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## 2018 TRANSPORTATION POLICY STATEMENT

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- 1 Critical investments are needed to maintain  
2 and improve Virginia’s transportation  
3 network. The structural imbalance between  
4 critical needs and available resources  
5 persists. Even with past actions taken by the  
6 General Assembly to enact a transportation  
7 and public transit funding bill, the  
8 challenges abound for all transportation  
9 modes. Beginning in FY 2018, transit  
10 capital funding will permanently decline by  
11 62.0 percent without additional resources,  
12 according to the Department of Rail and  
13 Public Transportation. The federal Highway  
14 Trust Fund, which pays for roads and transit,  
15 is barely solvent, and Congress has proven  
16 unable to develop a long-term solution.  
17
- 18 VML is mindful of and acknowledges the  
19 contribution of the legislation enacted in the  
20 2013 session (HB2313) and in the 2014  
21 session SMART SCALE (HB 2) as  
22 important first steps in addressing the  
23 transportation needs of Virginia’s localities.  
24 Future legislative and administrative  
25 initiatives should be based on these  
26 principles:
- 27
- 28 A. Sustainable Funding. - A stable and  
29 predictable plan which is  
30 comprehensive, which addresses  
31 investment across the state and  
32 which does not rely upon general  
33 fund revenue.
- 34 B. Fiscal responsibility. - Dedicated  
35 revenues, which are activity-based,  
36 will strengthen as the economy does.  
37 Further, revenues will be allocated to  
38 jurisdictions in proportion to their  
39 transportation tax contribution,  
40 preserving a balance of equity.
- 41 C. Statewide focus. Transportation is a  
42 statewide issue, not a regional, urban  
43 or rural issue. Every area of the state  
44 is economically hampered by  
45 insufficient infrastructure  
46 management.
- 47 D. Shared responsibility. Transportation  
48 planning and authority are delegated  
49 to regional bodies where they exist  
50 and to localities. These bodies  
51 prioritize and authorize individual  
52 projects within their jurisdictions, an  
53 essential element of equity which  
54 does require coordination among  
55 involved localities.
- 56 E. Project prioritization. VML supports  
57 the collaborative approach taken by  
58 the Commonwealth Transportation  
59 Board to seek input from regional  
60 and local bodies to develop a  
61 statewide prioritization process for  
62 measuring projects that expand  
63 capacity. Scarce resources should be  
64 targeted to projects that address  
65 congestion mitigation, economic  
66 development, accessibility, safety,  
67 and environmental quality. VML  
68 recognizes the importance of having  
69 an objective, quantifiable, and  
70 consistent process that also takes the  
71 different needs of regions into  
72 consideration and recognizes the  
73 significant progress made on this  
74 issue through SMART SCALE  
75 implementation.
- 76 F. Infrastructure modernization. Our  
77 transportation efforts must include a  
78 comprehensive statewide plan to  
79 provide transportation options for  
80 rail and transit which minimize the

1 use of petroleum. Such plans must  
2 ensure that all Virginians — rural,  
3 suburban and urban – are able to  
4 contribute to and benefit from  
5 statewide economic opportunities.

6 G. Congestion mitigation. Alleviation of  
7 commuter congestion is essential to  
8 economic development and to  
9 enhance citizens’ quality of life.  
10 Corridor-wide solutions which  
11 promote alternative modes including  
12 highways, transit and non-traditional  
13 solutions still need to be developed.

## 14 **REVENUES**

15 Since the transportation needs of the state  
16 are so much greater than the current funding  
17 provisions, it remains essential that the  
18 General Assembly continue and expand  
19 transportation and infrastructure investment  
20 which is fiscally sound, well documented  
21 and serves local, regional and state-wide  
22 needs by:

- 23 • Raising revenue from those who use the  
24 transportation and transit systems;
- 25 • Increasing dedicated funding for public  
26 transportation to meet transit operating  
27 expenses and make Virginia competitive  
28 for federal transport funds;
- 29 • Providing or extending as a local option  
30 transportation impact fee authority to all  
31 localities;
- 32 • Authorizing practical options for using  
33 long-term financing for major  
34 transportation projects;
- 35 • Providing full state funding for the  
36 revenue sharing program as provided for  
37 in §33.1-23.05;
- 38 • Seeking equity among various road users  
39 by ensuring that trucks pay their share of  
40 road costs. VML also advocates for  
41 increased local influence when the state  
42 considers mitigating negative impacts  
43 resulting from truck traffic.
- 44
- 45
- 46

## 47 **PASS-THROUGH OF FEDERAL** 48 **FUNDS**

49 Localities are often successful in receiving  
50 federal funds such as special appropriations  
51 and enhancement funds. These funds  
52 are passed through the State to localities  
53 and the transfer of these funds is often  
54 delayed. The federal government and the  
55 state need to streamline the transfer of these  
56 funds and allow localities to move forward  
57 with these projects.

## 58 **SAFETY**

### 59 **Pedestrian**

60 VML recommends that the Virginia Code be  
61 amended to clarify the respective rights and  
62 duties of pedestrians and vehicle drivers.  
63 Drivers should be required to stop, not just  
64 yield, for pedestrians in all marked and  
65 unmarked crosswalks. In addition, police  
66 need the ability to issue simpler citations  
67 than currently allowed under Virginia law to  
68 more effectively enforce the laws against jay  
69 walking.

### 70 **Bicycling**

71 VML also recommends changes to the Code  
72 of Virginia clarifying the rights and  
73 responsibilities of bicyclists in their use of  
74 public streets in order to ensure the safety of  
75 all road users.

## 76 **PRESERVATION OF RIGHTS-OF-** 77 **WAY**

78 Transportation projects take many years  
79 from the planning stage to  
80 construction. Localities need additional  
81 authority to reserve miles of right-of-way  
82 years in advance of any funding availability  
83 for these projects, or risk development in the  
84 path of these transportation projects.

## 85 **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

86 Smaller communities and regions require  
87 additional and enhanced transportation  
88 planning and technical assistance from

1 VDOT and DRPT. VDOT and DRPT,  
2 therefore, have a continuing obligation to  
3 assist these areas, including establishing  
4 equitable equipment rental rates and  
5 administrative costs.

6

### 7 **TRAFFIC CALMING**

8 VML supports continued improvements to  
9 VDOT's traffic calming program to improve  
10 safety for users of public streets.

11 Additionally, VML has supported, and  
12 continues to support, expanding the  
13 availability of photo-camera traffic  
14 enforcement for all localities while  
15 respecting civil rights.

16

### 17 **METROPOLITAN PLANNING 18 ORGANIZATIONS (MPOs)**

19 VML opposes broadening MPO voting  
20 membership to include private sector  
21 representatives. VML believes that  
22 representation by public officials makes  
23 MPOs accountable to citizens.

24

### 25 **PUBLIC TRANSIT**

26 Mass transit is critical to the state's  
27 economy and the quality of life for all  
28 Virginians. Public transit includes all  
29 available multiple occupancy vehicle  
30 services and technologies designed to  
31 transport passengers on local and regional  
32 routes.

33

34 VML supports:

- 35 1) increased federal and state funding for  
36 public transit;
- 37 2) policies that allow for the equitable  
38 distribution of such funding;
- 39 3) a dedicated source of funding to support  
40 public transit; and
- 41 4) state legislation to provide localities with  
42 additional taxing authority to adopt  
43 regionally-based or local taxes to address  
44 transit capital needs.

45

46 VML also appreciates congressional actions  
47 taken to restore and make permanent parity  
48 between employer-sponsored benefits for  
49 parking and for mass transit riders.

50

51 Beginning in 2019, transit in Virginia faces  
52 a 44 percent decrease in capital funding due  
53 to the phasing out of Capital Project  
54 Revenue (CPR) bond funds approved in  
55 2007. VML supports the provisions of HB  
56 1359 (2016 Session) that will issue a report  
57 to the General Assembly by mid-2017 that  
58 identifies possible sources of replacement  
59 revenue and examines methodologies for  
60 setting priorities for capital projects.

61

### 62 **RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

63 VML recommends the expansion of  
64 interstate and intra-state passenger and  
65 freight rail service corridors, with no  
66 requirement for local match to provide  
67 transportation alternatives, and to help to  
68 stimulate economic development and  
69 tourism.

70

71 State government and railroad executives  
72 must work cooperatively with local officials  
73 to improve and enhance railroad  
74 maintenance, safety, traffic and conflicts  
75 (for example at at-grade crossings).

76

77 The Commonwealth needs to:

- 78 • Work with railroad executives to provide  
79 greater access for passenger service (for  
80 commuters and tourists).
- 81 • Develop a source of funds for cost-  
82 effective intercity passenger service and  
83 high-speed rail operations to  
84 complement federal construction  
85 funding.
- 86 • Work with surrounding states to foster  
87 greater interstate passenger rail service  
88 and to promote the development of the  
89 Northeast high-speed rail corridor, the  
90 New York to Atlanta corridor and the  
91 TransDominion Express, where these

1 systems provide meaningful reduction of  
2 travel times, higher than historic  
3 reliability and needed coverage to vital  
4 business districts which are in close  
5 proximity to population centers.

6  
7 VML believes the state needs to work with  
8 rail executives and the commuter rail system  
9 to permit commuter system extension and  
10 expansion throughout the Commonwealth  
11 and to develop a source of funds to  
12 accomplish.

### 13 14 **AIR TRANSPORTATION**

15 VML wants the state and federal  
16 governments to actively work to develop  
17 and sustain comprehensive air service  
18 throughout the Commonwealth, connecting  
19 it to the mid-Atlantic region as well as the  
20 entire country. Additionally, VML wants  
21 the state and federal government to invest in  
22 and deploy new technologies intended to  
23 improve air service and safety.

24  
25 The federal government is urged to  
26 appropriate federal funds for airport  
27 infrastructure improvements at authorized  
28 levels and to develop a national airport  
29 access strategy intended to stimulate local  
30 economic development opportunities.  
31 Additionally, the state is urged to  
32 complement federal infrastructure  
33 investments as well as expand state support  
34 for capital improvements.

### 35 36 **PORTS AND WATER** 37 **TRANSPORTATION**

38 VML requests the protection and promotion  
39 of an effective port and water transportation  
40 system by:

- 41 a. developing alternative water  
42 transportation mechanisms to  
43 alleviate congestion, such as ferries,  
44 that will move people, goods and  
45 vehicles as an alternative to road  
46 travel;

- 47 b. enhancing rail service to move goods  
48 in and out of ports;  
49 c. deepening major water ports and  
50 navigable rivers;  
51 d. relieving congestion in the ports by  
52 enhancing rail and highway access  
53 out of ports; and  
54 e. developing policies on the  
55 disposal/reuse of shipping  
56 containers.

57  
58 Concerning the deepening of channels,  
59 VML requests the state to work closely with  
60 local governments regarding spoils disposal  
61 from channel deepening.

62  
63 The revenues derived from Virginia's public  
64 ports are dedicated exclusively to the state.  
65 Some portion should be shared with  
66 localities to account for street and road  
67 maintenance and police and fire protection  
68 services directly related to the impacts of  
69 tax-exempt port properties.

70  
71 VML urges a significant study of the state's  
72 water transportation system, including the  
73 expanded use of barge traffic for freight  
74 transportation.

### 75 76 **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION** 77 **AUTHORITIES**

#### 78 **Facilities**

79 VML supports by-right authority for the  
80 creation of regional transportation  
81 authorities to promote coordination of  
82 transportation and related facilities.

#### 83 84 **Town voting membership**

85 VML supports town voting membership on  
86 regional transportation authorities

#### 87 88 **Protective floor gas tax**

89 VML supports an amendment to Virginia  
90 Code § 58.1-2295 which would establish a  
91 protective floor price for the 2.1 percent  
92 regional gas tax, much as was done for the

1 statewide fuels tax in §58.1-2217. Such a  
2 floor concept is essential to provide a more  
3 stable, dedicated revenue source needed for  
4 long-term financing of regional projects as  
5 well as bus and commuter rail operations.  
6 The need is also highlighted by the drop in  
7 fuel prices since FY 2013. (In FY 2016, the  
8 absence of a floor price shrunk total gas tax  
9 revenues in Northern Virginia by \$35.0  
10 million, requiring localities to find other  
11 resources to meet commitments made to  
12 WMATA, VRE and PRTC commuter and  
13 local bus services. In Hampton Roads,  
14 regional gas taxes accounted in FY 2017 for  
15 17.0 percent of the Hampton Roads  
16 Transportation Fund. Actual collections fell  
17 to one-third of the revenue projections,  
18 affecting the progress of the region’s  
19 transportation projects.)

20

## 21 **LIVABILITY**

22 Streets do much more than move cars; they  
23 often define community character and serve  
24 as important public spaces. Small towns and  
25 larger cities alike are using complete streets  
26 policies to reclaim public space and solve  
27 traffic problems at the same time. Many  
28 complete street solutions are low-cost—  
29 some are as simple as changing paint-  
30 striping on pavement. VML supports  
31 securing mainstream transportation funds for  
32 non-motorized improvements and policy  
33 changes that result in construction of  
34 complete streets and improved bicycle and  
35 pedestrian infrastructure within the existing  
36 right of way.

37

## 38 **TRANSPORTATION NETWORK** 39 **COMPANIES**

40 VML supports state licensing of Internet-  
41 based transportation network companies  
42 (TNCs) as contained in HB 1662 (2015  
43 session) which establishes safety and  
44 insurance standards for vehicles and drivers.  
45 VML acknowledges that state licensing is  
46 preferable to local licensing recognizing the

47 wide area of operations of TNCs, the need to  
48 avoid conflicting or competitive licensing  
49 among jurisdictions, the need to establish a  
50 functional basis for taxation, the need to  
51 provide consistent driver credentials and the  
52 need to ensure all segments of the  
53 transportation industry are treated fairly.  
54 VML supports open market pricing for  
55 TNCs rather than fixed pricing, somewhat  
56 like variable toll pricing on major highways.