

Report to Governor-elect Northam
From
Transition Policy Council on Transportation

Introduction

Transportation is the movement of people, goods and ideas from place to place, connecting workers with jobs, products with markets, and thinkers with new ideas. Transportation is also a principal driver of growth and economic development, providing improved access to jobs, affecting the vitality of communities, and impacting our environment and our collective health and safety.

The Secretary must develop both of these themes simultaneously.

With that in mind, we recommend she set four goals for achievement by January 2022.

1. Make transportation decision-making an integral part of the Commonwealth's economic development strategy;
2. Continue progress on project prioritization and on major regional projects statewide and tee up the next generation of projects;
3. Make Virginia a leader in emerging transportation technology;
4. Increase the proportion of non-single occupant vehicle modes of travel in the Urban Crescent, as an element in advancing Virginia as a leader in modern, clean transportation.

Transportation as an Economic Driver

It is widely understood that transportation is a major economic driver, allowing products to get to markets, giving workers access to employment and attracting new businesses to an area. This is more or less true of all transportation facilities from farm to market roads to major interstates and transit centers.

One of the major roles of the Secretary is to oversee and reinforce this linkage between economic growth and transportation. There are a number of specific steps she should take.

- Improve the coordination between transportation and economic development by making the Deputy Secretary a Member of the Economic Development Partnership and the Board of GO Virginia;
- Re-establish the Freight Advisory Board and update the State Freight Plan;
- Increase funding for the Workforce Credentials Grant Program to assure a continuing flow of skilled workers for transportation related industries and economic development efforts;
- Consider permitting DMV to issue drivers licenses to non-residents to make commuting safer for all, by subjecting everyone to state safety and insurance laws and regulations;
- Better connect those parts of Virginia outside the Urban Crescent to jobs and opportunities through linking broadband and transportation access;
- Recognize that the link between transit, land use and access to jobs is a key factor in attracting twenty-first century businesses to the Commonwealth;
- Ensure the major transportation facilities that are principal statewide economic drivers receive needed capital funding;
- Review the adequacy of funding for General Aviation Airports to serve as economic catalyst in rural and non-hub airports across the Commonwealth.

In Virginia, three major transportation facilities stand out as statewide economic drivers: The Port of Virginia; Washington Dulles International Airport; and Washington Metrorail. Each helps drive the economy in its region and across the Commonwealth, either directly in the case of the Port and Dulles, or indirectly in the case of Metrorail, through the roughly \$600 million Metro/VRE-related development contributes annually to state revenues.

Continuing Progress on Major Regional Projects

The transparent process known as SMART SCALE has brought increased integrity to the project selection process and should be continued. Now that there has been a couple of years' experience with it, the values it employs and their relative weights might be reviewed to assure they align with a region's needs. In addition, a mechanism to allow continued funding on mega-projects beyond the six-year horizon should be considered.

The McAuliffe Administration made great progress in advancing major regional projects using SMART SCALE to set priorities and a combination of statewide and

regional monies to fund them. These projects, listed in Attachment A, should be continued, and many can be completed over the next four years.

The Policy Council also discussed a number of potential transportation projects farther out on the horizon that the Northam Administration could consider. These projects are listed on Attachment B.

Emerging Transportation Technologies

Transportation technologies are on the brink of a generational change: electric powered vehicles; driverless cars, buses, trucks, drones and work vehicles; advanced construction techniques; enhanced safety and more.

The long-term goal should be electric, shared, autonomous, active transportation to promote public health, environmental quality, economic development, mobility, access and safety.

With this goal in mind, the Secretary should

- Establish an Office of Innovation in the Secretariat to include:
 - Adopt a strategic framework of “principles” to guide departments officials’ deliberation in developing regulations;
 - New and emerging vehicle and aerial technologies including electric and autonomous vehicles, ridesharing, high speed rail and drones;
 - Relocation of the Transportation Technology Innovation Fund;
 - Direct links with the Commonwealth’s Colleges and Universities, including programs for joint funding with industry of research;
 - Advances in design and construction techniques for road, rail, water and active transportation;
 - Exploration of long term alternatives to the per gallon gasoline tax.
- Develop a Virginia Transportation Innovation and Technology policy by convening a group of private, University and public members to aid in the development of the policy and to guide the Office of Innovation;
- Continue to support and emphasize alternative modes of transportation, including transit, rail, fast ferry, bicycle, pedestrian, and various forms of ridesharing;
- Assure that Commonwealth procurement practices address the rapid responses often needed for these disruptive technologies;

- Develop and implement an immediate electric vehicle strategy through an expanded, technology agnostic network of charging facilities and through fleet purchase requirements;
- Pursue a statewide strategy to expand access to broadband.

