

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 and workforce 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 1.3 million new residents over the next two decades. Multimodal transportation investments including roadways, transit, bike and pedestrian facilities, and new technology are essential to meeting that demand. They also generate billions in economic activity and return millions to state and local coffers. In addition, these improvements make it easier for Northern Virginia residents to access jobs, opportunities, goods, and services throughout our region.

While travel was reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, daily vehicle miles traveled in Northern Virginia has returned to pre-COVID levels. In fact, the evening rush hour lasts longer and has higher traffic volumes than before the pandemic. Additionally, transit ridership remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels. While many large employers continue to delay returning to the office, it is only a matter of time until a full return-to-work leads to unbearable congestion and delays for everyone in our community.

Furthermore, roadway congestion and delays have a significant impact on low-income residents who rely on automobile travel in the Washington region. Households with incomes of less than \$60,000 are twice as likely to drive to work than take all other forms of transportation combined. And area residents with incomes of \$25,000 or less are three times more likely to drive alone than take a bus - and four times more likely to take an automobile than transit for their daily travel needs. At the same time, they are less likely to have a job that allows for telework or flexible scheduling. Our roadways are essential to expanding access to jobs and opportunities for millions of low-income residents across the region.

Therefore, we urge our elected leaders to continue investing in an all-of-the-above strategy to addressing our transportation challenges that includes roadways, rail, bus, bicycle, pedestrian, and technology improvements to ensure the continued success of our community.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

The primary function of our transportation infrastructure is to facilitate the movement of people and goods throughout our region.

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. Prioritize sustainable operations funding.
- **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** -- Open Silver Line Phase 2. Prioritize Metrorail safety and reliability. Redesign Metrobus routes and evaluate Metrorail services schedules to rebuild and maximize ridership.
- **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.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY FUNDING & AUTONOMY

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 \$38.5 million per year shortfall.

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, safety, and governance reforms. We also support an evaluation of WMATA's long-term financial stability due to the ridership impacts of COVID-19 and telework trends in the region. WMATA should also work with local transit agencies to continue improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our regional bus network including a bus network redesign, modernization, and the creation of new dedicated bus lanes 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.





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