

Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement



Agenda Item #11

Presented by:

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- **On December 4, 2009, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation published the Richmond to Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).**

- **Public Comment Period:** December 21, 2009 to February 12, 2010

- **Public Hearing Dates and Locations:**
 - **Richmond: January 26, 2010 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles
2300 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23269

 - **Newport News: January 27, 2010 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
City Center Conference Facilities
James and Warwick Rooms
700 Town Center Drive
Newport News, VA 23606

 - **Norfolk: January 28, 2010 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center
One Waterside Drive
Norfolk, VA 23510

- **There are a number of technical issues that have been expressed:**
 - Travel Demand modeling and forecasting are based on major components of the region's LRTP that have or will be amended.
 - The Draft Tier I EIS assumes that the costs associated with the capital improvements between Richmond and Petersburg will be associated with the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor unless the SEHSR corridor is deferred or canceled.

- **On October 30, 2009, the HRTPO Board endorsed a long-term strategy:**
 - Enhance (improve on-time performance and increase frequency) Amtrak's current intercity passenger rail service along the CSX route between Richmond, Williamsburg and Newport News.
 - Pursue high-speed rail service between Petersburg, Suffolk and Norfolk.
 - Hire a national expert to guide Hampton Roads to improve its competitiveness for Federal and State funds, and further guide the region's long-term high-speed and intercity passenger rail strategic plans.

- **It is the HRTPO staff's recommendation to "concurrently":**

1. Fully utilize the TTAC, TAC, and the HRTPO Board to craft comments regarding the Draft Tier I EIS.
2. Focus the region's full attention on furthering its competitiveness for Federal and State high-speed and intercity passenger rail funding.
3. Have the region pursue interim funding to:
 - Improve the on-time performance and frequency of Amtrak's service along the CSX line between Richmond, Williamsburg and Newport News (extended).
 - Establish passenger rail service along the Norfolk Southern line between Petersburg, Suffolk and Norfolk.
4. Expand Light Rail Transit service to Virginia Beach, Norfolk Naval Station and the Norfolk International Airport.

- **The HRTPO and public comments will be incorporated in future versions of the EIS.**
- **The Draft EIS will become a living document.**
- **The region must express a “unified” voice in order to successfully obtain Federal and State high-speed and intercity passenger rail funds.**