Virginia could and should become a leader in emerging technologies. We have all the ingredients: a robust statewide, centrally managed transportation system; a wide variety of excellent research Universities, a well-developed, experienced technology industry. And the benefits are considerable, from attracting 21st Century businesses to the Commonwealth to advancing our goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Transit

Transit is a critical piece of Virginia's transportation infrastructure. Multimodal options to move people around the Commonwealth, particularly in the Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads and Richmond area are key to getting people to work, creating economic development hubs, activity centers and relieving congestion on crowded roadways. In addition, in rural areas, transit ensures community connections by moving people short and medium distances to work, school and to other modes of travel.

WMATA is an economic driver that needs leadership, continued commitment from the Northern Virginia jurisdictions, and financial support from the Commonwealth.

The Secretary should support:

- Ensuring WMATA's capital needs are fully funded including an additional \$150 million annually;
- Continuing to work with DC, Maryland and the Federal government to foster strong relationships to ensure success on reforming its governance as recommended in the LaHood Report and continued Federal funding.

VRE plays a key role in reducing congestion in the I-95 and I-66 corridors, serving 20,000 riders daily along its two commuter lines and the Secretary should support:

- Funding for a capital and operating funding at \$45 million/year through 2040. Further expansion to double the number of passengers would require an additional \$15 million/year, for a total of \$60 million a year;
- Continue strong and productive relationships with the host railroads (CSX and Norfolk Southern) to help facilitate current and expanded service for VRE along these corridors;
- Focus on expanding Long Bridge and the surrounding corridor by collaborating with the DC Department of Transportation and CSX.

Other Transit and Rail Priorities:

- Hampton Roads has no true interconnected regional transit system for its buses and light rail nor does it have a regionally generated source of revenue to support its transit system. In its Core20 plan, they have identified a need of \$50 million annually to maintain a transit state of good repair and connect the region with a reliable core bus network;
- Fully fund the statewide transit capital program at a minimum of \$130M a year;
- Continue to support the DC2RVA Project, a 123-mile rail corridor improvement project designed to increase capacity to deliver higher speed intercity passenger rail, expand commuter rail, and accommodate growth of freight rail service between Richmond and Washington, DC.
- Support planned implementation of Richmond's new Pulse BRT service and the related transit network;
- Improve passenger rail service in the Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington DC Corridor;
- Improve data on costs and benefits of passenger rail projects.

Issues for the 2018 General Assembly session:

- Propose legislation to place the Secretary or a Deputy on the Board of the Economic Development Partnership and the Board of Go Virginia
- Propose increased funding for the Workforce Credentials Grant Program
- Support appropriations for the state share of deepening and widening the Port of Hampton Roads
- Support the McAuliffe Administration's budget for WMATA, ensuring state and regional funds are used.
- Support legislation/budget amendment to set a floor for the regional gas taxes similar to that which was set for the state
- Support expanded use of regional authorities in those areas which request them
- Support the removal of the existing restrictions on the use of tolling on I-81
- Support innovative solutions to expand broadband connectivity
- Amend proposed legislation re: the expansion of I-81 to shift it to a study
- Oppose HB103 re: general purpose lanes on I-95 around Fredericksburg
- Oppose bills to impede or restrict the Commonwealth's use of tolls
- Increase the proposed capital and operating funding for VRE; and
- Increase statewide transit capital funding by \$130 annually to fully off-set the transit funding cliff.

John G. Milliken
Aimee Perron Seibert
Co-Chairs

Attachment A

HRBT Expansion

WMATA

I-66 Outside the Beltway

I-95 Express Lanes Fredericksburg Extension (“FredEx”)

Deepening and Widening of the Hampton Roads Channel

Long Bridge and Atlantic Gateway Projects

Additional Passenger Rail Service to Norfolk, Charlottesville and Lynchburg

Corridor Q/Coalfields Expressway Project

Enhanced Rappahannock River Crossing

Last Segment of Route 58 Expansion in Southwest Virginia

Richmond BRT Network

Attachment B

Interstate 81

I-64 Widening Between Bottoms Bridge Exit 205 and Lightfoot-Route 199 Exit 234

Additional Potomac River Crossing

New River Crossing in Hampton Roads From I-64 to Craney Island to I-664

VRE Expansion

Improved North/South Connectivity in Northern Virginia

Complete Final Segment of Route 58 Expansion in Hampton Roads

DC2RVA High Speed Rail

American Legion Bridge

Development of a Regionally-generated Funding Source to Support Transit in
Hampton Roads