

With six individual jurisdictions coming together to speak as one voice under the name of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), it is critical to outline key policy-level priorities for state and federal initiatives.

Protect Existing Transit Programs and Funding

- Enhance the funding of existing state transit programs and revenue sources that benefit local transit systems, especially for OmniRide and VRE. The General Assembly's 2020 omnibus transportation bill streamlined Virginia's funding allocation model, secured sustainable revenues for local transit operators, created the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, and restored \$30 million/year to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

Action:

- Work with elected officials to re-evaluate funding mechanisms and identify new or potential general assembly proposals and DRPT programs to pass and implement legislative packages and maximize the resources provided.
- Oppose any proposed reductions to these codified funding levels, as this provides guardrails and relative consistency in revenue streams for state-level operational and capital support.

Restore Transportation Revenue Gap Resulting from the Elimination of the State Sales and Use Tax on Groceries

- PRTC supports identification of revenues to replace the loss of transportation funding as a result of the elimination of state sales and use tax on groceries passed by the General Assembly in 2022.
 - The elimination of this revenue source was estimated to result in a \$190 million reduction in the Commonwealth Transportation Fund in the 2022-2024 biennial budget and a \$741.4 million loss over the Six-Year Improvement Plan (SYIP).
 - If not addressed, this funding loss will negatively impact all transportation programs in the Commonwealth, including highways, rail and public transit.

Action:

- Monitor and support general assembly proposals to establish permanent restoration of these losses.
- Work with peer agencies to identify localized and state-wide impacts if this funding loss is not addressed.

Maximize the Commonwealth's Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)

- Use TRIP funds to offset the loss of federal revenues as I-66 converts from HOV to HOT lanes. In December 2015, PRTC lost federal funds when a new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) policy no longer gave credit to transit systems operating on HOT lanes, only HOV lanes. When I-95 converted to HOT lanes.
 - **OmniRide lost \$1M in federal funds over the next five years on I-95 alone.** As I-66 is now converted from HOV lanes to HOT lanes, **OmniRide** will see another **loss of \$615K** in annual federal operating funds on existing routes.
 - PRTC and NVTC have unsuccessfully evaluated the federal policy climate to determine if seeking a policy reversal is appropriate. When considering the future impacts of funding losses forthcoming on I-66, this may be the time to pursue the ability to earn revenues for operating high intensity motorbus services in these congested corridors.



- Preserve funding for commuter-driven regional routes new travel patterns such as off-peak service (i.e., late morning and mid-day) or demand for service not funded by traditional toll-revenues. Use this funding stream to support routes for a more extended period, especially when connecting multiple transit systems or modes in a post-COVID commuter era.

Action:

- Seek a sponsor for state legislative relief via TRIP funds to address this long-standing HOT to HOV revenue loss. These revenues offset expenses that will be pushed from the federal to the local level due to the Commonwealth's P3 programs, an unintended consequence the TRIP can resolve.
- Support a legislative effort within the TRIP program that increases the length of time for step-down in the state-supported portion of funding in the post-COVID commute/telework era.

Support Funding to Implement Decarbonization of Transit Systems to include Zero/Low Emission Vehicles:

- PRTC has completed its Zero/Low Emission fleet study and now seeks funding to implement the near-term fleet transition of medium and light duty fleets with zero- and low-emission vehicles infrastructure, as well as the necessary workforce training.

Action:

- Support state and federal legislation that funds fleet and facilities for transit vehicles with long-term (at least 12-year) operating lifespans. Ensure non-electric solutions are equally considered as solutions (i.e., CNG) and increase the federal spare ratio limit of 20% for fleets with electric vehicles.
- Ensure sufficient funding for transit vehicles, as costs are 1.5x higher than traditional buses and require significant charging and electrical infrastructure and support. Provide financial incentives to transit systems and utilities which partner to ensure upgrades in power distribution methods are included when updating systems near transit facilities for future cost-management and expedited implementation.

Things to Watch

- Continue monitoring implementation and rulemaking of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA)*. Work to avoid burdensome and costly regulations and watch for competitive grant opportunities for direct federal funds as well as discretionary grants allocated to DRPT.
- Continued Support for Flexibility in Remote Public Meetings. Monitor legislation that provides flexibility for public bodies to conduct virtual public meetings, greater access to the public, and opportunity to participate remotely beyond declared states of emergency.
- Supports protection of all revenues of the NVTVA that have been provided through legislation from 2013 to the present, and likewise the powers and provisions contained within existing legislation.
- Collaborate on joint aspects of the PRTC and Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Annual Legislative Agendas. As statewide initiatives are proposed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) or the General Assembly, VTA members will work collectively to support or shape policy that will increase transit funding and expand or protect services. PRTC will coordinate with NVTC, VRE, and other transit systems to support commuter-based services to assist the Northern Virginia economy.



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