

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 11, 2022

SUBJECT: NVTA Endorsement of Prince William County's FY2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program Application, and PRTC's Low-No Emission Vehicle and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Application

1. Purpose: To seek the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) approval letters of endorsement for Prince William County's FY2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program Application, and PRTC's Low-Emissions and Bus Facilities Application.

2. Suggested Motion: *I move the Authority approval of letters of endorsement for Prince William County's FY2022 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program Application, and PRTC's Low-Emissions and Bus Facilities Application.*

3. Background:

As is customary with NVTA community partnerships, requests for endorsement are received from regional agencies and local jurisdictions embraced by the Authority. NVTA has received two endorsement requests from Prince William County and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC).

Local Jurisdiction/Regional Agency	Federal Grant & Funding Program
A. Prince William County	1. USDOT Mega Grant Program
	2. USDOT INFRA Grant Program
B. Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission	3. USFTA Low-No Grant Program
	4. USFTA Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program

A. Prince William County's Request for Endorsement

NVTA has previously endorsed Prince William County's FY2021 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) application under the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program for Route 123 at Interstate 95 Corridor Innovative Intersection Improvements project. Prince William County now seeks NVTA endorsement of funding for the same project under their FY2022 MPDG application for USDOT's National Infrastructure Project Assistance Grant Program (Mega), and the INFRA Grant Program.

1. Mega Grant Program:

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Mega Grant Program (known statutorily as the National Infrastructure Project Assistance program) which was enacted in 2021 as part of a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), seeks to support large, complex projects that are difficult to fund by other means and likely to generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits.

The Mega Grant Program funding will be made available in 2022 under the MPDG's combined Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) that will allow applicants to use one application to apply for up to three separate discretionary grant opportunities. For FY2022-FY2026, \$5 billion will be available until such funds are expended.

Mega Grant Program Criteria:

Projects for the Mega grant program funding will be evaluated based on Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) that clearly quantifies and compares expected benefits and costs of the potential investment. Available funding under the Mega Grant Program will be used to ensure that devoted projects provide significant economic benefits to users and the Nation as a whole, relative to the resources required to implement those projects.¹

2. Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grants Program:

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program also known statutorily as the Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects, awards competitive grants for multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance, to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas.

In 2021, INFRA was updated to include new eligibilities, set asides, and other programming changes in the BIL which was substantively changed from the FAST Act of 2015. \$7.25 billion in funding is available through the INFRA Grants Program during a four-year period beginning in FY2022.

INFRA Grant Program Criteria:

Like Mega grant program funding, INFRA grant program funding will also be evaluated based on Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) that clearly quantifies and compares expected benefits and costs of the potential investment. Available funding under the INFRA grant program will be used to ensure that devoted projects provide significant economic benefits to the region and the Nation as a whole, relative to the resources required to implement those projects.²

Project Scope Under Prince William County's MPDG Application:

The Route 123 Corridor at I-95 Corridor Innovative Intersection Improvements project consists of improvements to the intersections of Route 123 with Route 1, I-95, and Old

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, The Mega Grant Program, <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/mega-grant-program>, May 11, 2022.

² U.S. Department of Transportation, The INFRA Grants Program, <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/infra-grants-program>, May 11, 2022.

Bridge Road. These three intersections were evaluated under Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) program to identify innovative, cost-efficient solutions that provide operational, safety and multimodal benefits. The Commonwealth of Virginia has funded improvements at the intersection of I-95 and the County is seeking funding for the remaining improvements, which include a TransAction project (ID#: 218).

These projects will improve operations along TransAction Corridor 8-1, and improve access to high occupancy vehicle, bus, and rail transit options at the Woodbridge Virginia Rail Express station as well as two commuter lots. This project has been previously endorsed by NVTA for Prince William County's FY2021 MPDG application for federal funding through the USDOT's INFRA and RAISE grant programs.

B. Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission's Request for Endorsement

The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) seeks NVTA endorsement of its application for funding consideration under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Low-No Emission Vehicle Program and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities-Competitive Grant Programs.

3. Low-No Emission Vehicle Program:

The purpose of the Low-No Emission Vehicle Emission Grant Program is to support the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The Low-No Emission Vehicle Program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

On March 07, 2022, FTA announced approximately \$1.1 billion available for Fiscal Year 2022 grants to help modernize bus fleets and bus facilities across the country, including to help transit agencies purchase or lease low or no emission vehicles that use advanced technologies to help improve air quality and combat climate change.

