

**--Working Draft--**

A resolution communicating the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization's priorities for the establishment of High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail ("HSIPR") connections to Hampton Roads.

WHEREAS, HSIPR will be a critical addition to the future United States transportation network offering an efficient, reliable, and environmentally friendly travel alternative linking the major urban centers across the country; and

WHEREAS, HSIPR will have significant economic and quality of life benefits for connected communities and regions that will promote economic development, job creation, and tourism opportunities; and

WHEREAS, President Obama recently released a strategic plan entitled *Vision of High Speed Rail in America* which proposes the rebuilding of the Nation's existing rail infrastructure into a robust network of HSIPR corridors comparable to the European network; and

WHEREAS, significant new federal funding has been made available in support of implementing the proposed national high speed rail vision; and

WHEREAS, it is crucially essential that the Hampton Roads Region be directly connected to the emerging national high speed rail network to ensure the Region's economic competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, the completion of the necessary and required initial environmental studies of options for the high speed rail connection to Hampton Roads has been delayed for several years and is still pending federal approval; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration has again recently delayed the release of these study documents, which must undergo a public review process prior to their finalization; and

WHEREAS, an approved Final Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for the development of an HSIPR strategy for the Hampton Roads Region; and

WHEREAS, the continued delay in finalizing these studies places the Hampton Roads Region at a significant competitive disadvantage against other regions further along in the pursuit of HSIPR; and

WHEREAS, possible options for connecting the Hampton Roads region with improved or restored HSIPR service have been studied for both the I-64 and Route 460 Corridors; and

WHEREAS, connecting the greatest concentrations of population, employment centers and major military installations should be the primary consideration in the selection of a HSIPR corridor; and

WHEREAS, Southside Hampton Roads has critical, yet unaddressed, emergency evacuation needs that could be aided with the establishment of a HSIPR service; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Southside Terminal Passenger Rail Station will link directly to an enhanced regional public transportation network, including light rail, improved regional bus services, and passenger ferry that will provide better integration of travel opportunities for passengers; and

WHEREAS, the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the federally designated agency responsible for the long-range transportation planning in the region and has studied and reviewed the issues related to HSIPR options to Hampton Roads; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization:

Section 1: - That the TPO recommends that the Route 460 Corridor be designated as the “High Speed Rail Corridor” to Hampton Roads permitting the re-establishment of reliable HSIPR service.

Section 2: - That the TPO recommends that the I-64 Corridor be designated as an “Emerging High Speed Rail Corridor” to Hampton Roads permitting enhanced and reliable HSIPR service.

Section 3: - That the TPO endorses the relocating of the Newport News station to downtown Newport News and the construction of new stations in downtown Norfolk and Bowers Hill in support of the enhanced HSIPR service to the region.

Section 4: - That the TPO recommends that the Commonwealth develop a service plan that maximizes service delivery potential for both the Peninsula and Southside.