



Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023

To whom it may concern,

The following letters are submissions from major stakeholders throughout North Carolina in support of the N.C. Department of Transportation Rail division's applications of future intercity passenger rail corridors for funding to the federal Corridor Identification & Development Program in 2023.



OFFICE *of* MAYOR VI LYLES

600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
Charlottenc.gov

February 27, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

On behalf of the City of Charlotte, I am pleased to express the support of the city for all of the grant proposals that will be submitted by the NC Department of Transportation for consideration through the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program.

In particular, we are very interested in the following corridors that would integrate passenger rail services into the future multi-modal Charlotte Gateway Station in uptown Charlotte:

- **Charlotte to Kings Mountain, NC**
- Charlotte to Washington, DC
- Winston-Salem, NC to Charlotte
- Atlanta, GA to Charlotte

These corridors are important connections in the Connect Beyond Regional Transit Plan. CONNECT Beyond has been endorsed by the Metropolitan Transit Commission, Charlotte Area Transit System's policy board, and Metropolitan Transportation Organizations across the Charlotte Region. The city expresses its profound appreciation to the NC Department of Transportation for all of the work that continues to be done to improve multi-modal opportunities throughout the State of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Mayor Vi Alexander Lyles
City of Charlotte

Cc: Charlotte City Council
City Manager Marcus D. Jones
City Manager's Executive Team



April 17, 2023

Ms. Julie White
Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27699-1501

Dear Secretary White:

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments and the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization fully support the North Carolina Department of Transportation's effort to expand passenger rail service into western North Carolina. The Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton Metropolitan Statistical Area is North Carolina's 8th largest, and as such serves as a key driver of economic activity in the western part of the state.

The extension of passenger rail service into our region – which is recognized for its natural beauty and wide range of outdoor recreation destinations – will stimulate tourism and improve connectivity for residents who need to travel to Asheville, Charlotte and Raleigh for business or leisure activities. New rail service to our region would also open an entirely new section of the state to passenger rail travelers from as far away as New York and Washington that have previously been unable to reach our area by rail.

Several downtowns in our region are located along the existing Norfolk Southern rail corridor and would welcome the opportunity to work with NCDOT to extend passenger rail access into the region. Western Piedmont Council of Governments and the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization have numerous resources that can also be used to assist in the development of NCDOT's feasibility study and can serve as a convener of key stakeholders throughout the region.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony W. Starr".

Anthony Starr, ICMA-CM, AICP
Executive Director

FRENCH BROAD RIVER

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

SUPPORT OF CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO RE-ESTABLISH A PASSENGER RAIL CONNECTION FOR SALISBURY TO ASHEVILLE

February 27, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., CPM
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Letter of Support for Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC Future Passenger Rail Service via FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program

Dear Jason:

This letter documents the support of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for NCDOT Rail Division's submittal of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC rail corridor to the FRA's Corridor Identification and Development Program. Restoring passenger rail service between Salisbury and Asheville for the first time since 1975 would bring many benefits to Western North Carolina (WNC) while enhancing rail ridership and economic development on connecting lines within the state and beyond.

Equity and Environment Benefits via Transportation Options

Passenger rail service would provide a travel mode alternative for Asheville and WNC, which already experience high travel demand. For example, the Asheville Regional Airport is now the 3rd busiest airport in the state, with a 43% increase in passengers in 2019 and 1.8 million passengers in 2022, reflecting six consecutive years of record passenger growth. Area highway traffic is also increasing, with I-40 now carrying 11% more traffic and I-26 carrying 13% more traffic than they did in 2009. Passenger rail service would present an opportunity for travel mode-shift, supporting FRA's goals for a safer, cleaner, and more equitable transportation system.

Economic Development and Equity Benefits via Access and Mobility

There are more than 900,000 people in the six counties that the rail corridor passes through. However, tourism plays a major role in WNC's economy, with more than 11 million visitors per year in Buncombe County alone. A 2019 study by the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) noted that for day-visitors, 58% are from North Carolina, with 28% from Charlotte and 8% from the Triangle. For overnight visitors, 31% are from North Carolina, with 10% from Charlotte and 9% from the Triangle. These numbers present latent demand and an opportunity for better access and mobility between WNC and the state's two largest metropolitan areas.