Low-No Emission Program Criteria:

Eligible applicants include direct or designated recipients of FTA grants; States; local governmental authorities; and Indian Tribes. Except for projects proposed by Indian Tribes, proposals for funding eligible projects in rural (non-urbanized) areas must be submitted as part of a consolidated state proposal. States and other eligible applicants also may submit consolidated proposals for projects in urbanized areas.³

4. Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program:

The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program makes federal resources available to state and direct recipients to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus related facilities, including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities. Funding is provided through formula allocations and competitive grants.

³ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Low or No Emission Vehicle Program, <https://www.transit.dot.gov/lowno>, May 11, 2022.

On March 14, 2022, the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) announced approximately \$409.3 million in grants to 70 projects in 39 states to improve the safety and reliability of America’s bus systems. On March 07, 2022, FTA announced approximately \$370 million available for Fiscal Year 2022 grants to help transit agencies purchase and rehabilitate buses, vans, and related equipment, and build bus facilities.

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program Criteria:

Eligible applicants for the Buses and Bus Facilities Program include designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, States (including territories and Washington D.C.) or local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes. Eligible subrecipients include all otherwise eligible applicants and private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation. ⁴

Project Scope Under PRTC’s Low-No Emission Vehicle Grant and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program Applications:

The PRTC Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Upgrades Project will provide the positive impacts of introducing non-fossil fueled vehicles to the fleet and the local service area, improving reliability and air quality for residents in Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. PRTC has a Zero Emissions Bus (ZEB) study currently underway and now has an opportunity to introduce zero emissions fleet to the system by way of small-to-medium-sized vehicles to operate paratransit and future micro transit services. With reliable and mature charging infrastructure largely in place for smaller vehicles, introducing zero emissions fleet to the existing operations will not only allow agency staff to understand electric vehicle technology, but will allow for partnerships with utility partners as well as the local entities which PRTC serves. PRTC’s Western Maintenance Facility has plenty of room to introduce the new infrastructure and would provide a shovel-ready plan that can move forward quickly once vehicles and charging equipment are in place.

Attachment:

- A. Prince William County’s Request for Endorsement Letter**
- B. Draft Endorsement Letter for Prince William County’s Mega and INFRA Application**
- C. PRTC’s Request for Endorsement Letter**
- D. Draft Endorsement Letter for PRTC’s Low-No Emission Vehicle Grant and Grants for Buses and Facilities-Competitive Grant Program Applications**

⁴ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, <https://www.transit.dot.gov/bus-program>, May 11, 2022.



April 21, 2022

Monica Backmon
Chief Executive Officer
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)
3040 Williams Drive
Fairfax, VA 22031

RE: Request for NVTA Endorsement of Prince William County's MPDG Application for the Route 123 at I-95 Corridor Innovative Intersection Improvements project

Ms. Backmon,

I am writing to request NVTA's endorsement of Prince William County's application for funding consideration under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program. The Route 123 at Interstate 95 Corridor Innovative Intersections Improvements is a local priority project that will provide significant congestion reduction and multimodal connectivity benefits to the region.

The Route 123 Corridor at I-95 Improvements project consists of improvements to the intersections of Route 123 with Route 1, I-95 and Old Bridge Road. These three intersections were evaluated under VDOT's Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) program to identify innovative, cost-efficient solutions that provide operational, safety and multimodal benefits. The Commonwealth has funded improvements at the intersection with I-95 and the County is seeking funding for the remaining improvements, which includes a TransAction project (ID 218). These projects will improve operations along TransAction Corridor 8-1 and improve access to high occupancy vehicle, bus and rail transit options at the Woodbridge VRE station and two commuter lots. This project has been previously endorsed by the Authority for application for federal funding through the USDOT INFRA and RAISE programs.

Federal funding through the MPDG program would greatly facilitate construction of this and we thank you for your time and assistance with this request. If you have any questions or comments regarding this request, please contact me at (703) 792-6825.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ricardo Canizales".

Director of Transportation



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

May 05, 2022

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

Re: NVTA Endorsement of Prince William County's FY2022 MPDG Application for the Route 123 at I-95 Corridor Innovative Intersection Improvement Project.

Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am writing to express our full support for endorsement of Prince William County's application under the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. The Route 123 at Interstate 95 Corridor Innovative Intersections Improvements project is a local priority project that will provide significant congestion reduction and multimodal connectivity benefits to the region.

