



Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads **2026 Legislative Agenda**

Public transportation is a cornerstone of economic prosperity and community well-being across Hampton Roads. Transit is essential to many regional priorities:

- Promoting economic growth,
- Supporting military communities,
- Building community connections,
- Enhancing quality of life for our residents, and
- Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Safe, reliable, clean, and efficient transportation options connect residents to jobs, healthcare, retail, recreation, education, and workforce training opportunities. Every investment in our multimodal system delivers new connections, improved reliability, and safer and more convenient trips for our customers.

With a focus on strengthening these critical regional priorities, Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) has identified the following legislative and public policy priorities.

Protect and Expand Transit Investment

HRT supports maintaining current federal funding levels for both formula and discretionary public transportation programs. As Congress considers reauthorization of the next multi-year surface transportation bill, HRT opposes reductions to the Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program and any changes to the longstanding 80/20 split between the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). In addition, HRT supports the continuation of congressionally directed spending through annual appropriations bills, which serve as a critical funding source for HRT's capital projects.

At the state level, HRT supports increased funding for the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund, as current investment levels do not adequately address statewide transit needs. In addition, any proposed modifications to the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) funding formula should be undertaken through a transparent, inclusive process that fully engages stakeholders and carefully evaluates and explains potential impacts.

Support the Sustainability of Virginia's Only Light Rail System

The Tide is a cornerstone of Hampton Roads' multimodal transportation network. In operation since 2011, it has been well maintained; however, its infrastructure and fleet are reaching their midlife overhaul and require new investments. HRT encourages the General Assembly to consider improvements to how the Tide is funded at the state level to enable reliable and predictable funding through a process that recognizes its unique operating characteristics, cost structure, capital needs and federal safety requirements, as the state has implemented for its only other two rail systems.

Establish Regional Transit Funding Options

HRT supports policy solutions identified in its recent Sustainability Study that will create new regional dedicated and reliable transit funding allowing for the maintenance of current operations and the expansion and enhancement of transit services throughout Hampton Roads. This will allow for investment in innovative mobility options such as microtransit as a new mode of transit as well as increased frequency and coverage on local bus routes, to help ensure transit needs can be met in communities across the region.

Strengthen the Transit Workforce

Transit operators and mechanics are essential to maintaining a safe and reliable public transportation network. The current statewide shortage of transit operators constrains the Commonwealth's ability to expand service to meet increasing demand. HRT supports policy initiatives and investments that strengthen recruitment, retention, and training of the transit workforce to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality transit services across Virginia.