HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

ELAC Meeting

External & Legislative Affairs Committee

October 21, 2026

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Approval of Minutes
October 21, 2026

Federal Update to Hampton Roads Transit

October 21, 2026

Congressional Activity Update

- Congress is in recess for the November 3 midterm elections.
  - Both chambers return the week of November 9 for a lame-duck session. Appropriations, the NDAA, and surface transportation programs all converge on December deadlines.
- Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriations
  - Government is funded by a CR through December 11. The CR did not include IIJA advance appropriations; APTA estimates a 20% cut to federal transit investment compared to FY26 levels. The CR also included a provision to delay implementation of OMB's controversial changes to federal grant making.
  - House has passed 3 of 12 bills; Senate has not released any funding bills.
  - December options: omnibus or minibuses, a CR into 2027, or a hybrid. A government shutdown remains possible.
- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2027
  - House-passed bill includes HRT's local transit partnership provision.
  - Final bill expected through informal House-Senate negotiations in the lame duck, likely December.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

- Surface transportation programs are extended through December 11 at prorated FY26 levels, without advance appropriations.
  - House: H.R. 8870 still awaits a floor vote; Speaker Johnson has stated that the BUILD America 250 Act will receive a floor vote, though timing remains uncertain.
- Senate: EPW, Banking, and Commerce have not released text or held markups on their bill.
  - Another short-term extension into 2027 is now the most likely outcome.
- Key issues to watch: guaranteed (advance) funding, Highway Trust Fund solvency, Mass Transit Account.
- Opportunities to advocate for these priorities could return if reauthorization is pushed into the next Congress with a new majority in either chamber.

Administration Update

- On October 1, FTA proposed revised Capital Investment Grants (CIG) policy guidance; comments due November 16.
  - Changes how the federal share is calculated, adds birth and marriage rate bonuses, and requires financing commitments earlier.
  - APTA reports 47 projects seeking $34.5 billion could be affected.
- FY26 Low-No and Buses and Bus Facilities applications closed September 21; awards pending.
- PROTECT grant applications closed October 9; DOT anticipates awards the week of December 7.
- DOT continues announcing discretionary awards.
  - October 1: $426 million in INFRA grants for 12 projects.
  - October 7: $90 million loan for I-81 improvements in Virginia.

State Legislative Update

Delivered by Access Point Public Affairs

HRT ELAC – October 21, 2026

HJ 28 Study: First Meeting Highlights

Inaugural meeting: September 23 Richmond, Va.

- Held its inaugural meeting, formally launching a two-year examination of Hampton Roads' long-term transit needs, funding, and sustainability.
- Elected Chair, **Del. Alex Askew,** and Vice Chair, **Sen. Louise Lucas.**
- DRPT, HRT, Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA), and Suffolk Transit provided presentations on existing services, funding structures, and challenges.
- Will examine regional connectivity, operating and capital needs, cost containment, potential dedicated funding sources, and HRT governance.
- Recommendations are expected for consideration in the 2028 General Assembly session.

HJ 28 Study: Key Themes from Discussion

Inaugural meeting: September 23 Richmond, Va.

- **Define the need before the solution.** Need to understand what transit services Hampton Roads needs today and in the future before evaluating costs, efficiencies, and funding alternatives.
- **Regional connectivity matters.** Should examine how HRT, WATA, and Suffolk Transit can better function as an interconnected regional network.
- **Service quality is critical.** Frequency, reliability, and workforce availability directly affect the usefulness of transit.

HJ 28 Study: Key Themes from Discussion

Inaugural meeting: September 23 Richmond, Va.

- **Financial challenges vary.** The three transit agencies operate under different funding structures, service demands, and local constraints.
- **Sustainability requires a comprehensive approach.** Must evaluate existing resources, projected costs, service needs, and potential efficiencies before identifying additional funding requirements.

HJ 28 Study: Technical Analysis

Inaugural meeting: September 23 Richmond, Va.

Late October

Consultant Selection

Technical and financial consultant expected to be retained and begin work. Scope of work includes:

- Assessing existing and potential regional revenue sources, including 10-year projections.
- Examining operating and capital cost growth through 2037.
- Evaluating service effectiveness, cost-saving opportunities, *The Tide*, regional connectivity, and HRT governance.
- Supporting the Joint Subcommittee and Technical Working Group with research, analysis, and meeting materials.

HJ 28 Study: Next Steps

Inaugural meeting: September 23 Richmond, Va.

November 18

Joint Subcommittee Meeting

1:00–3:00 PM | Regional Building, Chesapeake

Agenda to focus on identified transit needs and cost containment strategies.

November 30

Technical Working Group Meeting

Begin supporting the study's detailed technical and financial analysis.

Hampton Roads CTB Meeting

CTB Hampton Roads Meeting
October 27
2:00 p.m.

