

GRTC Development Committee

Meeting Date: May 13, 2026

Meeting Time: 1:30 pm

Meeting Location: GRTC Board Room

Committee Members:

Barb Smith, Chair

Dave Anderson

Terrell Hughes (Virtual)

Virtual:

Odie Donald

Staff Participants:

Sheryl Adams

Joe Dillard Jr.

Adrienne Torres

Kevin Hernandez

Patricia Robinson

Sharika Reed

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order once quorum was established.

A motion was made and seconded to allow Director Terrell Hughes to participate virtually. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee members considered amendments to the agenda. No amendments were proposed.

No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Action Item: CARE Plus Model Changes

Staff presented recommendations stemming from the recently completed paratransit operational assessment examining CARE, CARE Plus, and CARE on Demand services. Staff explained that CARE services within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service area are federally required, while CARE Plus represents an enhanced service offering outside of the ADA-mandated service boundary.

The proposed changes included transitioning CARE Plus riders to the CARE on Demand voucher model, establishing an income-based subsidy for riders at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and implementing a cap of 24 subsidized CARE on Demand trips per rider each month.

Staff explained that CARE on Demand provided same-day flexibility while reducing GRTC's cost per trip when compared to traditional paratransit services.

Committee members discussed the potential impacts on current CARE Plus riders who presently receive the service without charge. Questions focused on affordability, rider behavior, and the long-term financial benefits associated with increased utilization of the CARE on Demand model.

Director Hughes expressed concern about implementing changes affecting Henrico County residents without additional engagement with Henrico County leadership and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Donald concurred that additional stakeholder discussion was appropriate.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to defer action on the proposed CARE Plus modifications to allow for further conversations with Henrico County officials and stakeholders. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item: Expansion Allocation Framework

Staff advised the committee that work on the proposed Expansion Allocation Framework would remain on hold pending completion of the upcoming regional workshops associated with the FY28 Regional Public Transportation Plan process.

Staff noted that information gathered during the regional retreat process would provide valuable input and assist in refining future recommendations.

Committee members discussed the importance of ensuring elected officials remained informed and encouraged broad participation in the upcoming workshops and debrief sessions.

No action was taken.

Discussion Item: Quarterly Performance Report

Staff presented the third-quarter FY26 performance report comparing January through March 2026 performance with the same period during the previous fiscal year.

Staff reported:

- A 4 percent decrease in fixed-route boardings;

- A 2 percent decrease in LINK Microtransit boardings; and
- A 1 percent increase in CARE passenger trips.

Additional analysis was provided by service category, including Pulse, arterial, community radial, circulator and feeder, and express routes. Staff highlighted improvements in on-time performance across several route categories and discussed implementation of Swiftly software to assist with runtime analysis and schedule optimization.

Committee members reviewed microtransit performance across urban, suburban, and rural zones, discussing wait times, seat availability, service utilization, and opportunities to improve efficiency through operational adjustments.

Staff also highlighted several June service priorities, including:

- Formalizing Route 7A and 7B layover modifications at Richmond International Airport due to safety concerns;
- Enhancements to Route 95 service serving Brightpoint Community College;
- Ongoing LINK efficiency improvements; and
- Continued restoration of selected fixed-route service frequencies as operator staffing levels improve.

Committee members discussed future airport expansion impacts, trail connectivity opportunities, ridership patterns, restoration priorities, and opportunities to better understand rider demographics and travel behavior.

No action was taken.

Discussion Item: Legislative Update

Staff provided an overview of current federal and state legislative activities affecting public transportation funding.

Federal updates included discussion regarding:

- Potential elimination of the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program;
- Possible impacts to future Bus Rapid Transit expansion projects;
- Surface transportation reauthorization efforts; and
- Federal discussions surrounding transit systems operating zero-fare programs.

At the state level, staff reviewed:

- House Bill 200 and the transition of Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) oversight to the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee;
- Opportunities to pursue future zero-fare funding through revised TRIP policies;
- Recent legislation authorizing automated bus lane enforcement technologies; and
- Ongoing state budget negotiations, including potential transit funding implications associated with data center tax proposals.

Committee members requested future legislative updates include written summaries and key talking points to assist with tracking emerging policy developments and understanding budget implications.

No action was taken.

Discussion Item: Zero Fare Update

Staff provided updates regarding ongoing efforts supporting the sustainability of GRTC's zero-fare program.

Staff highlighted preparations for the upcoming Tap into Transit event, noting that this year's event would place greater emphasis on fundraising and community engagement. The event theme, "Art, Access, and Action," included partnerships with local artists who would transform retired transit materials into artwork to be auctioned during the event.

Additional updates included:

- Expansion of community-based fundraising initiatives through partnerships with local businesses;
- New promotional events supporting zero-fare efforts;
- Continued development of a community and corporate giving strategy;
- Efforts to increase sponsorship opportunities and donor engagement;
- Growth and organizational support of the Transit Access Partnership (TAP) program; and
- Strong performance of GRTC's advertising program, which had exceeded prior-year revenue targets.

Committee members discussed fundraising goals, the importance of establishing measurable targets, consultant support for fundraising efforts, and strategies for strengthening community investment in transit.

Discussion also addressed the evolving philosophy surrounding zero fare, with members noting the importance of framing the initiative as a core organizational value supported through responsible budgeting and operational efficiencies rather than solely as a revenue replacement exercise.

Staff additionally advised the committee that anticipated CMAQ funding previously expected to support zero-fare operations had been redirected to eligible capital purposes, requiring GRTC to identify alternative funding approaches within its budget planning process.

No action was taken.

Discussion Item: RideFinders Overview

Staff provided an overview of RideFinders' organizational structure, governance framework, and relationship to GRTC.

Staff explained that the GRTC Board also serves as the governing board for RideFinders and retains authority over the organization's business affairs. Responsibilities include oversight of staffing, contracting authority, appointment of officers, and general corporate governance.

The committee reviewed the role of the RideFinders Advisory Board, noting that the advisory body consists of stakeholder representatives and subject matter experts who provide recommendations regarding organizational priorities and strategic direction. Staff clarified that while the advisory board informs decision-making, ultimate authority rests with the GRTC Board acting in its capacity as the RideFinders Board.

Discussion also included the composition of the advisory board, meeting requirements, and the importance of maintaining clarity regarding governance responsibilities moving forward.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned. The transcript did not capture the official adjournment time.