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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 28

House Amendments in [] — February 12, 2026

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study options for providing long-term, sustainable, and dedicated operations and capital funding with cost-containment controls to ensure that the public transit systems that serve Hampton Roads [, including all modes of Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) service, local and express bus, light rail, passenger ferry, paratransit, on-demand microtransit, and seasonal trolley and shuttle services, other ridesharing and commuter programs, and any future modes of public transportation or mobility services that may be developed to serve the Hampton Roads region,] meet the growing public transit needs of the region. Report.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Delegate Askew

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Hampton Roads is served by Hampton Roads Transit (HRT), Suffolk Transit, and the Williamsburg Area Transit Authority (WATA), which move more than 25,000 customers per day; and

WHEREAS, HRT is the Commonwealth's largest public transportation agency outside of Northern Virginia and metropolitan Washington D.C., serving six of the top 10 largest cities in the Commonwealth and the second largest metropolitan area, including Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, WATA operates 12 fixed routes that serve citizens and visitors of James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and York County; and

WHEREAS, Suffolk Transit provides safe, cost-efficient fixed route transit services to Suffolk's core downtown service area and northern Suffolk, and a connection to HRT; and

WHEREAS, a successful regional public transit system is critical to the economic prosperity of Hampton Roads; it connects riders to jobs, reduces traffic congestion by removing single-occupancy vehicles from the roadways, and helps residents and visitors attain an education, receive health care, connect with family and friends, and attend places of worship, recreational and community activities, and sporting events; and

WHEREAS, the metropolitan area of Hampton Roads, which includes 1.7 million people, must continue to have a robust and efficient regional public transit system if it is to effectively compete with other urban and metropolitan areas, grow, and provide the quality of life and services that residents of the region deserve; and

WHEREAS, transit operators in Hampton Roads continue to face significant financial challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic, with ridership numbers slowly increasing but not yet returning to pre-pandemic levels due to shifting community habits and an increase in the number of individuals working from home; and

WHEREAS, state and federal transit funding is stagnant with threats of significant future decreases, while at the same time operating and capital costs are rising faster than new funding sources are becoming available; and

WHEREAS, just as other infrastructure such as roadways and bridges needs ongoing maintenance and an investment in repairs, public transportation requires an ongoing investment to maintain and expand options for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, Hampton Roads public transit agencies have identified a need [~~of approximately \$20 million annually to enable them~~ for significant additional funding] to meet the growing transit needs of the region they serve; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to manage ongoing and vital investments in public transportation in an accountable and transparent manner, and to make every effort to ensure reasonable and effective cost-control measures are in place for such investments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study options for providing long-term, sustainable, and dedicated operations and capital funding with cost-containment controls to ensure that the public transit systems that serve Hampton Roads [, including all modes of Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) service, local and express bus, light rail, passenger ferry, paratransit, on-demand microtransit, and seasonal trolley and shuttle services, other ridesharing and commuter programs, and any future modes of public transportation or mobility services that may be developed to serve the Hampton Roads region,] meet the growing public transit needs of the region. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 13 members that shall consist of seven legislative members, two nonlegislative citizen members, and four ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates, two of whom shall be members of the House Committee on Appropriations, and two of whom shall be members of the House Committee on Transportation, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional

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59 representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate, all of whom
60 shall be members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, to be appointed by the Senate
61 Committee on Rules; one nonlegislative citizen member, who shall be a member of the Transportation
62 District Commission of Hampton Roads, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one
63 nonlegislative citizen member, who shall be a member of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning
64 Organization (HRTPO), to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Executive Directors of the
65 HRT, WATA, and Suffolk Transit, and the Secretary of Transportation, or their designees, shall serve ex
66 officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of
67 the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint
68 subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel
69 originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a
70 companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be
71 required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who
72 shall be members of the General Assembly.

73 In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) establish a work group consisting of
74 representatives from HRT, WATA, Suffolk Transit, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation
75 (DRPT), the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC), and the HRTPO, a
76 representative from the [Amalgamated Transit Union #1177 Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities
77 Alliance (HRMFFA)], and a representative from the Hampton Roads business community, as selected by
78 the Speaker of the House of Delegates, to further examine potential regional revenue sources that would
79 contribute to a fund or set of funds for new dedicated operating or capital funding, or both, for Hampton
80 Roads transit agencies that leverages and exists in addition to current state and local funding commitments;
81 (ii) examine industry-wide cost-saving and cost-containment strategies to ensure the long-term fiscal
82 sustainability of the Commonwealth's only light rail system, The Tide; (iii) to the extent feasible, evaluate
83 projected revenue growth from each funding source identified and current projected annual cost growth
84 through 2037; (iv) analyze future land use plans for high-capacity transit corridors in Hampton Roads to
85 support continued transit ridership growth; (v) identify telework impacts on regional transit ridership; (vi)
86 determine, to the extent feasible, long-term capital funding needs for maintenance, improvements, or
87 expansion of public transit in the region; (vii) evaluate the use of local bus services and their fixed routes and
88 the impacts on residents and visitors in the region, and consider whether routes should be expanded or altered
89 to best meet ridership needs; and (viii) evaluate HRT's governance and organizational structure and identify
90 current structural challenges and possible solutions.

91 Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the chairman of the joint
92 subcommittee. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee
93 shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by Hampton
94 Roads Transit, the Williamsburg Area Transit Authority, Suffolk Transit, the Hampton Roads Transportation
95 Accountability Commission, the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization, and the Department
96 of Rail and Public Transportation. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint
97 subcommittee for this study, upon request.

98 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to six meetings for the 2026 interim [and six meetings for the
99 2027 interim], and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$40,000 [each year] without approval as
100 set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written
101 authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint
102 resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

103 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a
104 majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and
105 (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

106 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, [2026 2027], and the chairman
107 shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
108 recommendations no later than the first day of the [2027 2028] Regular Session of the General Assembly.
109 The executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly
110 and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate
111 document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the
112 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall
113 be posted on the General Assembly's website.

114 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules
115 Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the
116 period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2026 [or 2027] interim.