

### Federal COVID-19 Research Demonstration Program Award

- The Federal Transit Administration awarded \$247,500 in COVID-19 Research Demonstration funds to DRPT in January.
- This grant will allow DRPT to create a comprehensive collection of resources to help transit providers adapt to a “new normal.” It is intended to define the role of transit in this new environment and strengthen public confidence in transit services.
- DRPT will use the funding to develop an “Adapting to a New Normal” toolkit, including a strategy handbook and a statewide messaging campaign to assist transit agencies in safely restoring service and ridership.

### Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

- The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) was signed into law on Dec. 27, and includes \$50 million for Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310 formula grants).
- As with Section 5310 funding, CRRSAA is apportioned by census area, with \$155,786 appropriated for the Richmond Urbanized Area.
- CRRSAA stipulates that this funding can be used at 100 percent, with no local match required.
- DRPT anticipates taking Section 5310 CRRSAA funding recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board in March.

### Long Bridge

- The CTB also [awarded](#) a \$20.8 million contract for preliminary engineering for the Long Bridge project to Vanesse Hangan Brustlin (VHB). The contract was competitively bid in November 2019 and DRPT received six (6) responses.
- The contract will be transferred to the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) for administration when that organization has established the capacity to manage it.

### Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

- DRPT is continuing to work on standing up the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, as authorized during the 2020 General Assembly.
- The next VPRA meeting will be held on February 22.
- Additional information on VPRA can be found at: <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/vpra/board-meetings/>

### General Assembly

- Monitoring legislation relevant to transit, rail, and DRPT operations.
- Significant legislation:
  - HJR 542 – Transit Modernization and Equity Study
    - Needs assessment focusing on the equitable delivery of transportation services and modernization of transit in the Commonwealth
    - Includes, but not limited to: transit accessibility, adequacy of transit infrastructure, transit electrification, implementation of emerging technology, transit safety, and transit system engagement
    - Particular emphasis on transit services and engagement opportunities for underserved and underrepresented communities
  - Budget Amendments:
    - Relaxing Transit Strategic Plan schedule due to COVID impacts
    - TRIP program flexibility to waive 25% limitation on use of funds for zero fare/low income programs due to COVID impacts
    - Funding to support rail extension to Christiansburg