

MOTION:

SECOND:

**RE: APPROVAL OF THE 2020 POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

ACTION:

WHEREAS, each year the Potomac and Rappahannock Transit Commission (“PRTC” or the “Commission”) adopts a state and federal legislative agenda to guide its advocacy efforts; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 legislative agenda focuses on the Commission’s priorities of supporting enhanced funding for transit capital and operating programs, addressing the Virginia transit capital shortfall, restoring Northern Virginia Transportation Authority revenues, and addressing lost revenues associated with the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Potomac and Rappahannock Transit Commission does hereby approve its 2020 legislative agenda.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent from Vote:

Alternate Present Not Voting:

Absent from Meeting:

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

Enhanced State Funding for Transit Service Operation

- PRTC supports additional funding for statewide transit capital and operating programs. By increasing the overall revenue sharing pool, almost all transit systems across the Commonwealth should be able to maintain or improve funding levels under the DRPT MERIT (performance measurement) program.
- PRTC supports dedicated funding for *congestion mitigation commuter services, including enhanced capital replacement*. The Commonwealth's most ambitious accomplishments, specifically the I-95/395/495 HOT lanes and the Transform I-66 Project, establish new services but do not expand and aggressively support existing highly successful services.

Action:

- Work closely with DRPT and state legislators to inform them of PRTC's successes and challenges while emphasizing the impact of [OmniRide](#) service on the regional commuter network and advocate for funding, especially along high-congestion corridors.
- Closely monitor the governor's budget and pre-filed bills, as well as legislation introduced during the 2020 session, and advocate as appropriate.

Future State Revenues to Address the Virginia Transit Capital Shortfall

- PRTC supports a statewide approach to resolving the loss of revenues that fund transit capital projects. This becomes a critical issue when the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocates the last revenues received from the 2007 Transportation Capital Project Revenue Bonds, which make up almost 40% of funds for transit capital investments across Virginia.
- The loss of state funds will directly impact [OmniRide](#), which is particularly reliant on state funds because the vast majority of regional federal capital funds (98%) flows directly to WMATA/VRE.

Action:

- Work closely with fellow stakeholders to identify options for long-term, sustainable funding for the Commonwealth's transportation needs. These are imperative if we are to avoid the collapse of Virginia's transit capital and operational programs.
- Continue to communicate the impact of the very small amount of federal transit capital funds that flow to [OmniRide](#) and the impact of state funds in the effort to maintain the reliability of transit services in one of the most highly congested areas in the entire United States.



Support State Restoration of Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) Revenues

- PRTC supports restoration of NVTA revenues for continued funding/implementation of multimodal projects (including transit) that support the regional economy and reduce congestion. This will subsequently help transit in all of its forms. Restored NVTA revenues will support new and expanded capacity for all transportation projects (including transit) through the 70% revenues as well as operational costs through the 30% local funds, which in turn will benefit the transit environment.

Federal High Occupancy Toll Lane (HOT Lane) Loss of Revenues

- As outlined jointly by PRTC & NVTC in December 2015, PRTC lost federal funds when a new FTA policy no longer gave credit to transit systems operating on High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, only High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, when converting I-95 to HOT lanes.
- *Real Impact, Right Now:* **OmniRide** suffered a **\$265K loss** in federal funds this year, with over \$1M lost over the next five years on I-95 alone, just because of the shift from HOV to HOT.
- *Real Impact, 2022:* As I-66 is converted from HOV lanes to HOT lanes, **OmniRide** will see another **loss of \$615K** in annual federal credits that are used for supporting capital needs.

Action:

- PRTC and NVTC will jointly evaluate 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.

Things to Watch

- Federal FAST Act Reauthorization: USDOT's Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015) provides funding through 2020. PRTC will partner with stakeholders to advocate for appropriate funding levels and policies the support funding for bus and bus facilities, congestion mitigation, and other programs critical to the region.
- Virginia's Transit Passes for Working Families: There may be available federal funds from Virginia's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program that may purchase transit passes for those 200% under the federal poverty level for purposes of obtaining and retaining competitive employment. PRTC will monitor and support proposals that benefit citizens in our service area so that existing and potential customers can access funds for use on **OmniRide** local and commuter services.
- Virginia's Peer-to-Peer Vehicle Rental Tax: The automobile version of AirB&B is subject to a lower tax rate vs. the motor vehicle rental tax (MVRT). The MVRT helps to fund WMATA, Rail Enhancement Fund, and the Transportation Trust Fund, which flows into the Mass Transit Fund. There are multiple proposals to address this growing concern, which if left unchanged will negatively impact transit revenues longer term.
- Virginia Reinstitution of Business Deduction for Transit Commuter Benefits: This would restore the ability for private companies in Virginia to receive a tax credit for providing transit benefits of up to \$265 monthly to its employees, which would provide parity for the federal SmartBenefits program. This is highly beneficial to commuter-based systems and enhances the business-friendly image across the Commonwealth.
- Virginia I-95 Corridor Improvement Plan: As the corridor improvement study advances, PRTC will partner with VDOT and DRPT for improvements to park and ride lots for **OmniRide** services, vanpooling, and carpooling/slugging. Enhanced facilities essential to make HOV travel more attractive and increase throughput on I-95.



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