

## DRPT Agency Update – March 2024

### DRPT Connects Businesses Campaign

Launching on Monday, January 22, the inaugural DRPT Connects Business marketing campaign is set to run through February. Virginia-based businesses will discover the benefits of providing a variety of commuting options for employees and learn more about services provided by our Commuter Assistance Programs. As employees continue to return to the office, many businesses need assistance implementing employee commuter benefit programs and creating sustainable hybrid work plans. By raising awareness of the free resources available through DRPT and our partners throughout the state, this marketing campaign benefits regional economic development and raises awareness of employee transit benefit options.

Resources, including a campaign partner media toolkit can be found at <https://connectingva.drpt.virginia.gov/capartner toolkit> and Employers can learn more about available benefits for their employees at the Employee Commuter Benefits page at <https://connectingva.drpt.virginia.gov/employee-commuter-benefits/>.

### DRPT Launches New SMART SCALE Dashboard

DRPT has launched an interactive SMART SCALE dashboard using ArcGIS for grantees and the public to view project information around past and current transit projects that have received SMART SCALE funding. Access the dashboard here: [SMART SCALE Dashboard \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

### SMART SCALE Round 6 Pre-Applications

Pre-Applications open on **March 1** and must be submitted by **April 1**. [SMART SCALE Round 6 Resources](#) are available on the SMART SCALE website. For technical assistance as you prepare your pre-applications, please contact the appropriate DRPT SMART SCALE contact:

- **Transit Applications:** Paige Lazar at [Paige.Lazar@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:Paige.Lazar@drpt.virginia.gov)
- **Rail Applications:** Randy Selleck at [Randy.Selleck@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:Randy.Selleck@drpt.virginia.gov)
- **ALL Northern Virginia Applications:** Amy Garbarini at [Amy.Garbarini@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:Amy.Garbarini@drpt.virginia.gov)

### FRA Amtrak Long Distance Study

FRA has released the draft document for its Amtrak Long Distance Study for public comment through March 8, 2024. Of significance for Virginia is a proposed route of a New York City to Houston route with travel through Roanoke and Bristol. A copy of the [FRA presentation is available here for review](#).

### Federal Transit Administration announces two NOFOs

FTA has announced the opportunity to apply for \$1,103,963,762 in competitive grants under the Low or No Emission Grant Program (Low-No Program) and

\$390,045,823 under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program (Buses and Bus Facilities Program). [View the NOFOs here.](#)

The purpose of the Low-No Program is to support the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The Low-No Program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

The purpose of the Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program is to assist in the financing of buses and bus facilities capital projects, including replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing or leasing buses or related equipment, and rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities.

Review [DRPT's 2023 FTA discretionary grant writing workshop](#) on our YouTube page.

### **Clean Bus Planning Awards**

The \$5 million [Clean Bus Planning Awards \(CBPA\) program](#), managed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and funded by the Joint Office, [launched last week](#). The CBPA program provides free technical assistance from NREL to create comprehensive and customized bus electrification plans for fleets across the United States. Both public transit agencies and school bus fleet operators are eligible to apply.