

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**MEMORANDUM**

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

FROM: Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: February 2, 2023

SUBJECT: Approval of Letter of Endorsement for Loudoun County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Application

1. **Purpose:** To seek Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) endorsement of Loudoun County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) application.
2. **Suggested Motion:** *I move Authority approval of the Letter of Endorsement for Loudoun County's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity application.*
3. **Background:** As is customary among NVTA partnerships, requests for the Authority's endorsement are received from regional agencies and local jurisdictions embraced by the Authority. To help fund their transportation projects, these regional agencies and local jurisdictions pursue sources of funding through federal grants and programs. Per Code of Virginia, NVTA will serve as an advocate for the transportation needs of Northern Virginia before the state and federal governments. NVTA has received a request for endorsement from Loudoun County on their application under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program.
 - A. **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Discretionary Grant**
The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$1.5 billion in grant funding through the RAISE grants. The original notice was amended on January 3, 2023, to reflect additional funding made available. In total, the Department now has at least \$2.275 billion (but no more than \$2.299 billion) available for the FY2023 RAISE Grant Program. RAISE was formerly known as BUILD and TIGER. Application deadline is 11:59:59 Eastern on February 28, 2023.

The RAISE program enables the USDOT to achieve national objectives, examining initiatives that promise to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects on their merits to help ensure that taxpayers are getting the highest value for every dollar invested.

B. RAISE Program Criteria:

Projects for RAISE funding will be evaluated based on merit criteria which includes safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, opportunity, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Within these criteria, the Department is encouraging applicants to consider how their projects can address climate change,

ensure racial equity, and remove barriers to opportunity as well as create workforce development opportunities.

- Half of the funding will go to projects in rural areas, and half of the funding will go to projects in urban areas. At least \$15 million in funding is guaranteed to go towards projects located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and projects located in these areas will be eligible for up to 100 percent federal cost share, as directed by Congress in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

4. Project Scope Under Loudoun County's RAISE Application

Loudoun County will construct a grade separated overpass for bicyclists and pedestrians where the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail crosses Sterling Boulevard. The W&OD Trail is a significant regional trail in Northern Virginia that starts at Shirlington Road, Arlington County and ends east of North 21st Street in the Town of Purcellville, Loudoun County. The 45-mile-long paved trail is used daily by thousands of people for walking, running, cycling, roller skating, horseback riding, commuting, and recreational purposes. The westernmost 23 miles of the W&OD Trail are located within Loudoun County. The regional trail has 41 public road crossings within Loudoun County, of which 25 are at-grade intersections. This project will enhance access to pedestrian and bicycle facilities which links to the non-motorized network, improve access to the W&OD trail, and will enhance connectivity to Loudoun's Ashburn Regional Activity Centers along the corridor.

The W&OD at-grade crossing at Sterling Boulevard was identified as the number one pedestrian/ bike priority and is ranked as the highest priority Tier 1 crossing. Crossings were prioritized by the number of potential conflicts at each location, based on the number of trail users and vehicles passing the location. Additionally, Loudoun County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) created a prioritization of safety improvements for the at-grade crossings within the County. Crossings were prioritized by the number of potential conflicts at each location, based on the number of trail users and vehicles passing the location. The W&OD crossing at Sterling Boulevard was identified as the number one priority in Loudoun County with 222 potential conflicts. Lastly, this project is in an Equity Emphasis Area and will improve access to the area.

Attachments:

- A. Loudoun County's Request for Endorsement Letter**
- B. Draft Letter of Endorsement for Loudon County's RAISE Application**



Transportation and Capital Infrastructure

101 Blue Seal Drive, Suite 102, PO Box 7500 Leesburg, VA 20177-7500
703-737-8624 O | 703-777-0263 F | dtci@loudoun.gov
loudoun.gov/dtci

January 12, 2023

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

RE: Request for NVTA Endorsement of Loudoun County's 2023 RAISE Grant Applications for the W&OD Overpass of Sterling Boulevard

Dear Ms. Backmon,

I am writing to request NVTA's endorsement of Loudoun County's application under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program for the funding of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) overpass at Sterling Boulevard.

The W&OD Trail is a significant regional trail in Northern Virginia that starts at Shirlington Road, Arlington County and ends east of North 21st Street in the Town of Purcellville, Loudoun County. The 45-mile-long paved trail is used daily by thousands of people for walking, running, cycling, roller skating, horseback riding, commuting, and recreational purposes. The regional trail has 41 public road crossings within Loudoun County, of which 25 are at-grade intersections. Sterling Boulevard is the only W&OD crossing of a four-lane divided highway in Loudoun County that does not separate vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists.

Trail users have expressed safety concerns regarding several existing at-grade road crossings. In response to these concerns, Loudoun County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) developed a prioritization of safety improvements for the at-grade crossings within the County. Crossings were prioritized by the number of potential conflicts at each location, based on the number of trail users and vehicles passing the location. The W&OD crossing at Sterling Boulevard was identified as the number one priority in Loudoun County with 222 potential conflicts.

Federal funding through the RAISE program would greatly facilitate construction of this project and we thank you for your time and assistance with this request.

Sincerely,
DocuSigned by:


D1B3421C5D74C484...

Cc: Tim Hemstreet, County Administrator



Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

February 9, 2023

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

Re: NVTA Endorsement of Loudoun County's RAISE Grant Program Application

Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), I am pleased to express our full support of the Loudoun County's 2023 RAISE grant program application. Funding from this grant for this project will improve active transportation options, environmental sustainability, quality of life, and multimodal connectivity while also partnering and collaborating with other Northern Virginia active transportation network stakeholders.

The Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Overpass at Sterling Boulevard in Loudoun County ("Project") provides a safe grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing on the W&OD trail, which is a significant regional trail in Northern Virginia. The 45-mile-long paved trail is used daily by thousands of people for walking, running, cycling, roller skating, horseback riding, commuting, and recreational purposes. The regional trail has 41 public road crossings within Loudoun County, of which 25 are at-grade intersections. Sterling Boulevard is the only W&OD crossing of a four-lane divided highway in Loudoun County that does not separate vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists.

Trail users have expressed safety concerns regarding several existing at-grade road crossings. In response to these concerns, the Loudoun County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) created a prioritization of safety improvements for the at-grade crossings within the County. Crossings were prioritized by the number of potential conflicts at each location, based on the number of trail users and vehicles passing the location. This project location was identified as the number one priority in Loudoun County with 222 potential conflicts. This project is in an Equity Emphasis Area; and will improve access to this area. The project will also enhance access to pedestrian and bicycle facilities which links to the non-motorized network and encourage use of non-motorized vehicles. The encouragement of non-motorized vehicle use will help to reduce congestion and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. All these project impacts align well with NVTA's core values of Safety, Equity, and Sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration of the Loudoun County's RAISE grant program application as well as your time and attention.

Best Regards,

Phyllis J. Randall
Chair

Cc: Nancy Boyd, Director, Transportation and Capital Improvements, Loudoun County
Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer, NVTA