

**Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
TRIP Policy Development – May TSDAC
May 6, 2026**

Introduction

HB200 amended the enabling legislation for the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), consolidating guidance, removing administrative requirements, and involving the Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC) with preparation of program guidelines. This memo provides the revised enabling legislation language for TRIP and presents DRPT's initial recommendations for program guidance. DRPT welcomes comments on these recommendations, specifically:

- What rationale or concerns does your agency have regarding continued support for systemwide zero fare programs?
- Should DRPT implement customized stepdown policies by cohort for multi-year Regional Connectivity or Zero and Reduced Fare awards?
- What does 'innovative' mean to your agency within the Enhanced Mobility Innovation (EMI) category?
- What are some examples of other projects that could be eligible under the EMI program?

House Bill 200

House Bill 200 revises the TRIP-eligible projects to the following:

- A. The Board shall establish the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (the Program) to promote improved transit service across the Commonwealth by encouraging the identification and establishment of routes of regional significance; supporting the establishment of programs to reduce the impact of fares on low-income individuals; encouraging innovative approaches to micromobility, paratransit, and other specialized transportation; and supporting local, regional, and state entities in improving the accessibility and safety of transit bus passenger facilities. &c.

DRPT Recommendations

Passenger Experience: *“supporting local, regional, and state entities in improving the accessibility and safety of transit bus passenger facilities”*

Maintain Guidance: Combine passenger amenities and public safety into a single category. Retain eligible projects and applicants.

Regional Connectivity: “encouraging the identification and establishment of routes of regional significance”

Recommendation #1:

- a. Revised definition of regional significance permits applicants to define significance as appropriate for their region, is agnostic to mode, and ensures regional coordination and support.

Figure 1. Definition of Regional Significance

Former CTB Guidance	DRPT Recommendation
Improved transit services in urbanized areas of the Commonwealth.	Routes or service areas that address regional travel needs as described in a plan or study at a regional level.

- b. Revised list of eligible projects broadens eligibility to regionally significant improvements or expansions and re-orientes project concepts toward established capital/operating budget concepts.

Figure 2. Regional Connectivity Eligible Projects

Former CTB Eligible Projects	DRPT Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the improvement and expansion of ii. routes with regional significance; iii. the implementation of integrated fare collection; iv. the development and implementation of regional subsidy allocation models; v. the establishment of bus-only lanes on routes of regional significance 	<p>the improvement or expansion of routes with regional significance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Capital projects such as establishment of bus-only lanes or implementation of integrated fare collection; and ii. Operating projects such as enhancements to service frequency or expansion of service areas.

Enhanced Mobility Innovation: “encouraging innovative approaches to micromobility, paratransit, and other specialized transportation”

Recommendation #2:

- a. Establish program concepts
 - **Innovation:** Test ‘proof of concepts’ for new technologies. (DRPT)
 - **Micromobility:** Small, lightweight human-powered or electric vehicles operated at low speeds. (VDOT)
 - **Paratransit:** Comparable transportation service required by the ADA for individuals with disabilities unable to use fixed route transportation. (FTA)
 - **Specialized Transportation:** Eligibility-restricted transportation services for targeted populations, including older adults and people with disabilities. (DRPT Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan)

- b. Add 'local governments' to eligible applicants
 - Existing entities eligible for TRIP funding:
 - Public transit providers that receive state operating assistance pursuant to 33.2-1526.1 D1 (aka MERIT Operating Recipients)
 - Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - Planning District Commissions
 - Other statewide or regional bodies (including Area Agencies on Aging, Community Service Boards, etc.)
- c. Eligible projects could include the following:
 - Regional mobility hubs to coordinate transportation services
 - Innovative approaches to first/last mile connections
 - Innovative approaches to supporting the mobility of older adults or people with disabilities

Zero and Reduced Fare: *“supporting the establishment of programs to reduce the impact of fares on low-income individuals”*

Recommendation #3: Retain eligible projects and applicants.

In addition, DRPT is considering a request for continued funding of systemwide zero fare programs.