In addition to being a popular tourist destination, WNC is also a retirement destination. In fact, the WNC region has a 44% higher proportion of persons age 65 and older than North Carolina as a whole, so providing seniors with non-driving travel options to access the rest of the state will take on increasing importance.

This project would also enhance geographic equity, as a key guiding principle of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is to better connect and integrate Appalachia with the larger country. In 2017, ARC prepared a study whose title perfectly summarizes the need and importance of the WNC rail project: *Access vs. Isolation: Preserving Appalachia's Rail Connectivity in the 21st Century*. North Carolina is commonly associated with having three key regions, the Coast, Piedmont, and Mountains, but at present, the majority of passenger rail service is concentrated in the Piedmont.

Many countries around the world view and build widespread passenger rail networks as a critical piece of infrastructure, so our state could step in that direction with projects like the Salisbury to Asheville line. Connecting our growing region to the business and governmental centers in other parts of the state would be critical to maintaining safe, accessible, and scenic links across North Carolina.

As part of the work of the MPO, we work with NCDOT and our member governments to determine transportation priorities for funding as well as long-range planning. We are excited about the potential for restoration of passenger rail service and its positive social, environmental, and economic multiplier effects.

As our region continues to grow and change, we believe the Salisbury to Asheville passenger rail line would be a critical investment to help maintain and improve the quality of life for WNC residents in addition to the many visitors that are currently limited to highway and air travel to the region.

Sincerely,



Anthony Sutton, French Broad River MPO Board Chair



Buncombe County Government

Avril M. Pinder, CPA, ICMA-CM
County Manager

February 28, 2023

Jason Orthner, NCDOT Rail Division Director
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner,

Buncombe County offers its support of NCDOT's application for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program, and specifically inclusion of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC corridor. We support this application and the focus of improving access to the mountains via passenger rail.

Buncombe County believes strongly in creating an environment that promotes safe, efficient, and equitable transportation for our residents and visitors. The addition of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC corridor would offer an important connection to the mountains that has been missing for many years.

A passenger rail connection would allow many to visit the mountains of Western North Carolina using a safe, cost effective and efficient method while providing residents an important linkage to the rest of North Carolina.

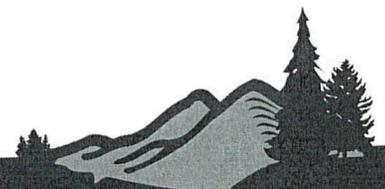
By enhancing connections between Buncombe County and the rest of the state, more people will have the opportunity to travel to and from the mountains of Western North Carolina without the use of a personal vehicle.

Buncombe County believes that having an improved multilayered transportation network will enhance the well-being of our residents, our visitors, and the community's quality of life.

Sincerely,



Avril M. Pinder



WAYNE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



WAYNE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
Phone: (919) 731-1435
Fax (919) 731-1446

March 21, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Corridor Identification Program:
Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I am writing you this letter to express the County of Wayne's support of the North Carolina Department of Transportation in their application for the Corridor Identification and Development Program, specifically supporting the Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC corridor.

I firmly believe that intercity passenger rail is a valuable and necessary component of the future transportation network of North Carolina. The County of Wayne would experience multiple benefits through the establishment and future implementation of the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor. The anticipated benefits include safety, intercity connectivity, economic and social advancement, and overall regional growth.

The County of Wayne is situated as a midpoint of the corridor and embraces the opportunity to serve as such. The railroad is an important part of the County of Wayne's history and I believe that the establishment of this corridor would be an integral building block for the future of not only our county, but for the entire southeast region of North Carolina

Respectfully,

Barbara Aycock
Chairwoman, Board of County Commissioners

THE GOOD LIFE. GROWN HERE.

