

Transcribed Public Comments from the
April 16, 2015 HRTPO Board Meeting

Four people requested to address the HRTPO Board at the April 16, 2015 meeting. Chair Price asked them to limit their comments to three minutes.

Mr. Jonathon Nye

Hampton Roads Portsmouth Transportation Alliance

Good morning to you all. I'm going to be handing out some flyers for you all. We're talking about mobility, action, transportation, connectivity, budgets. Also going to talk about the new ecology of leadership. It's a book written by David Hurst. With budgets shrinking, what does that actually mean? A couple things. First, it's going to mean that we're going to need to use resources wiser. We're going to need to look at other more sustainable options, broaden our horizons, and lastly we're going to need to enlist a deeper local network of creative, innovative, and adaptive leaders. How? By being transformed by the renewing of our mind, not conform to the patterns that we see in this world but being transformed. Patterns like old habits, the traffic, getting up in the morning and going to work in our cars. Patterns of leadership, such as the eco-cycle pattern, whether it's adaptive, innovative, administrative, managerial. So again, I invite you to first Friday event on May 1st, so you can learn more about how we connect as people using the transportation system, whether if it's biking, walking, light rails, buses, car pools, or single occupancy vehicles. Again, my name is Jonathan Nye. I reside in west Norfolk, which is Portsmouth. I thank you for your time and all the hard work that you do discussing these difficult situations.

Mr. Will Christopher

Norfolk Citizen

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Three weeks ago today, Hampton Roads Public Transportation Alliance partnered with 32 organizations and leaders from around the region and the state to host a sold-out luncheon on Connecting Virginia's Economic Crescent. Mr. Tom Frantz spoke on the Hampton Roads and Richmond Megaregion and the combined business roundtables who have already authored multiple white papers and eight joint resolutions with strong emphasis on transportation infrastructure improvements. With 70% of Virginia's workforce and economy along the Golden Crescent, Hampton Roads/Richmond is one of 11 emerging meg regions in the country. If these two MSAs decided to collaborate and become a recognized combined statistical area, together the two would have a population moving them to the 16th largest MSA and higher in the cue for federal dollars. One of the more salient points from the Business roundtable's work is, "in addition to highways, there must be alternate modes of transportation to connect the economies and labor forces". Good example of this, used regularly by Mr. Frantz, is true high-speed rail. We must de-conflict freight and passenger rail. It is only a matter of time, once the ports expand cargo, increases that we'll be unable to run people and freight on shared lines. With over 20 military and intelligence installations and nine million people along this short 200-mile corridor from Hampton Roads to D.C., the Virginia Crescent Line is one of the most profitable corridors in the nation and would be a game changer for this region. Opportunity exists to be stepping off at Union Station in 98 minutes with annual ridership of over 8 million and a positive operating ratio of 2.4 that covers capital costs and reduces congestion on I- 64 and I-95. We're talking about the next 50 years. A network of interconnected solutions, a high-speed rail corridor connecting into Norfolk and Newport News, stepping onto a fixed guideway connecting our

city's major urban centers and corridors, supported by a strong bus feeder system with car sharing, biking, and walking, et cetera. Taking a holistic approach that addresses economic, social, and environmental challenges. We have a chance to be an epicenter of modern transportation and livability for the East Coast if we get this right. A global player with a global brand. We have the consensus, we have the data, we have the business case. Let's take action. Thank you again to the TPO for your strong leadership.

Mr. Ellis James
Norfolk Citizen

Thank you, Mr. Price, members of the TPO. When my friend Mr. Rucker addressed the issue, I thought to myself wow, Houston, we may have a problem here, but I want to compliment the TPO. You had an effective, rational discussion, and you uncovered even further some of the problem. And I must tell you, I'm leaving here not worried about what's going to happen. I think you have taken the first and most important step towards resolution to the concerns of our friends at the federal level. I had intended on talking about supporting the light rail extension. I still support that. It's extremely important, and I hope that none of this other stuff will get in the way of that. I think the discussion itself that has just taken place leads us straight to the importance of making sure that we understand where funds are going for what projects. The Route 460 termination -- I, as a taxpayer, must tell you I'm all in favor of pursuing a lot of those funds to get them back where they're needed. And I think every person in the room more than likely understands that. Thank you.

Mr. Frank Papcin
Virginia Beach Citizen

So much to say and so little time to say it in. I want to start off by reading something that's a quote. The quote is from transportation authority, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. Martin Noble. Anyways, everything we do is designated to get people home from their families to their families faster. In a congested region like ours, that is a tall order. So towards that goal of reducing congestion in the most regional significant corridors, we have to cooperate between jurisdictions and across agencies. I'm assuming that's your function here, too. Now, that's enough of that part. Now onto the others that have come across. Right now 460, I really hope 460 gets built, but it seems like we're running into a problem with it. The reason why I want to build it is because our ports need it, not because of congestion or anything else. Let's face the facts of life. The sole purpose of 460 is to increase the transportation of cargo. That's so much for that one. An interesting point was made that the High-Rise Bridge was set at 90-foot, but 90 feet will reduce the ability of future ships from going underneath of it. That section of the river so it may reduce their ability to expand. But now we're getting into some nasty little things. I was told tonight that the \$255 million set aside for light rail was rigid. I heard this week from two different delegates out of Richmond, that the money does not belong to the Governor; it's state money, even though I also heard that it's federal money that the Governor has authority over, but it brings up a question of -- is there or is there not a firm commitment of that \$255 million that you people can be confident of? So that brings up that sort of question. I also heard tonight at the meeting: assumptions, and I want to point out one very important thing: the housing bubble that busted was on the assumption that people were going to be making more money in a limited amount of time than being able to pay the higher interest rates that were going to come down the road for them to pay, and it never materialized, and who got hurt the most? The poor people got hurt the most. The ones that lost their jobs and lost their homes and lost everything. And my time is up. So thank you.