



May 10, 2023

Kate Mattice  
Executive Director  
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

Dear Director Mattice,

On behalf of Crystal City Civic Association, I am writing to support Virginia Rail Express' (VRE) application to the Commuter Choice grant program for its Crystal City Station project. The project is critical to National Landing's future as a walkable, transit-oriented downtown and we encourage the NVTC to approve the grant request.

As VRE is finalizing its plans for the new station in Crystal City, we want to emphasize how important the design of the station will be. It should be an iconic landmark, appropriate for this future iconic transportation hub. We also note that is essential that appropriate security measures be installed to warn rider of oncoming trains and to prevent passengers from climbing on the tracks. When Amtrak and MARC trains are added, these safety measures will be even more essential. We look forward to hearing from VRE soon on what these measures will be.

VRE has long been an important part of National Landing's transportation landscape, helping thousands of employees from Northern Virginia's suburbs reach jobs and other destinations in the neighborhood. Prior to the pandemic, VRE's Crystal City Station was its busiest in Virginia. VRE is currently advancing plans for a new Crystal City Station that would replace its existing facility and provide additional capacity. That capacity is needed to accommodate the 75% increase in service planned as part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, including new bi-directional, night and weekend service.

In addition to accommodating the planned increase in VRE service, Crystal City Station will serve as the keystone for a larger set of projects that will enhance regional mobility and generate economic development. The station will include a dedicated platform for Amtrak, which plans to establish service to National Landing. It will also accommodate MARC trains which, under a recently announced framework agreement between Maryland and Virginia, would "run through" to National Landing and Alexandria from their current terminus at Union Station. Finally, Crystal City Station is set to serve as the western "landing" of the planned CC2DCA pedestrian bridge to National Airport. Together, these projects will create the nation's leading multi-modal, air to rail hub and create a significant competitive advantage for National Landing and Northern Virginia.

More broadly, Crystal City Station and related projects are part of a concerted strategy to generate economic development by concentrating jobs and housing in transit-oriented locations like National Landing. Indeed, there is currently more than \$4b of investment planned or underway in transportation improvements within National Landing to support this strategy. VRE has already secured the majority of the expected \$68.9m cost for the station project, with the \$18.78m request representing the remaining delta. Thus, by approving this request the NVTC has the opportunity to leverage existing funds and finalize this important regional project. For these reasons we strongly support the project and encourage the NVTC to grant VRE's request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric Cassel". The signature is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Eric Cassel  
President of the CCCA