

Thursday, February 23, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my strong support for Hampton Roads Transit's (HRT), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) \$25 million grant application for the construction of the new, state-of-the-art, Southside Bus Operating Division Facility. This grant will support a critical component of HRT's expanding service and will meet both HRT's and USDOT's goals of moving towards a green-energy future. The new Southside Maintenance Facility will replace aging, inefficient infrastructure, reduce operating costs, and provide opportunities for good paying jobs in the region. The new facility will be built to support up to 100 battery electric buses and will have the ability to use alternative energy sources such as electricity generated from offshore wind farms and on-site solar panels.

HRT is vital to the economy of Hampton Roads. They provide transit service to six of Virginia's ten most populous cities. In addition to 73 bus routes, the agency provides ferry, paratransit, seasonal trolley service, and transportation demand management services. HRT is also home to Virginia's only light rail system. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, HRT carried nearly 1,000,000 trips per month across the region on all of its services. The New Southside Bus Operating Facility supported by this RAISE grant application will enable the agency to continue to meet its goal of connecting Hampton Roads with transportation solutions that are reliable, safe, efficient, and sustainable.

The Hampton Roads Chamber strongly supports this application as it provides alternative forms of transportation to all residents of the region. It is a vital conduit for people traveling to and from work.

Thank you for your consideration of the Hampton Roads Transit RAISE application.

Sincerely,



Bryan Stephens,
President and CEO Hampton Roads Chamber