



**Meeting of the External / Legislative Affairs Committee of
Hampton Roads Transit**

Wednesday, February 18th, 2026 at 1:30pm.
509 E. 18th Street, Norfolk, VA - In Person - Zoom

Chair Goodwin called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioners in attendance:

Commissioner Anthony Goodwin, ELAC Chair, Portsmouth
Commissioner Roland White, Hampton
Commissioner Hope Harper, Hampton

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) staff in attendance:

Alexis Majjed, Chief Communications Officer
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer
John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist
Caleb Smith, Military and Government Affairs Outreach Liaison
Jayda Aldegon, Hampton Roads Transit
Petra Jovanovic, Executive Assistant Marketing and Strategic Communications
Reagan Reaves, Executive Assistant/Mail room Attendant

Others in attendance via phone/(Zoom)/In-Person:

Mike Miller, The Ferguson Group
Jeremiah Van Auken, The Ferguson Group
Jeffrey Burke, The Ferguson Group
Sheri Neil, City of Portsmouth
Janice Taylor, League of Women Voters
Gretchen Heal, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce
Rhonda Russell,

Approval of January 14th, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Chairman Goodwin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025, and January 2026 External and Legislative Advisory Committee (ELAC) meetings. Commissioner Roland White made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Harper. The committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Federal Legislative Report

Jeremiah Van Auken of the Ferguson Group provided the federal legislative update reporting that the House and Senate are not in session this week but will return to Washington on Monday, February 23.

Since the last ELAC meeting, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee met on February 3, 2026, to advance several transportation related nominations, including the nomination of John DeLeeuw to serve as a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, Ryan McCormack, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, and Daniel Edwards, of North Carolina, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation. These nominations will go to the full Senate for consideration.

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure continues to work on the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill. Chairman Graves has targeted early March for the bills release.

Since the January ELAC meeting, the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations agreed to eight of the nine remaining full-year FY 2026 spending bills and have now had 11 of 12 FY 2026 spending bills signed into law. HRT secured \$850,000 for its Paratransit Fleet, sponsored by Congressman Bobby Scott and Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (H.R. 7148), which was signed into law on February 3rd, 2026.

The Offices of Congressman Bobby Scott, Congresswoman Jen Kiggans, Senator Tim Kaine, and Senator Mark Warner are all expected to open submission portals for the fiscal year 2027 Community Project Funding/Congressional Directed Spending in the next few days or weeks. HRT and TFG have been diligently collaborating on project submission and meeting submission requirements in advance of this expected activity.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator Marc Molinaro announced on February 13, 2026, that he intends to step down from his position as FTA Administrator on February 20, 2026. The New York Times reported that Molinaro intends to run for a seat in the New York State Assembly. No information on potential replacements has been announced.

Lastly, the FTA issued a report on the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) on February 2, 2026, that identified 18 areas where CATS failed to meet federally mandated safety requirements. CATS must implement the required corrective actions identified for each finding.

State Legislative Update

Caleb Smith with HRT delivered the state legislative update. Transit Advocacy Day was held on Monday, February 9, 2026. HRT Commissioners and staff had 22 meetings and three (3) interviews with State Senators and Delegates from Hampton Roads. Senator Aaron Rouse recognized HRT on the Senate Floor. HRT appreciates the support from the Commissioner and looks forward to the event next year.

HJ28, Delegate Alex Askew's regional public transit study bill, passed the House of Delegates. HRT staff will continue to monitor and educate legislators about the bill.

Likewise, HB1241, Delegate Bonita Anthony's Hampton Roads Infrastructure Coordination and Readiness Framework bill, passed the House of Delegates.

Most of the statewide bills addressing public transit funding in the General Assembly were continued until next year. However, funding could still be available to public transit agencies through the budget process. The Appropriations Committees in both the Senate and House will release their budgets on Sunday, February 22. HRT will monitor the budgets and update ELAC as needed.

Marketing & Strategic Communications Department update

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

February 9th was Transit Equity Day, a day designated by HRT to celebrate Rosa Parks and her many contributions in making transit equitable. HRT commemorated Transit Equity Day by reserving a front seat for Ms. Parks on all HRT buses as well as inviting commissioners and stakeholders from the NAACP and YWCA on ride along in each city. Ms. Majied thanked Commissioners Tony Goodwin, Hope Harper, Les Smith, Mamie Johnson and Jay Jamison for taking time out to ride. She noted that our customers appreciated the opportunity to connect and converse with them about transit in their city.

HRT hosted a Galentine's Day themed silent read onboard The Tide light rail on Thursday, February 12th. This was in partnership with the Norfolk Public Library. Close to 30 participants descended upon the Newtown Road light rail station and silently read their books on their ride to the west end of the alignment and back, briefly stopping for coffee and conversation at Cure Coffeehouse. Marketing and Strategic Communications has now wrapped up its Winter Wonderland campaign funded by the Department and Rail and Public Transportation to increase ridership on transit services during the winter months.

Marketing and Strategic Communications is gearing up for outreach promoting the System Optimization Plan. The public is invited to attend one of six open houses to learn more about how the System Optimization Plan will impact them once implemented. Public outreach will also host one pop-up event in each city to encourage attendance at the open houses.

New and Old Business

There was no old or new business discussed.

Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm.