

momentum

SPRING 2026

QUARTERLY



Introducing GoMobile: A New Way to Pay

Hampton Roads Transit is excited to introduce GoMobile – a new way to pay for public transit. GoMobile is HRT’s new mobile fare pay system designed to improve customer experience. Whether commuting by bus, light rail, ferry, or VB Wave trolley, GoMobile offers flexibility and choice.

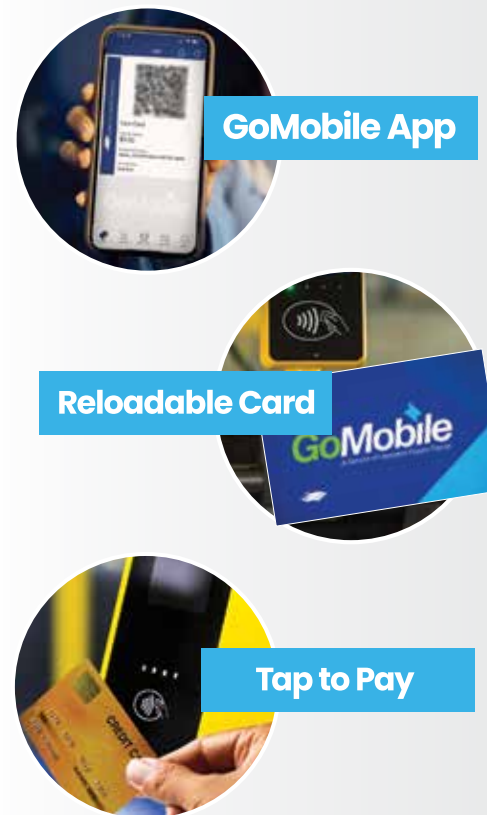
GoMobile began rolling out in March. By June, all customers across the system were able to use the GoMobile app and reloadable card or just tap their credit or debit cards.

With the fare-capping feature, GoMobile offers frequent riders a more affordable option. Instead of needing \$70 upfront for a monthly pass, riders pay their \$2 fare as they go. Once they spend \$4.50 in a day, rides for the rest of the day are free. Once they hit \$70 in a month, rides for the rest of the month are free. This perk ensures those who can’t afford the upfront cost of a monthly pass always get the best possible fare.

Implementation of GoMobile has been years in the making and required collaboration between multiple departments, including Operations, Technology, Finance, Customer Service, and Marketing & Strategic Communications.

Before implementation, teams installed card readers on every bus, ferry, and trolley. They replaced ticket vending machines. Operators learned the new technology. Outreach staff answered customers’ questions.

This milestone demonstrates HRT’s ongoing commitment to connecting, modernizing, and improving accessibility in Hampton Roads. ■



System Optimization Plan Gets Green Light

At the May board meeting, the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads officially approved Hampton Roads Transit’s System Optimization Plan (SOP). The SOP is a comprehensive initiative designed to better align our bus service with available resources, creating a more reliable, cost-effective transit network that increases ridership where it is needed most.

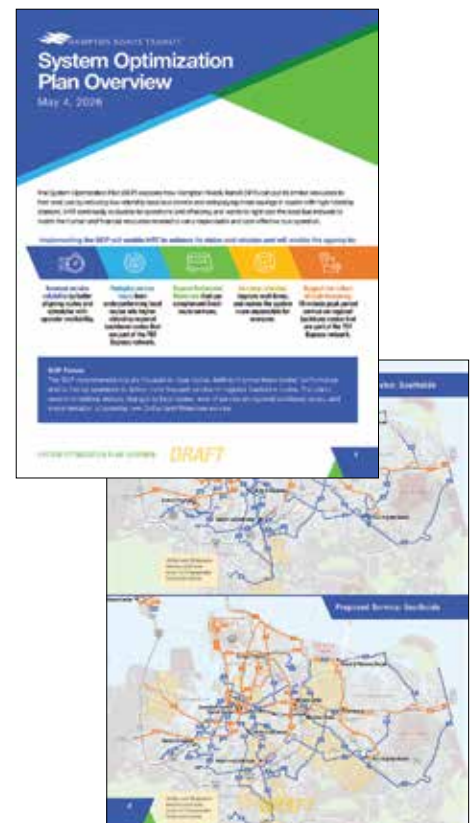
By eliminating low-performing routes and redeploying those assets to high-ridership routes, we are building a more efficient system for the future.

“Today’s board approval marks a critical milestone for HRT as we proactively build a more efficient bus network for the future—one that preserves customer access and mobility while better aligning service schedules with operator and vehicle availability,” said Karen Kitsis, HRT’s Chief Planning and Development Officer.

The SOP allows us to dramatically expand our regional backbone routes from three to 13, providing 330,000 more people across Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach with access to 15-minute peak service. We already know this strategy works. The three routes that previously made this transition have seen double-digit ridership increases.

Where fixed routes are discontinued, we are working closely with member cities to establish OnDemand zones, providing 15-minute wait times to improve mobility.

Implementation will begin in May 2027 and could take two to three years to complete. ■



Hampton Roads Transit Breaks Ground on Future Evelyn Butts Transit Center

Hampton Roads Transit is preparing to welcome a new transit center.

In April, HRT staff, community leaders and elected officials broke ground on the future Evelyn Butts Transit Center, a new bus hub named after the civil rights leader.

The off-street facility at 956 E. Little Creek Road will feature 12 bus bays to accommodate high-frequency service, covered waiting areas with benches, accessible restrooms, and a new park-and-ride lot.

For operators, the new transit center will feature a breakroom and office space. Once completed in early 2029, it will replace the current bus lineup at Evelyn T. Butts Avenue and Avenue J across the street in a residential neighborhood.

“We are creating a vibrant transit node emphasizing comfort, security and convenience to connect 2,000 daily riders on seven bus routes that transect Norfolk but also to Virginia Beach and Chesapeake as well as Hampton and Newport News,” said William E. Harrell, HRT’s President & CEO.

The future facility is named in honor of Evelyn Thomas Butts, the African American civil rights activist born in Norfolk. She is best known for challenging the poll tax and taking her case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2027.

“Our vision for this project is to transform the experience of our customers and employees with a modern, safe and clean transit hub to serve the people of Norfolk,” said Sibyl Pappas, HRT’s Chief Engineering and Facilities Officer.

“On behalf of City Council, I thank HRT for investing in our city and creating a convenient, safe and more comfortable facility to move people around our city and the region,” added Norfolk Mayor Kenneth C. Alexander.

Charlene Butts Ligon, the daughter of Evelyn Butts, spoke at the groundbreaking.

“This moment is deeply personal for me,” she said. “My mother believed in serving the ordinary citizen, making sure that every person, no matter who they were, had a voice.” ■



HRT Leadership Shares Updates at CEO Roundtables

Hundreds of HRT employees gathered at three sites and online for the biannual CEO Roundtables.

This provided employees with first-hand insights into ongoing initiatives from President and CEO William Harrell and the Senior Executive Team. Highlights included the rollout of GoMobile, progress on the System Optimization Plan, and construction updates for the new Evelyn Butts Transit Center.

Senior executives also fielded a wide range of questions directly from the staff, including security, scheduling, and professional training opportunities. These sessions continue to serve as an invaluable forum for transparency, open conversation, and direct collaboration between leadership and staff. ■



Trolley Season Kicks Off With Ribbon Cutting

HRT leaders, members of the Virginia Beach City Council and representatives from the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center celebrated the arrival of four new VB Wave trolleys with a ribbon cutting outside the aquarium to kick off the summer season.

The factory-fresh 29-foot-long Gillig buses are designed to look like trolleys to match the rest of our fleet. They feature that old hometown trolley feel – complete with iconic sky-blue and sand-colored brown exterior and wooden seating inside for 29 passengers.

The four trolleys joining our fleet for this season are from an order of 14 that will be delivered this year to replace some older trollies.

“The VB Wave trolley is vital to safely move people along the Oceanfront. Visitors also rely on the trolley to visit places like the Aquarium and Adventure Park so they can stay at Oceanfront hotels and not worry about moving their cars,” said Ben Simms, Chief Operations Officer.

The VB Wave serves three routes:

- Route 30, up and down Atlantic Avenue to 40th Street.
- Route 31, the aquarium and campground trolley along General Booth Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue to 18th Street.
- Route 35, the Bayfront route with service between Parks Avenue and 19th Street and Shore Drive and Pleasure House Road. It’s a great way to reach the Chesapeake Bay beaches, First Landing State Park and Bayfront restaurants.

Last year, the three VB Wave routes carried a total of more than 281,000 riders, demonstrating the impact and value of our service. ■



HRT Earns Top Honors at Annual VTA Conference

A delegation from Hampton Roads Transit attended the annual Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Conference in Fredericksburg.

William E. Harrell, HRT’s President and CEO, joined other transit leaders in a discussion on “Navigating Uncertain Terrain” from the CEO’s perspective, while our Organizational Advancement Officer, Noelle Pinkard, took on the legislative perspective in a separate panel. Military Outreach Liaison Caleb Smith joined a panel discussion on “Working with Federal Installations.”

Mr. Harrell received the Helen Poore Transit Professional Distinguished Service Award.

In addition, HRT’s Marketing and Strategic Communications team was recognized for its OnDemand Ridesharing Campaign. The team earned top honors in the Outstanding Public Transit Marketing (Large Agency) category.

“This award recognizes more than a successful campaign—it reflects HRT’s commitment to innovation and customer-focused communication,” said Alexis Majied, HRT’s Chief Communications Officer. “Our team developed a thoughtful and impactful approach to promoting OnDemand Ridesharing, helping ensure that community members understood how this service could expand their access to reliable transportation.”

The VTA conference concluded with a graduation celebration for the 15 Virginia Transit Leadership Institute fellows, including HRT Strategic Communications Specialist Angela Gregory. ■



HRT Hosts Annual State Roadeo

Hampton Roads Transit hosted the Virginia State Bus and Maintenance “Roadeo” in March. The annual competition showcased the skills of bus drivers and mechanics from across the Commonwealth.

HRT Operator Reginald Charity, Jr. won the operator competition and represented HRT and Virginia at the International Bus Roadeo in May in Salt Lake City.

HRT welcomed competitors from nine public transit agencies, including Alexandria, Arlington, Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Fairfax, Lynchburg, Richmond, OmniRide (Prince William County), and Petersburg.

In addition to Charity, operators Che-Vaughn Hall, Terraine Little and Joseph Perkins represented HRT. Meanwhile, our own Vincent Biggs, William Claud and Luke Cramer participated in the maintenance competition.

“The annual roadeo is a wonderful opportunity for our team to take a ‘detour’ from their normal routes and daily routines to engage in some friendly competition,” said William Harrell, HRT President and CEO, who spoke at the event.

Maintenance technicians met at HRT’s Hampton garage to test their expertise in identifying and diagnosing a range of mechanical issues across vehicle systems that include braking, engine, door operation, HVAC, vehicle computer systems, and general vehicle inspection.

Meanwhile, bus operators competed in a timed obstacle course designed to test their driving skills, including serpentine maneuvers, difficult turns, reversing, braking, vehicle inspection, simulated bus stops, and navigating a diminishing clearance.

“This event is more than a competition. It’s a showcase of precision, patience, and commitment to safety,” said Ben Simms, Chief Operations Officer. “The Roadeo is a reminder that behind every safe mile traveled is the skill and expertise of an operator and mechanic.”

The Roadeo was made possible through a grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), support from the Virginia Transit Association (VTA), and the following sponsors: Altro, ABC Companies, Snap-on, Sonny Merryman, Vontas, Parts Authority, Rivanna Equipment Company, New Flyer, VIA, Cummins, Wabtec, and Gillig. ■



Introducing the Sustaining Transit story map

Hampton Roads Transit has a new interactive story map to help tell our story.

The website (www.SustainingTransit.org) introduces our stakeholders to HRT, the history of transit in Hampton Roads, HRT’s economic impact, challenges and opportunities, and ways everyone can support transit.

You’ll find interactive maps where you can zoom in to see our route network, points of interest in the region, employment clusters, population density and more.

The website also includes testimonials from leaders in key industries that rely on transit, such as workforce development, Naval Station Norfolk, Sentara and the hospitality industry.

HRT is promoting this tool through our marketing and strategic communications channels as a way to support long-term and sustainable funding for public transportation. ■



Scan QR code to
view the study.



Honoring Four Decades of Dedication

Thank you, Mr. Harrell, for your decades of hard work, mentorship, and invaluable contributions to the community. You will be greatly missed!

Shelter Renovation Nears Completion

Service has been restored and renovations are nearly complete at the 81st and Orcutt Avenue transfer station in Hampton. Four new shelters with benches, trash cans, and solar lighting have been installed, and a handicap accessible sidewalk has been added. Work continues to complete the curb along the bus stop area. New security cameras were being installed by the end of June. The transfer station serves multiple routes, including the 757 Express Route 112.



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