would apply rail performance metrics to the light rail as opposed to bus performance metrics. These important performance metrics determine transit funding allocations in Virginia. Up to this point in time, there has never been deliberate attention given to addressing the unique needs of Light Rail compared to Bus operations. The proposed legislation follows the precedent established for WMATA and VRE by codifying consistent treatment for Light Rail. Passage of these bills will help provide clear legislative guidance for future funding and policy decisions.



General Assembly Advocacy Day:

Chairman Goodwin and Commissioner White, together with Mayor Glover will be joining the HRT team on Monday January 27th in Richmond for Transit Advocacy Day with the Virginia Transit Association. A list of appointments and collateral material will be provided ahead of time to ensure effective communication with our legislators about our priorities.

Local Advocacy City Council Presentations

Noelle Pinkard provided Committee with updates regarding Local Advocacy City Council presentations.

During 2024, HRT staff met with all representative City Councils except for City of Hampton. Currently, HRT staff are working together with Hampton Deputy City manager to schedule a meeting with the Council to discuss the Ferry Study. This study was previously presented to Newport News and Norfolk City councils.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

Alexis Majied gave the Marketing & Communications update.

On January 1st Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) started its annual “Vanuary” campaign. This campaign is an opportunity for HRT to promote van pooling and remind our business community about its benefits through goCommute program formerly known as Traffix.

In December HRT participated in the Virginia Beach Holiday Parade. Virginia Beach City Council members joined the ride on decorated VB Wave trolley as part of the parade.

HRT continues to promote its OnDemand Microtransit Rideshare program that was launched in October 2024. Towards the end of November, we started to see a spike in ridership numbers. We are hoping to see the ridership continue to build in 2025.

HRT was invited to mascot night with Norfolk Admirals. All the mascots from throughout Hampton Roads region descended upon Norfolk Scope to participate in the mascot night, and HRT's mascot Gus the Bus was present for the event.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05pm.

The next ELAC meeting is scheduled for February 19th, 2025, in the Norfolk Boardroom.