

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Phyllis J. Randall and Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Monica Backmon, Executive Director

DATE: July 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Endorsement of Fairfax County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Application

Purpose: To seek Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) endorsement of Fairfax County's application for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program.

Suggested Motion: *I move Authority Endorsement of Fairfax County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Application for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Project.*

Background: The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 discretionary grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. RAISE, formerly known as BUILD and TIGER.

- The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the DOT to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants, Congress has dedicated nearly \$8.9 billion for twelve rounds of National Infrastructure Investments to fund projects that have a significant local or regional impact.
- The RAISE program enables DOT to examine these projects on their merits to help ensure that taxpayers are getting the highest value for every dollar invested.
- The eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors at the State and local levels to obtain funding for multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to support through traditional DOT programs. RAISE can fund port and freight rail projects, for example, which play a critical role in our ability to move freight, but have limited sources of Federal funds. RAISE can provide capital funding directly to any public entity, including municipalities, counties, port authorities, tribal governments, MPOs, or others in contrast to traditional Federal programs which provide funding to very specific groups

of applicants (mostly State DOTs and transit agencies). This flexibility allows RAISE and our traditional partners at the State and local levels to work directly with a host of entities that own, operate, and maintain much of our transportation infrastructure, but otherwise cannot turn to the Federal government for support.

Criteria: Projects for RAISE funding will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Within these criteria, the Department will prioritize projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial equity, reduce impacts of climate change and create good-paying jobs.

- For this round of RAISE grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the appropriations act. Up to \$30 million will be awarded to planning grants, including at least \$10 million to Areas of Persistent Poverty.
- To ensure that the benefits of infrastructure investments benefit communities large and small the Department will award an equitable amount, not to exceed half of funding, to projects located in urban and rural areas respectively.
- The program is highly competitive with 680 projects funded out of over 9700 applications. It is one of the few DOT discretionary programs for which regional and local governments can directly compete for multimodal transportation funding.
- To provide technical assistance to prospective applicants, DOT is hosting a series of webinars during the FY 2021 RAISE grant application process.

Endorsement Requests: A request for application endorsement was received by Fairfax County for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Project.

The Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Project is in TransAction and as received \$250 million in funding from the Authority in the FY2018-2023 Six Year Program.

Application Deadline: The deadline to submit an application is July 12, 2021 at 5pm.

Attachments: Letter Requesting Endorsement from Fairfax County.
NVRTA Letter of Endorsement



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

July 9, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Reference: NVTA Endorsement of Fairfax County's RAISE Grant Application for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit Project.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am writing to express our full support for Fairfax County's submission for the USDOT Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project.

The Richmond Highway BRT project (TransAction Project ID #39) features a mixed-traffic running BRT system from the Huntington Metrorail Station along North Kings Highway to the Penn Daw Community Business Center (generally centered around the intersection of North Kings Highway/South Kings Highway and Richmond Highway) and then running in a dedicated median from Penn Daw on Richmond Highway (U.S. Route 1) to U.S. Army Fort Belvoir (Fort Belvoir). It includes nine transit stations, facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, and also accommodates automobiles and other motorized vehicles. The project is designed to catalyze the transformation of the Richmond Highway corridor through the implementation of high-quality mass transit and the creation of opportunities for higher density, mixed-use developments along planned community business center (CBC) nodes. Further, the Richmond Highway corridor is the most heavily used transit corridor in Fairfax County, and this project will enable even greater transit ridership.

The total project estimate for the Richmond Highway BRT Project is \$730 million. Fairfax County intends to apply for \$25 million through the RAISE Program. The Authority has previously provided \$250 million to the BRT project, as well as an additional \$248 million to the Richmond Highway Widening project, which also included provisions for part of this BRT project. A total of \$50 million has been allocated through the Commonwealth's Smart Scale Process, and approximately \$50 million in federal Congestion Mitigation Air

Quality (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds are also allocated to the project. Fairfax County is also preparing to request approximately 40% of the project's total cost through the federal New Starts Program funding.

NVTA is responsible for setting regional transportation policies and priorities, developing the region's long-range transportation plan, known as TransAction, and for improving mobility and reducing congestion in the Northern Virginia.

Federal funding through the RAISE Program would greatly facilitate the advancement of this regionally significant project which will in turn reduce congestion and help the economy.

We thank you for your consideration of Fairfax County's application and for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair

cc. Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, Fairfax County
Tom Biesiadny, Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Monica Backmon, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

July 1, 2021

Ms. Monica Backmon, Executive Director
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

Reference: Request for NVTA Support of Fairfax County Application for RAISE
Discretionary Grant Program

Dear Ms. ~~Backmon~~ ^{Monica}:

I am writing to request the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's (NVTA's) assistance by providing a letter of support for the application that Fairfax County plans to submit for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) FY 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program. Following formal Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorization on June 22, 2021, Fairfax County plans to submit an application for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project by the July 12, 2021, deadline.

The Richmond Highway BRT project (TransAction Project ID #39) features a mixed-traffic running BRT system from the Huntington Metrorail Station along North Kings Highway to the Penn Daw Community Business Center (generally centered around the intersection of North Kings Highway/South Kings Highway and Richmond Highway) and then running in a dedicated median from Penn Daw on Richmond Highway (U.S. Route 1) to U.S. Army Fort Belvoir (Fort Belvoir). It includes nine transit stations, facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, and also accommodates automobiles and other motorized vehicles. The project is designed to catalyze the transformation of the Richmond Highway corridor through the implementation of high-quality mass transit and the creation of opportunities for higher density, mixed-use developments along planned community business center (CBC) nodes. Further, the Richmond Highway corridor is the most heavily used transit corridor in Fairfax County, and this project will enable even greater transit ridership.

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Ms. Monica Backmon
July 1, 2021
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As the USDOT considers funding under this program, we would appreciate the Authority's support of Fairfax County's grant application, which will provide for an improved national and regional transportation network. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (703) 877-5663. Thank you for your time and assistance for this critical project.

Sincerely,

 for Tom Biesiadny

Tom Biesiadny
Director

cc: Todd Wigglesworth, Chief, Coordination and Funding Division, Fairfax County
Department of Transportation (FCDOT)
Noelle Dominguez, Coordination Section Chief, FCDOT