

### Transit Equity and Modernization Study

- DRPT has selected Kimley-Horn to support the Transit Equity and Modernization Study (HJ 542).
- The legislation requires DRPT to conduct a needs assessment that focuses on the equitable delivery of transit services and modernization of transit in Virginia.
- A [joint webinar](#) for TRIP and Transit Equity and Modernization Study was held on July 29.
- An interim report is due to the General Assembly by December 2021 and final report by August 2022.

### SMART SCALE Round 5

- With the SMART SCALE portal scheduled to open March 2022, DRPT is encouraging all eligible applicants with potential transit or rail projects to reach out for technical assistance on applications.
- Please reach out to your DRPT contact or for general SMART SCALE questions, please contact Taylor Jenkins at [taylor.jenkins@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:taylor.jenkins@drpt.virginia.gov).

### Transit Ridership Incentive Program

- The Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) is a new statewide grant program dedicated to improving transit's regional connectivity in urban areas with a population in excess of 100,000 and reducing barriers to transit use by supporting low income and zero fare programming.
- Application opened on August 1 and will close September 17, 2021. Supporting documentation such as letters of support or board approvals may be submitted through October 1, 2021.
- Additional information is available on DRPT's webpage at: <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/transit/trip-transit-ridership-incentive-program/>

### Virginia Breeze Bus Expansion

- The Virginia Breeze intercity bus service is expanding service along the I-81 Corridor with a fourth route titled the Highlands Rhythm. Service will begin later this year.
- The route will consist of daily northbound and southbound service connecting Bristol, Virginia to Union Station in Washington, D.C. with stops in Wytheville, Radford, Christiansburg, Salem, Roanoke, Harrisonburg, Dulles International Airport, and West Falls Church Metrorail Station.

### Intercity Bus Relief Funding Opportunity

- This one-time grant opportunity will help intercity bus companies recover operating expenses incurred during the pandemic
- The application period is open now through October 1, 2021
- Funding is provided at a 100 percent federal share, with no local match required. The funds can be used to reimburse certain operating expenses incurred to maintain transit services as well as pay for administrative leave for transit personnel due to reduced operations during the emergency.
- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and DRPT have established [eligibility criteria](#) to appropriately allocate this funding. Criteria should be thoroughly reviewed before completing the [application](#).

## **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority**

- The VPRA Board will be meeting on September 28, 2021 at 10:00 am at the VDOT Central Auditorium - 1221 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA with a livestream available.
- Extension of passenger rail service from Staples Mill Station to Main Street Station scheduled to launch in September as part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program.
- Additional information on VPRA can be found at: <http://vpra.virginia.gov/>

## **Freight Rail Enhancement to Increase Goods and Highway Throughput (FREIGHT) Grant Program**

- DRPT funding program to utilize the Commonwealth Rail Fund for planning purposes and rail projects not administered by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority
- DRPT presented at the July CTB Board workshop draft guidance for the FREIGHT program. A copy of the presentation may be found here: [http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/media/3499/crf\\_freight\\_julyctb.pdf](http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/media/3499/crf_freight_julyctb.pdf)
- Next steps include finalizing program guidance, adoption by the CTB, and accepting applications on December 1, 2021.