The Route 123 Corridor at I-95 Improvements project consists of improvements to the intersections of Route 123 with Route 1, I-95, and Old Bridge Road. These three intersections were evaluated under Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) program to identify innovative, cost-efficient solutions that provide operational, safety and multimodal benefits. The Commonwealth of Virginia has funded improvements at the intersection of I-95 and the County is seeking funding for the remaining improvements, which includes a TransAction project (ID#: 218). These projects will improve operations along TransAction Corridor 8-1 and improve access to high occupancy vehicle, bus, and rail transit options at the Woodbridge Virginia Rail Express station and two commuter lots. This project has been previously endorsed by NVTA for Prince William County's FY2021 MPDG application for federal funding through the USDOT's INFRA Grant Program as well as the RAISE Grant Program.

Federal funding through the MPDG program would greatly facilitate this construction project which has national and regional significance.

Thank you for your consideration of Prince William County's FY2022 MPDG discretionary grant application as well as your time and attention.

Best Regards,

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair

Cc: The Honorable Ann Wheeler, Chair of Prince William County Government
Ricardo Canizales, Director of Transportation, Prince William County
Monica Backmon, NVTA Chief Executive Officer



May 11, 2022

Honorable Phyllis J. Randall, Chair
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)
3040 Williams Drive
Fairfax, VA 22031

RE: Request for NVTA Endorsement of PRTC's Low-Emissions and Bus Facilities Application for the Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Upgrades Project

Dear Ms. Randall,

The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) seeks your endorsement of our application for funding consideration under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Low or No Emission and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Programs. The PRTC Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Upgrades Project will provide the positive impacts of introducing non-fossil fueled vehicles to the fleet and the local service area, improving reliability and air quality for residents in Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

Transit systems across the United States are transitioning and amid conducting Zero Emissions Bus (ZEB) studies for transition to cleaner fuel options for their bus systems. Likewise, PRTC has a ZEB study currently underway and now has an opportunity to introduce zero emissions fleet to our system by way of small-to-medium-sized vehicles to operate paratransit and future microtransit services. PRTC is prepared to submit a grant application toward this effort, and your letter of support would be a valuable addition to our application.

With reliable and mature charging infrastructure largely in place for smaller vehicles, introducing this fleet type to our existing operations will not only allow agency staff to understand electric vehicle technology, but will allow for partnerships with our utility partners as well as the local entities which PRTC serves. Our Western Maintenance Facility has plenty of room to introduce the new infrastructure and would provide a shovel-ready plan that can move forward quickly once vehicles and charging equipment are in place.

Federal funding through the Low-Emissions and Bus Facilities Program would greatly assist PRTC as we help to move Prince William County and the surrounding area into a cleaner way of providing public transportation. If you have any questions or comments regarding this request, please contact Perrin Palistrant at ppalistrant@omniride.com or 703-580-6162. We thank you in advance for your time and assistance with this request.

With sincere thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Schneider", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert A. Schneider, PhD
Executive Director



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

May 12, 2022

Amy Volz, Program Manager
Office of Program Management
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission's Low-No Grant Program, and Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program Applications

Dear Ms. Volz,

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am writing to express our full support for endorsement of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission's (PRTC) Low-No Grant Program and Buses and Bus Facilities competitive Grant Program Applications for their Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Upgrades Project. This project will provide the positive impacts of introducing non-fossil fueled vehicles to the fleet and the local service area, improving reliability and air quality for residents in Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

PRTC has a Zero Emissions Bus (ZEB) study currently underway and now has an opportunity to introduce zero emissions fleet to the system by way of small-to-medium-sized vehicles to operate paratransit and future microtransit services. With reliable and mature charging infrastructure largely in place for smaller vehicles, introducing this fleet type to the existing operations will not only allow agency staff to understand electric vehicle technology, but will allow for partnerships with utility partners as well as the local entities which PRTC serves. PRTC's Western Maintenance Facility has plenty of room to introduce the new infrastructure and would provide a shovel-ready plan that can move forward quickly once vehicles and charging equipment are in place.

Federal funding through the Low-Emissions and Bus Facilities Program would greatly assist PRTC as we help to move Prince William County and the surrounding area into a cleaner way of providing public transportation.

Thank you for your consideration of PRTC's grant program applications as well as your time and attention.

Best Regards,

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair

Cc: Robert A. Schneider, PhD, Executive Director of PRTC
Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer of NVTA