

# 2011 RRPDC REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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The Richmond Regional Planning District Commission unanimously adopted the following 2011 RRPDC Regional Legislative Agenda during its meeting on November 11, 2010.

## LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

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### REQUESTED STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

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#### Commonwealth Transportation Board

Add a third urban at-large seat to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (see Va. Code Ann. § 33.1-2) to be filled by a resident of the Richmond-Petersburg Metropolitan Statistical Area. Historically, the two urban at-large seats are filled with citizens residing in the Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads areas.

#### Rail Transportation Funding

Establish state mechanisms to fund passenger rail capital improvements and operations.

#### Regional Emergency Management Cooperation

Empower localities with comprehensive and general authority to provide assistance to other localities as needed without the requirement for emergency declarations or inter-jurisdictional agreements for each of the various types of services or procurement processes.

### REQUESTED FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

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#### Public Infrastructure Investment

Allow rehabilitation expenditures for public school buildings to qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit. Current federal law allows for tax credits when a historic school is rehabilitated and used by another user, but not where the buildings are reused as public schools.

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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### STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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#### Government Reform

We **SUPPORT** local government autonomy to make policy decisions on local issues, particularly concerning land-use regulation and local revenue measures.

We **SUPPORT** reform measures and financial incentives that encourage regional cooperation.

We **SUPPORT** full funding of all state and federal mandates on local governments.

### **Transportation**

We **SUPPORT** the development of funding mechanisms to meet the state's current and future transportation funding needs.

We **SUPPORT** enhancements to intercity passenger rail service connecting through Richmond, especially those that increase reliability, on-time performance, and speeds of travel.

### **Land Use**

We **SUPPORT** local growth management tools that:

- can be tailored to the needs of the local jurisdiction;
- are flexible to the specific needs of development locations;
- are simple to implement and easy to understand;
- transparently allow all parties of interest to freely and fairly negotiate agreements; and
- only require development to contribute its fair share for infrastructure improvement.

### **Resource Protection**

We **SUPPORT** the protection and enhancement of Virginia's natural resources through environmental regulations and programs that:

- are based on well-researched scientific foundations;
- have demonstrated an ability to achieve meaningful improvements to the environment;
- offer short and long-term solutions;
- fully consider unintended consequences;
- consider the size, location, or type of development being regulated instead of imposing a generalized standard;
- can be implemented in a reasonable time period and in a cost-effective manner;
- embrace the planning authority of local government and allow flexibility for local government to determine the best approach to meet program goals; and
- are connected with adequate funding to implement mandated programs.

### **Education Funding**

We **SUPPORT** a state budget that meets the Commonwealth's obligations to localities for K-12 education funding.

## **FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

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### **Federal Mandate for Collective Bargaining**

We **OPPOSE** federal legislation that would require localities to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety employees.

### **Passenger Rail Funding**

We **SUPPORT** the Commonwealth's efforts to obtain federal funding for capital improvement projects that will enhance passenger rail service in the Richmond Region.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

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### GOVERNMENT REFORM

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#### Governing Locally

We **SUPPORT** a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to examine the impact of the Dillon Rule on local government's ability to efficiently address local issues such as public safety, land use, and revenue.

#### Taxes and funding Mechanisms

We **SUPPORT** the continuation of local government tax authority and encourage the study of revenue-neutral or enhanced local tax authority.

We **SUPPORT** a comprehensive evaluation of local tax authority, including the ability to generate sufficient revenue to provide services and comply with state and federal mandates, while reducing dependence on real estate and personal property taxes.

We **OPPOSE** piecemeal attempts to eliminate existing local funding sources and urge that any elimination of single sources of local funding be replaced by realistically implementable tools that enable localities to generate equal or greater funds.

We **SUPPORT** giving counties equal taxing authority as cities and towns.

#### Regional Solutions

We **SUPPORT** a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to examine the costs and benefits of the Commonwealth establishing incentives to localities for the joint utilization of existing capital facilities, joint construction of capital facilities, and joint provision of operating services.

We **SUPPORT** increased state funding of Virginia's planning district commissions based upon a formula jointly agreed upon by the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, the Virginia Municipal League, and the Virginia Association of Counties.

### TRANSPORTATION

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#### Passenger Rail

We **SUPPORT** the extension of high-speed rail from Washington, DC to Richmond followed by further extensions from Richmond to Raleigh, North Carolina and from Richmond to Norfolk along the Southeast High Speed Rail corridor.

We **SUPPORT** allowing federal funds to serve as matching funds for passenger rail projects seeking funds from the Commonwealth's Rail Enhancement Fund (see Va. Code Ann. § 33.1-221.1:1.1). Currently, the code only allows matching contributions from private sources, local government sources, or a combination of both.

#### Regional Transit

We **SUPPORT** enhancing the Richmond Region's regional transit system.

## **Regionally-Allocated Transportation Funding**

We **SUPPORT** efforts of local jurisdictions, metropolitan planning organizations, the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to allocate, obligate, and expend regionally-allocated transportation funds in a timely manner, so long as any deadlines for allocation, obligation, and expenditure:

- are developed in cooperation with the Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations;
- realistically balance the timely delivery of projects with adequate time to complete the phases of transportation projects;
- reflect federal deadlines;
- do not penalize metropolitan planning organizations for delays that are outside their control; and
- enable metropolitan planning organizations to appeal any rescission of funds on a case-by-case.

## **LAND USE**

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We **SUPPORT** strengthening local government authority to manage future growth in the Region.

### **Growth Management Tools**

We **SUPPORT** cash proffers or impact fees as tools for local governments to require developers to pay for public infrastructure improvements required to accommodate development.

We **SUPPORT** the authority to require cash proffers be paid at the time of final building inspection and not at the time of occupancy.

We **SUPPORT** local government authority to apply zoning laws and comprehensive plans to all private residences and private businesses, including:

- businesses that sell liquor and
- assisted living centers of all sizes.

### **Public Infrastructure Investment**

We **SUPPORT** growth that maximizes public infrastructure investment, including infill development and redevelopment of areas where existing infrastructure is under-utilized.

We **SUPPORT** local government authority to adopt adequate public facilities ordinances.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

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### **Public Safety Funding**

We **SUPPORT** full funding of the Commonwealth's commitment for local law enforcement assistance, including Compensation Board funding for Sheriff's offices and HB 599 funding for police departments.

### **Emergency Management**

We **SUPPORT** restructuring the program for state regulation of dams to focus on those dams which involve the potential for significant risk to public safety or property.