

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

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

**FROM:** Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** November 3, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Letter of Endorsement for Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program Application

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- 1. Purpose:** To seek the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) approval of letter of endorsement for Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program Application.
- 2. Suggested Motion:** *I move Authority approval of the letter of endorsement for Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program Application.*
- 3. Background:** NVTA has received an endorsement request from the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority for their application for funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation's CRISI Program Application.
- 4. Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program:** The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the CRISI Program on September 9, 2022 and will be accepting applications through December 1, 2022. CRISI Program funds are awarded to projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail. A little over \$1.4 billion in funding is available for award in FY2022.

**CRISI Eligible Projects:** The types of projects eligible for funding under CRISI include Capital projects for intercity passenger rail service, and capital projects that address congestion and facilitate ridership growth along heavily traveled rail corridors and improve short-line or regional railroad infrastructure; regional rail and corridor service development plans and environmental analysis; and highway-rail grade crossing improvement projects.

- 5. Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's Franconia Springfield Bypass Project:** The Franconia Springfield Bypass project ("Project"), one of the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program Projects will design and construct an approximately 0.9-mile-long, dedicated passenger rail bridge located just south of the Franconia-Springfield station in Fairfax County. The bridge, which will cross over two CSX Transportation mainline freight tracks, will be owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and will allow for unimpeded crossing of passenger trains over freight tracks. The Project will provide a connection for passenger trains between the west

side of the corridor north of the bridge and the east side of the corridor by eliminating conflicts between freight rail and passenger rail. Per the Transforming Rail in Virginia agreement with CSX Transportation, the completion of the Project will also allow for increased passenger and commuter rail service in Virginia. The Authority approved \$22.9 million in funding for this project in its FY2020-2025 funding program.

**Attachments:**

- A.** Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Request for Endorsement Letter
- B.** Draft Endorsement Letter for VPRA's CRISI Application



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

DJ Stadler  
Executive Director

919 East Main Street, Suite 2400  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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November 2, 2022

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

RE: Request for NVTA Endorsement of Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's CRISI Application for the Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project

Ms. Backmon,

I am writing to request NVTA's endorsement of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's (VPRA) application for funding consideration under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) FY22 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program for the Franconia-Springfield Bypass project.

The Franconia-Springfield Bypass project, one of the Transforming Rail in Virginia projects, will design and construct an approximately 0.9-mile-long, dedicated passenger rail bridge located just south of the Franconia-Springfield station in Fairfax County, VA. The bridge, which will cross over two CSXT mainline freight tracks, will be owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and will allow for unimpeded crossing of passenger trains over freight tracks. The project will:

- Provide a connection for passenger trains between the west side of the corridor north of the bridge and the east side of the corridor south of the bridge.
- Improve the safety, reliability, and efficiency of rail services in the corridor by eliminating conflicts between freight rail and passenger rail.
- Allow for increased passenger and commuter rail service in Virginia.

Investing in rail improvement projects such as the Franconia Bypass Project which support projected increases in freight and passenger rail traffic along this corridor is crucial to continued economic growth and enhanced mobility. While the Franconia-Springfield Bypass project has independent utility, it will

also enable the region to maximize the benefits of other rail infrastructure investments planned or underway in Virginia and North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of support. If you have any questions or comments regarding this request, please contact me at (804) 629-0008.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "L".

Michael McLaughlin  
Chief Operating Officer  
Virginia Passenger Rail Authority  
919 East Main Street, Suite 2400  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 629-0008  
[michael.mclaughlin@vpra.virginia.gov](mailto:michael.mclaughlin@vpra.virginia.gov)



November 10, 2022

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

Re: VPRA's FY2022 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Program Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg;

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am writing to express our full support for Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA)'s **Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project** application submitted under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) FY22 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program for fiscal year 2022.

Virginia recognizes that our nation's highway systems are overburdened and investing in rail infrastructure is vital to both the Commonwealth's and the nation's economies. The rail corridor running between Washington, DC and Richmond, VA is a central component of the east coast rail transportation system, connecting the northeast and southeast freight rail networks and extending the spine of the nation's intercity passenger rail system from the Northeast Corridor to the Southeast. Investing in rail improvement projects to support projected increases in freight and passenger rail traffic along this corridor is crucial to continued economic growth and enhanced mobility. For this reason, Virginia, through the Transforming Rail in Virginia Program, is investing heavily in rail projects to add capacity and improve the reliability of service along this corridor.

The Franconia-Springfield Bypass project, one of the Transforming Rail in Virginia projects, will design and construct an approximately 0.9-mile-long, dedicated passenger rail bridge located just south of the Franconia-Springfield station in Fairfax County, VA. The bridge, which will cross over two CSX Transportation mainline freight tracks, will be owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia and will allow for unimpeded crossing of passenger trains over freight tracks. The project will provide a connection for passenger trains between the west side of the corridor north of the bridge and the east side of the corridor south of the bridge. This will improve the safety, reliability, and efficiency of rail services in the corridor by eliminating conflicts between freight rail and passenger rail. Per the Transforming Rail in Virginia agreement with CSX Transportation, the completion of the Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project will also allow for increased passenger and commuter rail service in Virginia.

While the Franconia-Springfield Bypass project has independent utility, it will also enable the region to maximize the benefits of other rail infrastructure investments planned or underway in Virginia and North Carolina. The significant investments by Virginia and North Carolina in the acquisition of railroad right-of-way between Washington, DC, and Ridgeway, NC will connect megaregions over publicly-owned right-of-way and allow for new connections and reduced travel time from Charlotte, NC to the Northeast Corridor. Improvements including Long Bridge, Alexandria Fourth Track, and Franconia to Lorton Third Track projects, in combination with the Franconia-Springfield Bypass will increase the capacity of the corridor and allow for additional passenger rail service.

Please accept this letter of recommendation as an indication of my support for VPRA's request for the ***Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project*** under the FRA's FY22 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements funding opportunity. Thank you for your consideration of the Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project application.

Best Regards,

Phyllis J. Randall  
Chair

Cc: DJ Stadtler, Executive Director, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority  
Michael McLaughlin, Chief Operating Officer, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority  
Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

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