



GRTC's Advertising Policy

Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) acknowledges that transit advertising has a far-reaching impact to broad audiences. The mobility of transit vehicles allows for extensive geographical coverage and exposure to individuals on and off transit vehicles. Transit bus stops span the region and have exposure to riders and non-riders. The GRTC Advertising Policy (Policy) provides guidance and structure for approving messages to be included in GRTC's advertising program and displayed on GRTC's property.

GRTC reserves the right to approve the design and location of all advertisements on any property designated for use for external, non-GRTC advertising and may limit the percent of identified advertising space on the respective property.

Enactment of this Policy represents GRTC's declared intent to maintain any designated advertising property as a non-public forum and to not allow any of its property to become a public forum for open communication and the free expression of ideas. The use of designated property for private advertising is limited for the sole purposes of generating revenue for GRTC, and advertisements must not run counter to, be disruptive to, or undermine the interests and needs of GRTC in providing public mass transit services, the transportation mode of public mass transit and multi-modal transportation, or the general welfare of our riders and communities.

Designated advertising property includes, but is not limited to, passenger service vehicles, ad panels in shelters, ad panels on bus stop signs, digital displays at bus stops and stations, channels cards in passenger service vehicles, digital displays in passenger service vehicles, digital ads on apps, and digital ads on website.

All advertising is subject to approval by GRTC and/or its designated representatives.

1. DEFINITIONS

- a. Political Advertising: Any advertising that supports or opposes the election of any candidate or group of candidates, or any ballot question, initiative, petition, or referendum issue, including bond issues, constitutional amendments, or proposed legislation.
- b. Non-Profit Organizations: Organizations that are tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.1) have a physical office in the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA) geographical boundaries; 2) provide social welfare services; and 3) serve the needs of GRTC passengers.
- c. Public Service Announcements: Non-commercial and non-Political Advertising by Non-Profit Organizations promoting their social services.
- d. Transit Facilities: Transit facilities include bus stops, stations, and transit centers.
- e. Transit Vehicles: Transit vehicles include all in-service vehicles.



2. ADVERTISING STANDARDS

a. Advertising Requirements

- i. All advertising shall comply with the spirit of all applicable laws and regulations of the various jurisdictions in which it is displayed unless the inconsistencies among the various jurisdictions prevent such compliance.
- ii. All advertising must be of professional quality; may not contain any rotating, revolving, flashing, or noise-making device, or any other illuminated, reflective, back-lit, or moving parts; and may not interfere with traffic or conflict with any traffic control device.
- iii. Advertisers promoting contests shall ensure the contest is being conducted with fairness to all entrants and complies with all applicable laws and regulations.
- iv. Advertising offering premiums or gifts shall avoid representations that would enlarge the value of the item in the minds of the viewers.
- v. Testimonials should be authentic and shall honestly reflect the response of the person making them. (The sales contract shall provide for the indemnification of GRTC against action by any person quoted or referred to in any advertisement placed on the property.)
- vi. Medical and health-related messages will be accepted only from government health organizations, or if the substance of the message is currently accepted by the American Medical Association or the Food and Drug Administration.
- vii. Advertisers shall avoid illustrations or references which disregard normal safety precautions.

b. Permitted Advertising: GRTC may display advertisements that fall under one or more of the following categories:

- i. **Commercial advertising.** Paid advertisements that propose, promote, or solicit the sale, rent, lease, license, distribution, or availability of, or some other commercial transaction concerning, goods, products, services, or events for the advertiser's commercial or proprietary interest, or more generally promote an entity that engages in such activities.
- ii. **Governmental advertising.** Notices or messages from GRTC that promote GRTC or any of its functions or programs, and paid notices or messages of the United States government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and its agencies, and any local government that advance specific governmental purposes.
- iii. **Public service announcements.** Public service announcements which are sponsored by either a government entity or a nonprofit organization, and which are directed to the public, such as but not limited to the following:
 1. Prevention or treatment of illnesses.
 2. Promotion of safety or personal well-being.
 3. Education or training.



4. Art or culture.
 5. Provision of children and family services.
 6. Provision of services and programs that provide support to low-income citizens, senior citizens, or people with disabilities.
 7. Solicitation by broad-based contribution campaigns that provide funds to multiple charitable organizations active in the above-listed areas.
- iv. Prohibited Advertising: All advertisements are subject to the viewpoint-neutral restrictions set forth below.
1. Advertising that is false, misleading, or deceptive, or that contains other non-protected speech.
 2. Advertising that contains language or portrays images or descriptions of graphic violence, including dead, mutilated, or disfigured human beings or animals, the act of killing, mutilating, or disfiguring human beings or animals, or intentional infliction of pain or violent action towards or upon a person or animal.
 3. Contains profanity, is obscene or vulgar in nature; is sexually explicit or graphic; is excretory related; is used to describe intimate body parts or genitals; is used to condone or encourage violence; is used to describe illegal activities or illegal substances.
 4. Implied or declared endorsement of any product or service or message by GRTC.
 5. Prominently or predominantly supports, opposes, or comments on any international dispute or warfare among nations or religious, ethnic, or other similar groups.
 6. Advertisements of tobacco products, tobacco-related products, or e-cigarettes; cannabis or any cannabis-related product; and illegal drugs.
 7. Advertising for firearms, ammunition, or other firearms-related products.
 8. Advertisements that support or oppose any political party or candidate, slate of candidates, referendums or other ballot initiatives.
 9. Advertisements that include imagery or language that is discriminatory based on age, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.
 10. Advertisements that promote or oppose any religion, religious practice, or belief.
 11. Advertisements that support or oppose an industry position or industry goal without any direct commercial benefit to the advertiser.
 12. Advertisements that promote unlawful or illegal goods, services, activities, or involve other unlawful conduct.
 13. Advertisements for X-rated movies, massage parlors, pawn shops, or check cashing services.



