

INTRODUCED: June 28, 2021

A RESOLUTION No. 2021-R044

To express the Council's support for the Greater Richmond Transit Company's application for the Transit Ridership Incentive Program through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation for the purpose of maintaining the Greater Richmond Transit Company's current zero fare policy.

Patrons – Mr. Jones, Mr. Addison, Vice President Robertson, Ms. Jordan,
Ms. Lambert, Ms. Lynch, President Newbille and Ms. Larson

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: JUL 26 2021 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 1230 of the Acts of Assembly of 2020, the General Assembly enacted the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (the "TRIP Program"); and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the TRIP Program is currently being developed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will be seeking approval from the Commonwealth Transportation Board for the TRIP Program, the application process for which is expected to begin in July, 2021; and

AYES: 9 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN:

ADOPTED: JUL 26 2021 REJECTED: STRICKEN:

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the TRIP Program is a statewide grant program whose purpose is to improve regional transit connectivity in urban areas and reduce barriers to public transit through low income and zero fare programming; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, the TRIP Program focuses on urban metropolitan areas with populations of 100,000 or more, which includes the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, other Virginia localities are implementing or pursuing “fare free” or “zero fare” policies including the cities of Alexandria, Charlottesville, Lynchburg, and Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, a plan for exploring additional sources of funding for the future sustainability of zero fare policies should be developed; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Richmond that the Council support the Greater Richmond Transit Company’s application for the TRIP Program through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transport for the purpose of maintaining the Greater Richmond Transit Company’s current zero fare policy.

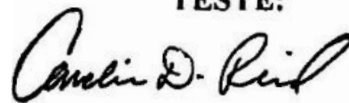
NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND;

That the Council of the City of Richmond hereby supports the Greater Richmond Transit Company’s application for the TRIP Program through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transport for the purpose of maintaining the Greater Richmond Transit Company’s current zero fare policy.

A TRUE COPY:

TESTE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camille D. Reil".

City Clerk



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Ordinance/Resolution Request

TO Haskell Brown, Interim Richmond City Attorney
Richmond Office of the City Attorney

THROUGH Joyce L. Davis
Interim Council Chief of Staff

FROM Samson Anderson, Council Budget Analyst

COPY Michael Jones, 9th District Representative
Summer Morris, 9th District Liaison
Tabrica Rentz, Interim Deputy Richmond City Attorney

DATE June 16, 2021

PAGE/s 1 of 2

TITLE Resolution to Support Application to TRIP

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance** ☐ **Resolution** ☒

REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON

Michael Jones, 9th District
Representative

SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE

Land Use, Housing, Transportation

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

The Patron is requesting a Resolution expressing Council's support for the Greater Richmond Transit (GRTC) Authority's application for the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transport.

The Patron believes that a successful application to the TRIP would assist GRTC in maintaining its current zero fare policy.

BACKGROUND

The 2020 General Assembly passed HB 1414, creating the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP). The TRIP program is currently being developed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transport (DRPT) and will be presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) for approval.

The application process for TRIP will open in July 2021.

TRIP is a statewide grant program whose purpose is to improve regional transit connectivity in urban areas and reduce economic barriers to public transit through low income and zero fare programming. TRIP focuses on urban metro areas with populations of 100,000 or more; a metric for which Richmond qualifies.

Other Virginia localities that are implementing or pursuing "fare free" or "zero fare" policies include, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Alexandria, and Charlottesville.

For further information, please see the attached memo and the following web link:

<http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/transit/trip-transit-ridership-incentive-program/>

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Fiscal Impact Yes ☐ No ☒

Budget Amendment Required Yes ☐ No ☒

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact:

This is a resolution indicating support for applying to a statewide grant program.

Attachment/s Yes ☒ No ☐

Memo: Support to GRTC TRIP Application – Free Fare

Richmond City Council Ordinance/Resolution Request Form/updated 10.5.2012 /srs

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff

FROM: Summer Morris, Ninth District Council Liaison

DATE: June 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Supplemental Information for CART Request Regarding GRTC's TRIP Application

This memo is a supplement to Councilmember Jones' CART Request for a Resolution to express support for the Greater Richmond Transit Company's (GRTC) application for the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. "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."

Other Virginia localities, such as Lynchburg, Roanoke, and Alexandria, are either planning to stay fare-free or are exploring the possibility of a zero-fare system.¹ Charlottesville is using CARES Act funding and ARP funding to support Charlottesville Area Transit being fare-free for three years.² Alexandria's DASH bus network will be fare-free beginning on September 5, 2021.³ Mayor Justin Wilson said "Free transit will expand ridership by an estimated 23%, bring riders back to transit following the pandemic, help achieve the City's environmental goals and disproportionately benefit our lower-income residents."⁴

Regarding zero fare transit in Richmond, Julie Timm, CEO of GRTC, supports this effort. Timm said that "Maintaining zero fare transit is an investment in our communities, in our economy, and in our future growth, but the reality is that it's a gap in our budget that has to be filled. In Richmond, our funding gap is so small that if we were ever to wean off of fares now is the time to do it. However, if we do continue zero fares post-COVID, we need some kind of acknowledgement from our partners that when we get to the end of the pilot that they would be willing to still invest in this model."⁵

\$40 million has been allocated by the state to DRPT to fund TRIP.⁶ By supporting GRTC's application through a Resolution, City Council would be demonstrating local support for the program. Interested and invested partners are key to the success of GRTC's ability to implement a zero fare transit system.

¹ http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/resources/2021/may/pres/4_trip_ctb_update_may_2021v2_1.pdf

² https://dailyprogress.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/cat-planning-to-stay-fare-free-for-three-years/article_b963cfae-8dbc-11eb-8d53-6f156753580a.html

³ <https://wtop.com/alexandria/2021/05/alexandria-lowers-property-tax-rate-makes-dash-buses-free/>

⁴ <https://www.alxnow.com/2021/04/06/dash-bus-could-be-completely-free-starting-this-fall/>

⁵ <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2021/04/06/virginia-bus-systems-could-go-fare-free-for-at-least-three-years/>

⁶ <https://dcist.com/story/21/05/18/virginia-putting-40-million-toward-free-transit-fare-programs/>