PO BOX 227
GOLDSBORO, NC 27533

WAYNE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

**RESOLUTION #2023-11: A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF RAIL SERVICE FROM GOLDSBORO,
NC TO WILMINGTON, NC**

WHEREAS, every year, railroads save consumers billions of dollars while reducing energy consumption and pollution, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, cutting highway gridlock, and reducing the high costs to taxpayers of highway construction and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's first system dates back to 1833 when the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad was chartered to connect its namesake cities, which it completed on March 7th, 1840. By doing so the railroad became the longest railroad operated in the world at that time, spanning some 161 miles; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) manages a 317-mile rail corridor spanning the state of North Carolina from Morehead City to Charlotte, over which about 60 Norfolk Southern freight trains and 10 Amtrak passenger trains travel each day. Since its creation, NCRR has been a driver for economic growth in the state; and

WHEREAS, annually, North Carolina's passenger rail services contribute to 430 jobs, \$20.1 million in earned wages, \$30.6 million in gross state product, and \$47.4 million in benefits rail passengers receive from taking the train instead of other modes of travel; and

WHEREAS, nearly 900,000 passengers boarded trains in North Carolina in 2016, served by six intercity passenger routes with stops in 16 cities and towns. Nine of those stops are along the busy, 174-mile Piedmont Corridor between Charlotte and Raleigh; and

WHEREAS, Eastern North Carolina would benefit in the same way with job creation, a reduction of highway construction and maintenance, as well as reducing highway gridlock, energy consumption and pollution, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, Goldsboro and Wayne County are home to Goldsboro Union Station, a once thriving rail depot from 1907 to 1968, and that station stands ready to begin passenger and freight service once again; and

THEREFORE, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners does hereby request the State of North Carolina to consider and begin the process to bring rail service back to Goldsboro and Wayne County, and connect to Wilmington, North Carolina.

This the 21st day of March, 2023.



Barbara Aycock, Chairwoman
Wayne County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Carol Bowden, Clerk to the Board



CITY COUNCIL:
BARBARA G. VOLK
Mayor
LYNDSEY SIMPSON
Mayor Pro Tem
DR. JENNIFER HENSLEY
DEBBIE O'NEAL-ROUNDTREE
JERRY A. SMITH JR., J.D.

CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE
The City of Four Seasons



OFFICERS:
JOHN F. CONNET
City Manager
ANGELA S. BEEKER
City Attorney
JILL MURRAY
City Clerk

February 28, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner, Director
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Passenger rail service between Asheville and Salisbury

Dear Mr. Orthner,

On behalf of the City of Hendersonville, I would like to provide this letter of support for the reconnection of passenger rail service between Asheville, NC and Salisbury, NC. As the second largest municipality in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and a significant tourist/retirement community, we believe that passenger rail is critical to the long-term vitality of Hendersonville. In addition, the reconnection of the Asheville MSA with the Hickory, Morganton and Lenoir MSA via passenger rail will provide a significant economic boost to all twenty-eight western North Carolina counties.

The City of Hendersonville fully supports NCDOT's inclusion of the Asheville to Salisbury passenger rail route in the Corridor ID Program. We sincerely hope that this route will be included in the program and grant funding will be made available to support the expansion of passenger rail service in western North Carolina.

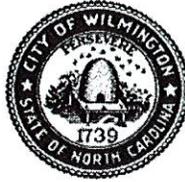
Thank you for your attention in this matter. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (828) 697-3000.

Sincerely,

Barbara G. Volk
Mayor

Cc: City Council
Congressman Chuck Edwards

Resolution



City Council
City of Wilmington
North Carolina
R-2023-58

Introduced By: Anthony N. Caudle, City Manager

Date: 5/16/2023

Resolution Supporting the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s Rail Division Application for the Federal Railroad Administration’s Corridor Identification and Development Program for the Wilmington to Raleigh Corridor

LEGISLATIVE INTENT/PURPOSE:

WHEREAS, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (“IIJA”), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (“BIL”), included \$66 billion in passenger and freight rail infrastructure investments, with \$44 billion to be distributed through the Federal Railroad Administration’s (“FRA”) discretionary grant programs; and,

WHEREAS, the IIJA also authorized the establishment of the Corridor ID Program to assist in the development of existing and future intercity passenger rail corridors, making funding available to identify and develop projects necessary to implement service; and,

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s (“NC DOT”) Rail Division identified the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor as a candidate corridor for the FRA’s 2022 Notice of Solicitation of Corridor Proposals, submitting the application in March 2023; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington is situated at the end of the corridor and, along with NC DOT, has planned for future passenger rail service for many years, so establishment and future implementation of intercity rail service in the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor would provide numerous benefits to the City and surrounding region, including safety, connectivity, economic advancement, and supporting overall regional growth, and selection of the corridor for the FRA’s Corridor ID Program would provide some of resources necessary to realize these benefits.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT, the City of Wilmington City Council hereby supports the NC DOT’s Rail Division application for the FRA’s Corridor Identification and Development Program for the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor.