14. Promotes an escort service, strip club, or a sexually oriented product or service.
 15. Advertising which depicts the American flag in a disrespectful or inappropriate manner.
 16. Advertising messages that conflict with the mission of GRTC.
 17. Advertisements for hiring bus operators and mechanics for providers of bus services other than GRTC or its contractors.
 18. Advertisements that disparage GRTC, any other transit agency, or the use of public transportation in general.
 19. Internet address(es) and/or telephone number(s) that direct(s) viewers to materials, images or information that would violate this a Policy if they were contained in advertising displayed or posted on GRTC property.
 20. Content that would violate exclusive sponsorship rights.
 21. Libelous speech and copyright infringements.
- v. The Director of Communications and Marketing or designee shall review each advertisement submitted for display on GRTC property to determine whether the advertisement falls within, or may fall within, one or more of the categories set forth above. If the Director of Communications and Marketing or designee determines that an advertisement falls within, or may fall within, one or more of the categories set forth above, then the Director of Communications and Marketing will submit the advertisement, along with the name of the advertiser, size and number of the advertisements, and the dates and locations of display, to the Advertising Review Committee (Committee). The Committee includes at minimum the Director of Communications and Marketing, Chief of Staff, and Director of Risk Management. Upon determination of whether or not the advertisement falls into one of the categories listed in this policy, the GRTC Marketing department will advise the advertiser of the decision. GRTC reserves the right to reject or remove any advertising which it deems not to be in compliance with these guidelines. GRTC reserves the right to market and promote its own image and services, including co-promotions with for-profit and other non-profit entities.

3. PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

- a. Advertising materials will be produced at the advertiser's expense and must be of good quality and conform to standards for size, weight, material, and other physical characteristics as set forth by GRTC.
- b. It is the advertiser's responsibility to deliver or reclaim materials in a timely fashion or they may be disposed of at GRTC's discretion.

4. APPLICABILITY



- a. This Policy is applicable to all persons (including GRTC employees and independent contractors), groups, and organizations that contract with GRTC or its contractor(s) for the placement of advertisements in GRTC Property.
5. USE OF GRTC'S NAME
 - a. Use of GRTC's name, logo, slogans, or other graphic representations requires advance approval by GRTC and must meet GRTC's brand standards. GRTC does not endorse or imply endorsement of any product or service.
6. SEVERABILITY
 - a. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or other portion of this policy is, for any reason, declared invalid, in whole or in part, by any court of competent jurisdiction, in a final, non-appealable decision, such portion shall be deemed severable, and such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this policy, which remaining portions shall continue in full force and effect.
7. APPEAL PROCESS
 - a. An advertiser may appeal a decision to reject or remove an advertisement by filing a written Request for Reconsideration with GRTC's Communications and Marketing Director or Designee within 10 business days after GRTC's rejection or removal decision. The advertiser's request must state why the advertiser disagrees with the decision considering GRTC's Advertising Policy.
 - b. The Communications and Marketing Director or Designee will review the basis for the rejected or removed advertisement, consult with GRTC's legal counsel, if necessary, and consider the advertiser's reasons for filing the request. The decision of legal counsel shall be final. The Communications and Marketing Director or Designee will notify the advertiser of the final decision in writing within 15 business days after receiving the advertiser's Request for Reconsideration.
8. APPLICATION OF POLICY
 - a. This advertising policy applies to the posting of all new advertisements on GRTC Property on or after the effective date. Any advertisements which would be prohibited under this policy, but which were posted pursuant to the terms of a fully executed advertising contract prior to the effective date of this policy, will be allowed to remain posted for the duration of that contract.
9. DISCLAIMER OF ENDORSEMENT
 - a. GRTC's acceptance of an advertisement does not constitute express or implied endorsement of the content or message of the advertisement, including any person, organization, products, services, information, or viewpoints contained therein, or of the advertisement sponsor itself. This endorsement disclaimer extends to and includes content that may be found via internet addresses, quick response (QR) codes, and telephone numbers that may appear in posted ads and that direct viewers to external sources of information.
10. BUS ROUTES AND VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT



- a. GRTC cannot guarantee that specific buses will remain on specific routes for the duration of any advertising campaign. GRTC will try to satisfy sponsors' geographic requests, but due to repair and maintenance needs, buses cannot be guaranteed to service specific routes. GRTC reserves the right to move advertising between buses when repair and maintenance issues require the advertising to be moved. GRTC will notify the sponsor of any such change prior to it being made.

11. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

- a. GRTC reserves the right to amend this advertising policy at any time. GRTC also reserves the right to limit the availability of advertising space on its property at any time.

12. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date is June 20, 2023.