



External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes

Wednesday, February 19th, 2025

1:30 PM - Zoom

Commissioners in Attendance:

Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, Chair ELAC
Commissioner Roland White, Hampton
Commissioner Amelia Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach

Attendees:

Michael D. Hawthorne, Squire Patton Boggs
Sheri Neil, City of Portsmouth
Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters

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
Uma Uma, Helpdesk, 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 January 15th, 2025, 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 from Squire Patton Boggs provided the federal legislative update.

Former Representative Sean Duffy was sworn in as the 20th Secretary of Transportation on January 28th. Former Rep. Marc Molinaro (R-NY) has been nominated to be FTA Administrator; he is awaiting Senate confirmation.



President Trump has signed more than 75 executive orders, memos, and actions in his first month in office, including:

- Executive Orders and memos establishing deregulatory goals, freezing federal grant and loan disbursements, halting climate and green energy funding, and freezing most federal hiring; and
- EOs repealing Biden-era policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Justice 40, and climate initiatives.

Secretary Duffy has taken early actions to implement President Trump’s Executive Orders, including an order to ban grants for “projects and goals that are purely local in nature and unrelated to a proper Federal interest.”

House and Senate leaders are still negotiating funding levels and protection-from-DOGE cuts for FY25 appropriations bills prior to the March 14 federal funding deadline. A further continuing resolution (CR) is possible to avert a government shutdown, with some Members supporting a CR through the end of the fiscal year and a pivot to FY 2026 funding bills.

The House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee has begun holding hearings on transportation topics in advance of reauthorization, already holding hearings on roadway safety and freight rail.

The House and Senate Budget Committees have advanced competing budget reconciliation proposals to enact key legislative priorities, including major tax, energy, immigration, and debt limit legislation. Reconciliation may have little impact on surface transportation programs.

State Legislative Update:

Noelle Pinkard provided the state legislative update.

The legislation regarding performance metrics for Light Rail was laid on the table respectively in the Senate and the House Appropriations and Finance Committees. We hope to reintroduce the bill during the 2026 legislative session.

HRT has been successful in getting budget language in the House version of the second year of the biennium budget. The language directs the Department of Rail and Public Transportation to work with HRT and the Elizabeth River Crossing to help find acceptable resolution to transit vehicles being charged tolls. The Senate version of the budget included \$200,000.00 to help HRT pay current tolls. The ELAC Committee will be updated as the legislature continues to finalize work on the budget.



General Assembly Advocacy Day:

Chairman Goodwin and Commissioner White, together with Mayor Glover joined the HRT team on Monday January 27th in Richmond for Transit Advocacy Day with the Virginia Transit Association. It was an opportunity for HRT to talk with legislators about exciting projects that are taking place in their respective districts.

DC Advocacy Day

HRT will plan a DC Advocacy trip in May this year in order to discuss appropriations requests for FY26. Right now, there is an \$800,000 earmark pending in the FY25 Transportation Appropriations Bill. HRT is currently working on the 2026 appropriations request, and one possibility is to request more paratransit vehicles and funding to help support the midlife overhaul of the light rail.

Local Advocacy City Council Presentations

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

The cities are currently engaged in their budget processes. Because of this, HRT will start scheduling annual meetings with the city councils closer to summertime.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

Alexis Majied gave the Marketing & Communications update.

In honor of Rosa Parks and her contributions to advancing equity in public transportation, Hampton Roads Transit provided free bus, light rail, ferry, OnDemand ridesharing and paratransit services on the Monday following her birthday, which this year was February 10th, 2025, as part of HRT's celebration of Transit Equity Day.

Also, on February 10th, 2025, HRT together with Hot 91 hosted a Random Acts of Kindness event at the Downtown Norfolk Transit Center. Customers were able to win prizes including a 30-day transit pass. On Wednesday, February 12th, 2025, the same event was held at the Hampton Transit Center.

On February 14th HRT finished its annual employee survey. The goal was to collect over 400 surveys, last year 352 surveys were collected, while this year that number was 413.

At the end of 2024, Hampton Roads Transit launched an interactive route map to help customers plan trips and better navigate the transit system, and the marketing team has been working on advertising and social media promotion. This new system map allows you to go onto the HRT website and access real-time information for all routes and over 2,600 bus stops – a significant upgrade from previous options that showed only major stops. It's a great way to help customers with planning that trip.



Vanuary campaign throughout January and February was an opportunity for the goCommute program to promote vanpooling throughout our region. As a result of this campaign, there are 4 new vanpools.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05pm.

The next ELAC meeting is scheduled for March 19th, 2025, in the Hampton Boardroom.