Adopted at a regular meeting
on May 16, 2023

Bill Saffo

Bill Saffo, Mayor

ATTEST:
Penelope Spicer Sidbury

Penelope Spicer-Sidbury, City Clerk



CHAPEL HILL
Mayor Pam Hemminger
Chair

WILMINGTON
Mayor Bill Saffo
Vice Chair

CONCORD
Mayor Bill Dusch
Treasurer

GREENSBORO
Mayor Nancy Vaughan
Past Chair

APEX
Mayor Jacques Gilbert

ASHEVILLE
Mayor Esther Manheimer

BOONE
Mayor Tim Futrelle

BURLINGTON
Mayor Jim Butler

CARRBORO
Mayor Damon Seils

CARY
Mayor Harold Weinbrecht

CHARLOTTE
Mayor Vi Lyles

CORNELIUS
Mayor Woody Washam

DURHAM
Mayor Elaine O'Neal

FAYETTEVILLE
Mayor Mitch Colvin

FUQUAY-VARINA
Mayor Blake Massengill

GASTONIA
Mayor Walker Reid

GREENVILLE
Mayor P.J. Connelly

GOLDSBORO
Mayor David Ham

HICKORY
Mayor Hank Guess

HIGH POINT
Mayor Jay Wagner

HOLLY SPRINGS
Mayor Sean Mayefskie

JACKSONVILLE
Mayor Sammy Phillips

KANNAPOLIS
Mayor Darrell Hinnant

MATTHEWS
Mayor John F. Higdon

MOORESVILLE
Mayor Miles Atkins

NEW BERN
Mayor Jeffrey Odham

RALEIGH
Mayor Mary Ann Baldwin

ROCKY MOUNT
Mayor Sandy Roberson

SALISBURY
Mayor Karen Alexander

STATESVILLE
Mayor Costi Kutteh

WILSON
Mayor Carlton Stevens

WINSTON-SALEM
Mayor Allen Joines

DIRECTOR
William A. (Beau) Mills
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Mr. Jason T. Orthner, P.E., CPM
Rail Division Director
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

March 10, 2023

Dear Mr. Orthner:

We write on behalf of the members of the NC Metropolitan Mayors Coalition (NC Metro Mayors). As leaders of the NC Metro Mayors, we want to share with you, that our group representing mayors of our state's 32 larger cities have voted unanimously to support expansion of passenger rail service; and, therefore wholeheartedly support North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) application for ALL twelve corridors being submitted for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program.

We believe that NCDOT's vision for a state-wide passenger rail system that connects our cities and rural communities across the state will provide incredible opportunities for our citizens. Adding to a robust and growing effort to improve regional corridors with connections to Washington, DC and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, as well as planned southern connections to urban centers such as Atlanta and Florida, we will grow a passenger rail system to serve generations to come.

The excitement for passenger rail amongst our mayors is palpable, and successful applications for the Corridor ID program will be a huge help in continuing to build on that excitement. As leaders of our state's urban centers, I cannot emphasize enough just how we strongly believe in the opportunity that passenger rail offers as we work hard to connect our citizens, both urban and rural, to tools for a better quality of life and opportunities. Passenger rail is a badly needed complement to our overburdened highway and air travel, one that can also help us combat climate change, connect to urban, suburban and rural residents to jobs as well as open up areas of the state that may not have benefitted from our state's economic and population growth.

As a group, we are already looking for ways that we can aid the growth of passenger rail. Over the coming months we will reach out to you to grow our efforts. We look forward to working with you, Deputy Secretary White, Secretary Boyette, Governor Cooper – and other critical partners, such as our elected representatives in the NC General Assembly and the US Congress, and other partners such, Amtrak, USDOT and our local and state business leaders across our state as we continue to build support for passenger rail.

