



HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

External Legislative Advisory Committee Minutes

Wednesday, October 15th, 2025

1:30 PM

Norfolk, VA

Commissioners in Attendance:

Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, ELAC Chair, Portsmouth

Commissioner Roland White, Hampton

Attendees:

Mike Miller, The Ferguson Group

Jeremiah Van Auken, The Ferguson Group

Jeffrey Burke, The Ferguson Group

Sheri Neil, City of Portsmouth

Janice Taylor, HRT Paratransit Advisory Committee

Cassidy Taylor, Access Point Public Affairs

Mindy Carlin, Access Point Public Affairs

Gretchen Heal, Hampton Roads Chamber

Jerri Wilson, City of Newport News

Megan Gribble, City of Portsmouth

HRT Staff:

Alexis Majied, Chief Communications Officer

Amy Jordan, Director of Business Development

Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer

Gene Cavasos, Director of Marketing

Petra Jovanovic, Executive Assistant

Thomas Becher, Communications Manager

John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist

Caleb Smith, Military and Government Affairs Outreach Liaison

The meeting began at 1:30 pm with Chairman Goodwin calling the meeting to order.

Chairman Goodwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from September 2025 External and Legislative Advisory Committee (ELAC) meeting. Lacking a quorum, the vote was postponed until the November ELAC meeting.

Federal Legislative Update:

Chairman Goodwin introduced The Ferguson Group (TFG) team, who will be assisting HRT staff with federal legislative efforts. Jeremiah Van Auken of TFG provided the federal legislative update, noting that the government shutdown remains in effect with no resolution in sight. He also presented information on Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant opportunities. Mr. Van Auken concluded his report with a discussion of a recent meeting between leaders of the House Transportation and



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Infrastructure Committee, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials, and law enforcement personnel focused on enhancing safety on public transportation systems.

State Legislative Update:

Ms. Mindy Carlin of Access Point provided the state legislative update, reminding the committee about proposed changes to the state's Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) capital and operating funding program. One-on-one meetings with Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) members were held throughout September, and another TSDAC meeting has been scheduled for November.

TSDAC's feedback primarily focused on the proposed shift to a biennial application cycle for major enhancement projects. TSDAC members emphasized the need for additional consideration regarding how this change aligns with other funding cycles. TSDAC also noted that using a three-year average to calculate performance may not adequately account for the disproportionate impact that single-year metrics can have on project sizing. The public comment period on the proposed changes is currently open and closes on November 21, 2025.

Local Advocacy City Council Presentations

Noelle Pinkard provided an update regarding local city council advocacy meetings. HRT's 2025 advocacy efforts have been centered around the System Optimization Plan. On October 14, the HRT team met with the City of Newport News. A meeting with Hampton City Council is scheduled for October 22, 2025, and another with the City of Norfolk is scheduled for October 28, 2025.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

Alexis Majied presented the Committee with a Marketing and Communications update.

The annual Neptune festival in Virginia Beach was celebrated in September. HRT participated in this event with a paratransit vehicle to promote this service that HRT provides. Also, HRT provided transportation to the parade as well. HRT is looking to continue this partnership with Neptune Festival next year.

The Student Freedom Pass campaign has been in progress since the start of the school year. To date, the Public Outreach team has issued 979 passes to students across Hampton Roads. So far in FY26, over 1,200 passes were issued, in comparison to 1,700 passes total from FY25.

State of Transit event is scheduled for October 21st, 2025. The program starts at 9am. This year's theme, "Sustaining the Future of Transit," will focus on how to build reliable, resilient, and people-first transit systems for the next decade and beyond. HRT is honored to host Paul P. Skoutelas, President and CEO of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) as keynote speaker.

New and Old Business

Chair Goodwin reminded the committee that Safety Town in Portsmouth will celebrate its 50th anniversary this October 22nd, 2025, starting at 5pm. HRT will provide bus signage and other items that can help children familiarize themselves with public transportation.



Applications for transit grants at the State level are now open. HRT uses these funds for projects like Microtransit, South Side facility, internships, etc. The TRIP grant is also important because of possibility for the Norfolk Naval shipyard to have a shuttle connecting it with the Hospital in Portsmouth. HRT's Planning team is working with the shipyard on developing this service and how similar it would be to Base Express at Norfolk Naval station. As these conversations are ongoing, once more information is available, Caleb Smith will provide an update to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15pm.

The next ELAC meeting is scheduled for November 5th, 2025, in the Hampton Boardroom.