

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Below is background information on the legislative priorities of the HRTPO 2017 Legislative Agenda:

- The HRTPO supports the pursuit of federal/state funding by the Commonwealth of Virginia for preparation of a Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the continuation and expansion of intercity and higher-speed passenger rail service from Richmond to Hampton Roads. The estimated cost for the Tier II EIS is \$25 million.
 - Background: This project provides a higher-speed passenger rail service from Hampton Roads to the proposed Southeast High-speed Rail Corridor and existing Amtrak Northeast Corridor via Richmond Main Street Station. A TIER I EIS Record of Decision (ROD) was issued and became effective on December 7, 2012. A TIER II analysis would include site specific planning and detailed evaluations of the selected alternative; and determine capital improvements for tracks, structures, station locations, routing within existing right-of-way, and bypasses. Upon completion of the study and permitting process, construction may proceed. The TIER II EIS for the Richmond to D.C. project is funded through a \$55 million cooperative agreement between the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The Raleigh to Richmond Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor project TIER II EIS is funded with \$3,845,250 DRPT, \$3,129,750 NCDOT, and \$4,000,000 FRA monies for a total of \$10,975,000.
- The HRTPO supports the pursuit of funding for trains 2 and 3 from Norfolk to Washington D.C.
 - Background: DRPT's Rail Division supports both freight and passenger rail initiatives in Virginia through funding and advocacy for railroad network improvements. Improvements are implemented through four grant programs, with funds from other sources, such as the federal government, leveraged when possible. Passenger Rail funding includes operation of intercity passenger rail services. Currently, there is one daily round trip from Norfolk to Washington D.C. and the Northeast Corridor (Route 50). The addition of Train 2 from Norfolk to Washington D.C. is in the DRPT's FY 2017-2022 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). State funding has been allocated for operating costs for Train 2 (\$2 million FY-20, \$2.06 million FY-21, \$2.19 million FY-22) and Train 3 (\$2.19 million FY-22); capital equipment contribution for the second train (\$4 million FY-16, \$8 million FY-17, and \$7 million FY-18); and capacity and speed improvement for a two train extension to Norfolk (\$12 million FY-16, \$32.8 million FY-17, \$42.1 million FY-18, and \$20.1 million FY-19).

- The HRTPO supports the pursuit of federal/state funding for the widening of I-64 between the Hampton Roads and Richmond, *from Exit 205 Bottoms Bridge to Exit 234 Route 199-Lightfoot*.
 - According to the Governor, the I-64 Corridor between the Peninsula and Richmond is one of the two high priority corridors in the State. This is a critical transportation corridor between Hampton Roads and Richmond for the movement of people and goods. Segment I of this corridor from Jefferson to Lee Hall/Yorktown is currently under construction. The HRTPO was awarded \$145 million of SMART SCALE funding for the I-64 Peninsula Segments 1-3 from Jefferson to Route 199 West of Williamsburg (21 miles). The segment between I-295 and Bottoms Bridge, about 5 miles received \$60 million of SMART SCALE funding; a project that was originally submitted as an SMART SCALE project by Richmond Regional TPO and later completed as an application from the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The middle section from Bottoms Bridge to Route 199 West in Williamsburg (29 miles) is not funded and no SMART SCALE application was submitted during the first cycle (attached map). The Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) and the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization are collaborating to address the gap in the I-64 corridor.

- The HRTPO supports the pursuit of legislation to make whole the original intent of HB2313 by establishing a floor, similar to the Commonwealth of Virginia, on the 2.1% tax imposed on motor vehicle fuels sold in Hampton Roads.
 - HB2313 – Approved by the General Assembly and signed into law in 2013, created the Hampton Roads Transportation Fund (HRTF) to address project funding gaps for new construction projects on new or existing roads, bridges, and tunnels. Priority is given to funding projects that are expected to provide the greatest impact on reducing congestion and ensures funds are used for construction projects in localities comprising Planning District 23. An additional wholesale fuels sales tax of 2.1% is imposed in Hampton Roads to meet the intent of the law. There is a wholesale fuels sales tax floor established at the State level based on the February 2013 wholesale price of gas at the time (\$3.17/ gal. gasoline and \$3.36/ gal. diesel). The Hampton Roads regional wholesale fuels sales tax does not include a floor and the region is losing \$20-40 million per year because of this. Recouping the lost revenues would increase the amount of money that could be bonded in the future, decrease the amount of funding that would need to be borrowed (at a higher cost) in the future, and decrease the likelihood of tolling of facilities. An adjustment is needed in the legislation to more fully realize revenues to address project funding gaps.