We strongly support the important step of securing Corridor ID grants in ***all our corridors***. As you know, we stand ready and will work hard - bold action now will bear fruit for many years to come. Sincerely,



Mayor Pam Hemminger, Chapel Hill



Mayor Bill Saffo, Wilmington



Brenda Howerton, *Chair*
3325 Tarleton West
Durham, NC 27713
Email: bhowerton@dconc.gov

Wendy Jacobs, *Vice-Chair*
4308 Rivermont Road
Durham, NC 27712
Email: wjacobs@dconc.gov

Nida Allam
104 Wellwater Ave
Durham, NC 27703
Email: nallam@dconc.gov

Nimasheena Burns
1727 Great Bend Drive
Durham, NC 27704
Email: nburns@dconc.gov

Heidi Carter
31 Falling Water Drive
Durham, NC 27713
Email: hcarter@dconc.gov

COUNTY OF DURHAM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, Director
NC Department of Transportation
Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601



Dear Mr. Orthner:

Durham County strongly supports all the NC Department of Transportation's applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development program. NCDOT is submitting twelve corridors for the program, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, and we appreciate and support the department's extensive vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program in North Carolina connecting urban and rural communities.

Durham was founded as a stop on the railroad and our history is linked to the connectivity and economic opportunity that the railroad provided to our residents and industries. Today, the North Carolina Railroad corridor crosses through Durham providing freight and well-utilized intercity passenger rail service. The corridor has tremendous potential for even more intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont crescent cities, more frequent rail connections to Washington, DC and beyond, and new connections between rural and urban communities in eastern and western NC.

Durham County's top priority for the FRA Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the North Carolina Railroad corridor through Durham. This corridor is used today by the Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes, and more frequent, safer, and more reliable service would be a great benefit for our residents. Durham County has participated in and supported several studies of infrastructure and new services on this corridor including the GoTriangle Commuter Rail Study and the submission of an FRA Railroad Crossing Elimination grant application to study crossings in East Durham. This corridor is well-positioned to move quickly into design, construction, and implementation of enhanced intercity rail service.

We also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the North Carolina Railroad corridor through Durham. NCDOT has proposed several new corridors connecting

Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should include the consideration of extension through Durham and beyond to truly provide a statewide interconnected passenger rail network.

The FRA Corridor ID program provides an opportunity to advance Durham County's environmental, economic, and equity goals. Intercity passenger rail service and the infrastructure to support it provides alternatives to more costly and more polluting modes of transportation, improved safety at railroad and roadway crossings, more access to transportation for disabled and economically disadvantaged residents, enhanced economic competitiveness for the growth of business and industry, and better quality of life for our residents. Durham County emphatically supports the FRA's goals to use the Corridor ID program to establish a long-term vision for passenger rail service, and we are excited about the opportunity that this will provide for Durham. Please give NCDOT's applications full consideration, and we strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Howerton". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the end.

Brenda Howerton, Chair
Durham Board of County Commissioners

NCDOT Rail Division Director, Jason Orthner,
1 S. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC 27601

Letter in support of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC corridor

I understand twelve corridors will be submitted to FRA for consideration for participating in the **Corridor Identification and Development Program** and obtaining grant funding.

This letter of support is being emailed to Cheryl Collins (cjcollins@ncdot.gov) on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, to be included in your application packages.

My prospective may be a bit different. Our town, Old Fort is celebrating its 150 anniversary this year with a theme of “Elevate Old Fort”, Elevate its People, Community and History. There is little history of Old Fort that does not include the railroad and what the railroad has brought to the community through the years. Many of our most noted citizens were employed by the railroad and many people have fond memories of riding the mountain railroad between Old Fort and Ridgecrest, going through the loops and tunnels.

With passenger rail connection for the Salisbury to Asheville route, people could again experience and learn the history behind how this remarkable feat was accomplished.

