

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairman Martin E. Nohe and Members  
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

**FROM:** Ms. Mary Hynes, Chair, Governance and Personnel Committee

**DATE:** January 6, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of Policy 20 – Responses to Information Requests from Candidates  
for Political Office

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- I. **Purpose.** To seek Northern Virginia Transportation Authority adoption of the proposed draft policy intended to provide guidance to NVTa staff and senior management, in addressing information requests from candidates for political office. The Council of Counsels has reviewed the draft policy. The Governance and Personnel Committee recommends NVTa adoption.
- II. **Suggested motion.** *I move adoption of proposed Policy 20 – Responses to Information Requests from Candidates for Political Office.*
- III. **Background.** During the time leading up to elections, the Executive Director and NVTa staff may be asked to provide information to candidates running for public office. This proposed policy is intended to provide guidance in responding to political candidates' requests for information.

**Coordination:** Council of Counsels

**Attachment:** Policy 20 – Responses to Information Requests from Candidates for Political Office

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY****Policy Number 20 - Responses to Information Requests from Candidates for Political Office**

- I. **Purpose.** During the periods of time leading up to the primary election and to the general elections, the Executive Director and other NVTa staff may be asked to provide information to candidates running for public office regarding NVTa policies, programs, funding, activities, actions and positions on various transportation issues. This policy is intended to provide general guidance for use in responding to such questions and requests.
- II. **General.** Under direction of the Executive Director, the NVTa staff will respond to directives and other inquiries from Authority members including questions and inquiries requiring research on issues coming before the Authority.
- III. **Special Provisions.** The following will guide responses to requests from candidates for political office, and for non-candidate inquiries from political organizations. Under direction of the Executive Director, NVTa staff will respond to requests for information from political candidates or their representatives by complying with the following provisions:
- A. **Format of Request.** For clarity, requests from candidates, their representatives or political organizations must be in writing.
  - B. **No New Research.** Responses to requests for information must rely on existing, public documents. NVTa staff will not devote time to developing new information or doing research for candidates, their representatives or political organizations.
  - C. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** FOIA requests shall be processed as required by NVTa Policy 5 – Freedom of Information Act Requests.
  - D. **Responses Returned in Writing.** All NVTa responses will be provided in writing.
  - E. **All Responses Shared with Every Candidate.** All NVTa responses must be forwarded to every candidate for the office which the inquirer is seeking. NVTa member jurisdictions may be enlisted to help with these distributions. Central copies of all responses shall be retained by the NVTa.
  - F. **Use of E-Mail.** The above guidelines also apply to e-mail correspondence between candidates and NVTa staff.
  - G. **Meetings with Candidates for Office.** Because of the importance of clarity of communications and the need to share information among all candidates, meetings between individual candidates and staff are discouraged. However, should such meetings be necessary, staff is encouraged to get questions in writing in advance of the meeting. Such meetings should be opened to, or made available, to all candidates. Staff shall produce a brief written summary of the meeting. Which shall be provided to all candidates for the office

sought by the candidate(s) who attended the meeting. Such meetings will be held at the NVTa office or at another suitable government location.

- H. NVTa Website.** Whenever possible, candidates should be directed to the NVTa's website (or that of member jurisdictions) for information. NVTa's website is an effective tool in making information equally accessible to all.

**Approved by the Governance and Personnel Committee:**  
**Approved by Northern Virginia Transportation Authority:**