

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COALITION

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A Regional Multimodal Transportation Network Remains Key To Northern Virginia's Economic Competitiveness, Quality of Life, Environmental Sustainability, and Equitable Access to Opportunity

We, the undersigned organizations representing the vast majority of businesses and employees of Northern Virginia's private sector and non-profit workforce, believe that a regional multimodal transportation network remains key to our future economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental sustainability, and equitable access to opportunity.

Transportation infrastructure is an investment in the future of our community. Our region is forecast to gain more than 1 million new jobs and residents over the next two decades. While there is currently a reduction in travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this temporary change is due to closed schools, businesses, and recreational activities.

Commuters make up 20% of total trips in our area, and despite significant closures, traffic has already returned to 80% of pre-pandemic levels. As a vaccine becomes widely available and our community re-opens, we expect a return to previous travel patterns including major congestion and delays.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

We support continued investment in Northern Virginia's transportation infrastructure using performance-based statewide and regional transportation plans that focus on corridors of regional and statewide significance and the prioritization of projects that produce the best long-term return on investment.

When prioritizing transportation projects, the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority should focus on projects that:

- Reduce congestion and travel time between major regional employment centers;
- Move the greatest number of people throughout the region;
- Increase region-wide network reliability; and
- Promote regional economic development and growth.

KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Using these criteria, transportation funds should be primarily allocated and leveraged, where appropriate, with federal, state, regional, and private funds on projects of large-scale regional significance. These include:

- **American Legion Bridge** -- Add two new High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes in each direction and add express bus service between Virginia and Maryland per the recommendations of the American Legion Bridge TDM Study.

- **495 NEXT** -- Complete the expansion of Virginia's HOT Lanes Network to the American Legion Bridge.
- **New Potomac River Crossing** -- Construct a new Bridge northwest of the American Legion Bridge.
- **VRE** -- Fund the construction of a new Long Bridge and fourth track to Springfield.
- **Route 28** -- Build the 28 Bypass and Route 28 STARS improvements in Prince William County. Improve the intersection of Route 28, the Dulles Toll Road, and the Dulles Greenway.
- **Northstar Corridor** -- Connect Route 234 in Prince William with US Route 50 in Loudoun County.
- **Metro** -- Move forward with the opening and integration of Silver Line Phase 2 into the Metrorail system. Prioritize any new emergency federal funding to replace lost ridership revenue in Metro's operating budget.
- **Fairfax County Parkway** -- Convert to limited-access facility.
- **Richmond Highway** -- Expand roadway capacity including dedicated lanes for Bus Rapid Transit.
- **Regional Express Bus Network** -- New express bus service using the regional managed lanes network including I-66, I-495, I-95, I-395, I-270, and the American Legion Bridge.

NVTA FUNDING RESTORATION

In order to make these investments, we strongly support the full restoration of Northern Virginia Transportation Authority funding diverted in 2018 using statewide or regional dedicated funding sources. After the 2020 General Assembly Session, there remains a \$50 million per year shortfall.

We also support amending the law requiring that the long-term benefits of Northern Virginia's regional funds be distributed proportionally among jurisdictions to enable the Authority to better address the region's most critical transportation needs.

In addition, we believe the Commonwealth should maintain its commitment to fund transportation improvements in Northern Virginia. The presence of local, regional, and private transportation funding as well as toll revenue does not absolve the Commonwealth of this responsibility.

Furthermore, we support the continued autonomy of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and Northern Virginia Transportation Commission to make regional transportation planning and funding decisions for Northern Virginia.

CONGESTION MANAGED LANES

We support the use of congestion managed express toll lanes to expand the capacity of our roadway network, incentivize carpooling, and increase transit reliability. We believe that any net revenue to the Commonwealth or Northern Virginia raised through the implementation of these lanes should be reinvested in transportation improvements that directly expand the travel capacity of the corridor in which that revenue is raised.

WMATA

We believe that Metro is a core statewide asset, and that a well-maintained, safe, reliable, and fiscally sustainable Metrorail system is essential to Northern Virginia's and the Commonwealth's economic competitiveness.

Therefore, we support maintaining sustainable, adequate Metrorail funding from all sources tied to implementation of appropriate operational, funding, and governance reforms. We support the long-term reauthorization of the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), additional emergency federal funds for FY22 and FY23, and an evaluation of WMATA’s long-term financial stability due to the ridership impacts of COVID-19 and telework trends in the region.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Finally, we support the creation of tax incentives for employers who provide employees with fare assistance for public transportation, telework, and other travel demand management options.