Significant points to consider in your consideration:

- Current Passenger Rail Service in North Carolina is widely used and has a growing passenger count. This could be true for Salisbury to Asheville, as well.
- Passenger Rail Service from Salisbury to Asheville could be improve accessibility to communities along the route and promote economic growth.
- Western North Carolina has been without passenger rail service since 1975 and there is a need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system
- Statistics show that return on investment matches dollar for dollar when it pertains to station devolatilization

We ask for your support in making this consideration a reality,

Catherine R Moore
WNC Rail Committee Member
Old Fort 150 Project Coordinator





NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

March 8, 2023

Jason Orthner, Director
NC Department of Transportation
Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

The NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is happy to send a letter of support for the NC Department of Transportation's applications for the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development program. We support the goals of the program and see great benefit in bringing world-class passenger rail service to our region while we work together grow a safer, cleaner, and more equitable rail system.

CAMPO is a regional transportation planning organization serving communities in Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, and Wake Counties in the North Carolina Triangle Region. The focus of CAMPO's work is to move towards a seamless integration of transportation services that offer a range of travel choices and are compatible with the character and development of our communities, sensitive to the environment, improve quality of life, and are safe and accessible for all. As such, we believe that NCDOT's applications for the FRA Corridor ID program provide an opportunity to help advance these goals by providing enhanced access to frequent and reliable rail service in CAMPO's jurisdiction.

Of the twelve corridors NCDOT is submitting for the program eight travel directly through CAMPO's jurisdiction (Charlotte to Washington, DC; Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC; Greenville, NC to Raleigh, NC; Winston-Salem, NC to Raleigh, NC; Hamlet, NC to Raleigh, NC; Morehead City, NC to Raleigh, NC; Fayetteville, NC to Raleigh, NC; and Weldon, NC to Raleigh, NC), and the remaining three still provide increased access to and from the CAMPO jurisdiction by connecting into existing corridors serving the key destinations in the area.

We hope that you give NCDOT's applications full consideration as we believe they will provide needed mobility improvements for the people of North Carolina, and the CAMPO jurisdiction in particular.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Lukasina".

Chris Lukasina, AICP, GISP
Executive Director
NC Capital Area MPO



Business & Community Development
100 N King St.
Hendersonville, NC 28792

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, Director
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

VIA: E-mail

RE: Corridor Identification and Development Program Submittal - Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC

Dear Mr. Orthner:

Henderson County is excited to support the North Carolina Department of Transportation's submittal for the Corridor ID Program. Hendersonville, the County seat, is situated about 25 minutes south of Asheville. A passenger rail connection between Asheville and Salisbury would be an asset to our region. The mountainous terrain limits cost-effective multi-modal infrastructure. A passenger rail system would expand transportation options as well as access to various destinations that those who use public transit may not feasibly visit otherwise. This integration point would connect the historically disadvantaged Appalachian communities with the state's capital, Research Triangle, the coast, and even multiple destinations in other states along the east coast.

This grant funding would be the beginning of a much-needed project to address transportation inequities and bolster economic development across the state. Henderson County fully supports its regional partners in this effort. Please feel free to reach out regarding any additional comments. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Christopher Todd
Director of Business & Community Development



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

March 1, 2022

Jason Orthner
Director
NC Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601



RE: Support for inclusion of the Raleigh to Fayetteville Route in the FRA Corridor ID Program

Dear Mr. Orthner,

On behalf of the more than 335,000 residents of Cumberland County, please accept this letter in support of the Raleigh to Fayetteville route being included in the FRA Corridor ID Program.

Passenger rail service to Raleigh has been identified by both Cumberland County and the City of Fayetteville as a top priority for our community. Connectivity between Raleigh and Fayetteville via rail will facilitate substantial economic and quality-of-life improvements for our citizens.

Despite recent gains and continued growth, Cumberland County remains North Carolina's most populous "Tier 1" county. Adding this additional mode of transit will provide a critical alternative for our citizens of limited means, allowing them to access their state delegation, state-wide departments, and executive leadership. The Fayetteville to Raleigh route would also provide direct connections to rail services such as the Carolinian (to Charlotte) and the future "S-Line" (connecting to Petersburg, VA).

Beyond our residents, this service would greatly benefit the 30,000+ students attending our local universities and colleges, including our namesake Fayetteville State University (HBCU) and Methodist University, North Carolina's newest medical school. This project would also provide a much-needed transportation option for the 52,000 active-duty soldiers, and their 63,000 family members, serving at the recently renamed Ft. Liberty.

