



HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes

Wednesday, July 16th, 2025

1:30 PM Hampton, VA

Commissioners in Attendance:

Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, ELAC Chair

Commissioner Roland White, Hampton

Commissioner Hope Harper, Hampton City Council

Attendees:

Michael D. Hawthorne, Squire Patton Boggs

Cassidy Taylor, Access Point Public Affairs

Megan Gribble, Manager of Transportation Planning, City of Portsmouth

Janice Taylor, Paratransit Advisory Committee

Ed Reed, Two Capitols Consulting, representing the City of Hampton

David Westcott, Jr., City of Chesapeake

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) Staff:

Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development

Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer

Sheri Dixon, Director of Revenue Services

Monique Lynch, TDM Program Specialist

Caleb Smith, Military Outreach Liaison

Thomas Becher, Communications Manager

John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist

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 June 18, 2025, External and Legislative Advisory Committee (ELAC) meeting. Commissioner Roland White made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Chairman Goodwin. The minutes were approved by the committee.

Federal Legislative Update:

Michael Hawthorne of Squire Patton Boggs reported that the White House released its “skinny” Budget Request on May 2, 2025, which includes \$25.6 billion in requested discretionary funding for the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT), a 6% increase over Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 levels. The FY 2026 proposal is consistent with authorized funding levels and includes a proposed 2.5% funding increase for transit formula funds. Congress is not bound to follow the spending recommendations in the President’s budget request.

Work on FY 2026 appropriations bills is ongoing. However, a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government past September 30, 2025, is increasingly likely as Congress continues to prioritize the budget reconciliation process and as appropriators await key budget documents from the Trump



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Administration. The House Appropriations Committee will mark up annual appropriations bills throughout July. To date, the Committee has released text of four of twelve of its annual appropriations bills. The Senate has not announced a markup schedule.

Subcommittee and Full Committee markups of the FY 2026 House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill is expected to occur on July 14 and July 17, respectively. The bill will likely include earmarks.

Congress is continuing to consider Republican-led tax, spending, and debt limit legislation. The reconciliation process is unlikely to impact most transportation programs.

State Legislative Update:

Noelle Pinkard reported that there was no state legislative update as the General Assembly is currently in recess.

Local Advocacy City Council Presentations

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

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

Thomas Becher gave the Marketing & Communications update and introduced the Be Kind campaign that will appear inside buses and light rail vehicles. The campaign is designed to remind riders to be kind, not make a mess while eating/drinking, not to smoke or vape, and to wear headphones when listening to music or podcasts. The campaign was designed in-house following a request from the Security Department.

A poster reminding bus operators to be safe on the road was presented. The poster reiterates that operators are carrying precious cargo, as illustrated by a model bus carrying eggs.

The light rail safety video was reviewed. This campaign reminds baseball fans to always stay alert and watch for trains on the tracks. The video, part of the Operation Lifesaver grant, features Chris Pfaffinger and his son, Sebastian. <https://youtu.be/bSRdkv96ySY>

Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC)

Caleb Smith shared information concerning a potential shuttle service at Naval Support Activity Portsmouth. As discussed at the last ELAC meeting, NSA Portsmouth approached HRT to see if a shuttle service similar to the Base Express at Naval Station Norfolk was possible. NSA Portsmouth's goal is to get Navy personnel and civilian employees to and from Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Scott Annex, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, and other locations. Since the last ELAC meeting, the Navy has submitted their initial route and list of stops in the region to HRT. Amy Brazier, HRT Director of Contracted Services and Operational Analytics, is reviewing the proposal and HRT will respond once the review is complete. The goal is for this shuttle service to use a TRIP grant from DRPT.



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New and Old Business

Commissioner Goodwin shared that Portsmouth's Safety Town will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary. Mr. Godwin thinks it would be a good idea to try and partner with them in some way for this celebration. Safety Town is a partnership between Portsmouth's education, law enforcement, and legislative bodies designed to teach young children pedestrian and bicycle safety. Through the use of age-appropriate, hands-on interactive experiences, children enjoy learning lifesaving behaviors and practices that help reduce the chance of serious injury. Safety Town provides a safe and interesting learning environment that is set up to simulate an actual neighborhood.

Portsmouth Public Schools students visit Safety Town in kindergarten, first grade and third grade to practice pedestrian and bike safety. They also have the opportunity to engage with Portsmouth City Police officers.

Sheri Dixon shared that HRT will be installing a ticket vending machine at the Waterside ferry dock. The current system will not work properly with bus system diagnostics. HRT is currently working on rolling out mobile ticketing in phases. The summer rollout has been for the Virginia Beach Wave trolley and later in the year it will be phased into buses, light rail, and ferry.

Ms. Dixon also discussed the concept of fare capping, a feature of public transport fare collection systems that allows passengers to earn an unlimited-ride pass by paying single-ride fares. Typically, passengers pay a single-ride fare each time they use public transport, using a smart card or their own credit or debit card. An automated fare collection system tracks the payments, and awards the passenger an unlimited-ride pass after they have paid the equivalent value in single-ride fares.

Commissioner Goodwin brought up the GoPass365 program as the discussion was around farecards. Amy Jordan shared what the current state of the program entailed and that goCommute was in the works to rebrand or reframe the program to meet the growing needs of the community. Noelle Pinkard suggested that GoPass365 be added as a future agenda item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

The next ELAC meeting is scheduled for August 20th, 2025, in the Norfolk Boardroom.