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An Important Opportunity for Hampton Roads

- The CTB plays a critical role in determining state transportation investments, including operating and capital funding for public transportation.
- This meeting provides an opportunity to speak directly with CTB members and state transportation leaders about regional priorities.
- With the HJ 28 study underway, this is a particularly important time to reinforce the role of public transportation in supporting Hampton Roads' workforce, economy, military community, and regional connectivity.

OUR GOAL: Demonstrate broad regional recognition that public transportation is an essential component of Hampton Roads' transportation infrastructure and economic future.

Regional Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

CTB Hampton Roads Meeting
October 27
2:00 p.m.

- Distributed a CTB meeting briefing and talking points to a broad network of regional business, community, workforce, education, healthcare, and local government stakeholders.
- Encouraged stakeholders to provide public comments reflecting their own experiences and perspectives on the importance of transit.
- Emphasized the connection between continued state investment, efficient transit operations, and the development of sustainable long-term regional solutions.

NEXT STEP: Encourage strong participation at the meeting to communicate the importance of transit to Hampton Roads' economy and workforce.

Hampton Roads CTB Meeting

Tuesday, October 27, 2026 | 2:00 PM

VDOT Hampton Roads District Auditorium
7511 Burbage Drive, Suffolk, VA 23435

Written transit and rail comments may also be submitted to DRPT through November 30, 2026.

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HB 1241: Infrastructure Framework

HB 1241 (Anthony) — Hampton Roads Infrastructure Coordination and Readiness Framework

- Enacted in 2026, directs the HRPDC to develop a regional framework encompassing highways, bridges, tunnels, public transit, resilience, affordability, and infrastructure investment priorities.
- Specifically includes HRT, WATA, and Suffolk Transit and requires coordination with regional transportation partners.

Progress report due December 1, 2026.
Final framework due December 1, 2027.

2027 State Budget Requests: Transit Policy Initiatives

DRPT has submitted the following requests for consideration in the Governor's proposed FY27 budget amendments:

- **Transit Operator Workforce.** Proposed workgroup to address CDL driver shortages, training barriers, recruitment, and retention, including opportunities to leverage existing state workforce training funds.
- **University Transit Coordination:** Proposed workgroup to examine opportunities to improve coordination between university-operated and public transit systems, including potential efficiencies and impacts on ridership and funding.
- **DRPT Capacity:** Request to increase authorized staffing by 20 positions to strengthen grant administration, safety oversight, planning, and project delivery.

ACCESS POINT public affairs

Looking Ahead: 2027 General Assembly Session

- **November 30, 2026:** Legislative drafting requests due for prefiling
- **December 17, 2026:** Governor's proposed budget amendments expected to be presented
- **January 13, 2027:** 2027 General Assembly convenes
- ***February 9, 2027:** Anticipated legislative crossover
- ***February 27, 2027:** Anticipated adjournment

**Crossover and adjournment dates are anticipated, subject to the General Assembly's adopted procedural calendar.*

Marketing & Communications

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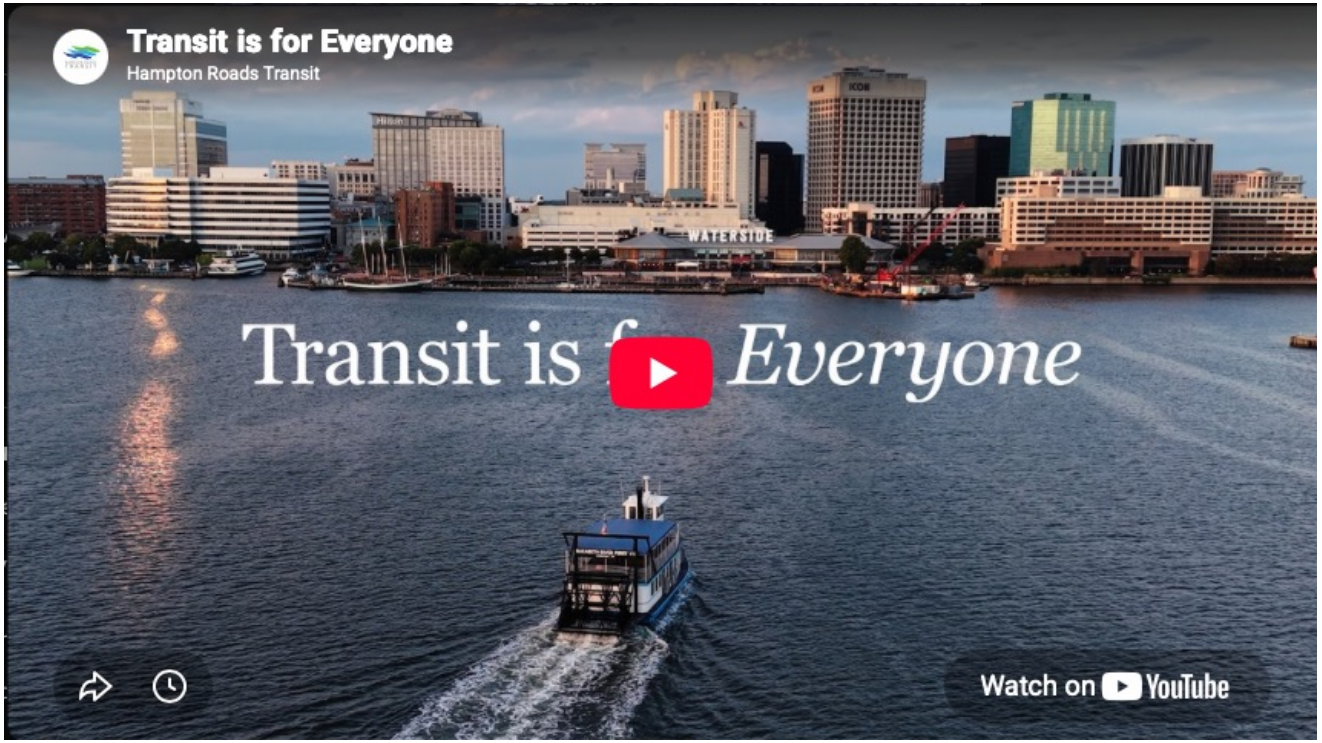

