



RESOLUTION NO: 2024-1

TITLE: *Calling on the Mayor's Office, City Council, and All Candidates for City Government to Support Establishment of A Department of Transportation in Richmond*

TO: All City Elected Officials, Candidates for City Government, Local State Delegation, Local Congressional Delegation

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Resolutions Committee has unanimously approved this resolution and recommends that the general body vote in favor – and that the resolution be posted on the committee website. Our collective endorsement underscores the importance of this initiative and our commitment to improving the quality of life for all Richmond residents through enhanced transportation policies and infrastructure.

INTENDED DISTRIBUTION:

This resolution is intended for wide distribution among city and state elected officials, candidates for city government, and our esteemed members of both the state and local congressional delegations. It aims to garner support across all levels of government to make the establishment of a Local Department of Transportation a reality.

PRESS RELEASE:

In addition to direct distribution, this resolution is intended for release to local news organizations, including the Richmond Times Dispatch and the Richmond Free Press, to inform the public about this significant initiative and to highlight the united front of the Richmond City Democratic Committee in advocating for transportation improvements and sustainable urban development.

Calling on the Mayor's Office, City Council, and All Candidates for City Government to Support Establishment of A Department of Transportation in Richmond

WHEREAS, Democrats are committed to providing Americans with quality public transportation options by making flexible investments to upgrade and expand systems including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure;¹

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond is empowered by its Charter, specifically, to improve all streets and walkways within the City and, generally, to promote the welfare and safety of its inhabitants;²

WHEREAS, the City has adopted an "Equity Agenda" policy roadmap that includes the goal of "Ensuring Equitable Transit and Mobility for Residents",³ and the Richmond 300 Master Plan defines "equitable transportation" as "prioritizing the movement of people over the movement of vehicles through a safe, reliable, equitable, and sustainable transportation network."⁴

WHEREAS, the City's annual budget includes a "Complete Streets Program" line item appropriation that is meant to "exemplify good transportation policy and design approaches that require streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel";⁵

WHEREAS, the City has committed to Richmond Connects, spearheaded by the City's Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility, whose vision is a "connected, safe and equitable transportation system";⁶

WHEREAS, the City is an Affiliate Member of the National Association of City Transportation Officials ("NACTO"), with the goals of building "cities as places for people, with safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable transportation choices that support a strong economy and vibrant quality of life";⁷

WHEREAS, engineering standards that prioritize vehicle speed and through-put over all other considerations have a disproportionate crash impact on people who walk and bike in the city, as well as on other vulnerable streets users such as children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, and that speed increases exponentially the severity of crashes;

¹<https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/combatting-the-climate-crisis-and-pursuing-environmental-justice/>

² <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/charters/richmond/>

³ <https://www.rva.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/Res.%20No%20%282%29.pdf>

⁴ https://www.rva.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/R300_Adopted_210331_0.pdf

⁵<https://rva.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY2024%20Adopted%20Annual%20Fiscal%20Plan%20-%20City%20of%20Richmond%2C%20Virginia.pdf>

⁶ <https://rvaconnects.com/about-the-process/>

⁷ <https://nacto.org/member-cities/>

WHEREAS, City Council has adopted a resolution to support a Vision Zero approach to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the City's streets by 2030,⁸ but, from January of 2022 to April of 2023, thirty six individuals have been victims of traffic violence in Richmond;⁹

WHEREAS, the City Council passed a resolution 2021-R086¹¹ in support of a DOT.

AND, WHEREAS, an emerging best governmental practice for the effective achievement of these ideals and goals across Virginia is the establishment of a Department of Transportation that is appropriately tasked, adequately staffed, and budgeted for success, for which there has already been discussion and action taken in other localities and within Richmond City Council;¹⁰

Therefore, Be It Resolved That the Richmond City Democratic Committee urges the Mayor's Office to establish a Department of Transportation for the city of Richmond.

Therefore, Be It Resolved That the Richmond City Democratic Committee strongly urges all candidates for City Government, including incumbents, to support the establishment of a department of transportation explicitly tasked with the objective of prioritizing human lives over speed and throughput, operating and consistent with the objective of delivering the following:

Guiding Principles that should govern the DOT:

- Leadership that prioritizes incorporating community values into current engineering standards;
- Objectives for prioritizing human lives over speed and throughput;
- Budgets and project standards consistent with the expectation that we can and must leverage infrastructure to meet these goals; and
- Design and infrastructure to lower speeds and prioritize vulnerable users and children over vehicles.

Fulfilling Richmond's Values-based Commitments:

- Adopt budget and project standards consistent with the Vision Zero Network's Fundamental Principles, Policies & Practices to Advance Vision Zero in the U.S.;
- Develop goals and metrics for achieving the City of Richmond's Vision Zero Action Plan;
- Prioritize the values and action plans created by Richmond Connects, spearheaded by the City's Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility, whose vision is a connected, safe and equitable transportation system; and

⁸ <https://www.rva.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/VisionZero-RichmondActionPlan.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.rva.gov/public-works/vision-zero>

¹⁰

<https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5360561&GUID=B0E3EE18-35EB-4A90-A4E3-A8252D1D5D87&Options=ID|Text|&Search=Department+of+Mobility+and+Multimodal+Transportation>

¹¹<https://richmondva.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5360561&GUID=B0E3EE18-35EB-4A90-A4E3-A8252D1D5D87&Options=&Search=>

- Adhere to the core of NACTO goals of building “cities as places for people, with safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable transportation choices that support a strong economy and vibrant quality of life.”