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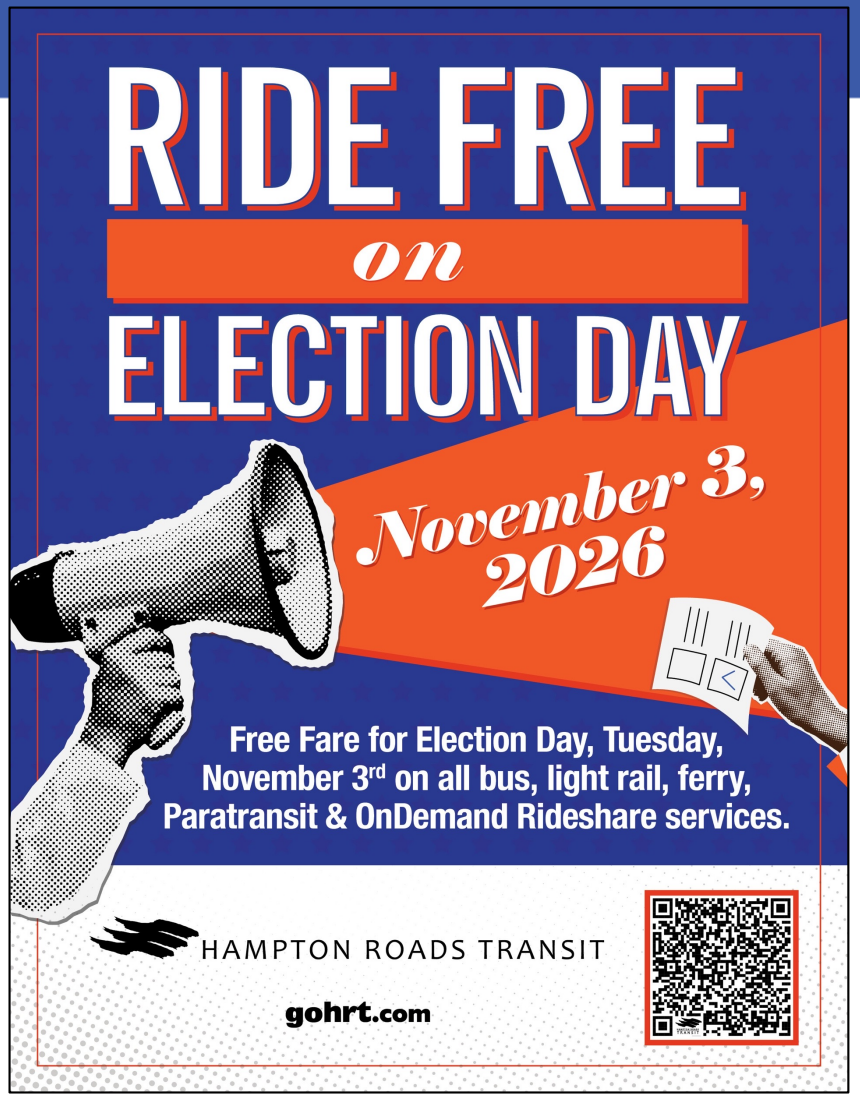

New and Old Business

HRT Federal Legislative Agenda

- Protect Transit Investments
- Support Multimodal Transit Options
- Increase Regional Transit Funding Options
- Support Informed Transit Policy
- Strengthen the Transit Workforce
- Enhance Safety and Security

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Thank You

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