Lastly, we are excited to see the millions of private sector dollars being spent by RJ Corman to improve the newly created "Raleigh & Fayetteville" railroad (RFCC) and believe that now is the perfect time to build the public-private partnerships needed to efficiently deliver the transportation infrastructure our citizens deserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Glenn B. Adams
Vice Chairman



February 27, 2023

Jason Orthner
Rail Division Director
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

The Town of Apex is writing in support of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's **Hamlet, North Carolina to Raleigh, North Carolina** application for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program.

The Town of Apex sits directly along the S-Line Corridor, between Hamlet and Raleigh, in Wake County, North Carolina. Apex is a railroad town without a rail station. Our motto, "The Peak of Good Living", is an affectionate tribute to both our position at the highest point along a 30-mile stretch of the S-Line corridor, and the high regard we have for our hometown. While centered around a beloved, small, historic downtown, Apex is rapidly growing. Our population dramatically increased from about 20,000 in 2000 to about 75,000 today. Given this rapid growth and rapid increase of congestion on roadways, Apex understands the importance of transportation options. We are excited about the opportunity to bring passenger rail back to Apex, and see rail as a critical spine of our overall multimodal, land use, and economic development vision.

Apex has a history of strong partnerships with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). We have participated in a year-long effort, led by NCDOT, to facilitate transit-oriented development (TOD) planning along the S-Line rail corridor. The Town contributed funds, time, and resources to this important effort to integrate land use, economic development, and transportation connectivity as new passenger rail services develop. The Town also is looking forward to participating with NCDOT in a feasibility study for a mobility hub that we anticipate serving as a future passenger rail station in Apex. Once again, the Town was eager to contribute funds, time, and resources to this effort.

The Corridor Identification Program is a substantial opportunity to identify and plan for infrastructure needs along the S-Line corridor between Hamlet and Raleigh. Apex is pleased to support NCDOT's efforts to secure funding for this corridor through the FRA program and looks forward to continuing to work with NCDOT on the transformative S-Line project.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-249-3302 or shawn.purvis@apexnc.org.

Sincerely,

D. Shawn Purvis
Deputy Town Manager



March 10, 2023

Jason Orthner, PE, Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S Wilmington St
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: NCDOT Corridor ID Program application

Dear Mr Orthner:

As the Town of Carrboro's representative to the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO (DCHC MPO) Board, I am writing in support of the NC Department of Transportation's applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development program. Many of the 12 corridors NCDOT will submit for designation would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for the Triangle region. I support NCDOT's vision for a safe, efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between North Carolina's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond. A top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC, corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes already use the NCRR corridor. More frequent, safer, more reliable service would be a great benefit for residents of the western Triangle. This corridor is ready to move into design, construction, and service implementation.

I also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All of these corridors should extend through the DCHC MPO study area, including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

I am excited about the opportunity that enhanced service in these corridors will provide to the people of our region and our state, and I strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damon Seils".

Damon Seils
Mayor

C: Richard White, Town Manager
Mary Bryant, Deputy Town Clerk





Office of the County Manager

P.O. Box 550 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

TEL 919 856 6160
FAX 919 856 6168

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, Director
NC Department of Transportation
Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: NCDOT's Applications to the FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program

Dear Mr. Orthner:

Wake County is pleased to submit this letter of support for **all of NCDOT applications to the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development Program**. All the proposed corridors, the majority of which interact with the Raleigh/ Wake County area, are important strategic corridors to connect communities safely and efficiently within North Carolina and to the larger national rail network.

In 2016, Wake County voters approved a local option sales tax to support a major transit expansion in an area that is adding approximately 60 people per day. Wake Transit investments will triple the existing level of bus service by expanding 17 miles of frequent bus service to 99 miles and providing connection services to all Wake County communities. These investments in local transit along with supportive and focused development will help Wake County meet its economic, equity and environmental goals over the coming years and enhance the County's role as a key regional origin and destination. The strategic and sustained improvements to the regional and interregional rail network proposed by the Corridor Identification and Development Program will better link the County to nearby communities and the larger network and expand opportunity, flexibility, and options.

Wake County looks forward to working with NCDOT, FRA, partner agencies, and partner communities to develop and implement strategic investments to address existing rail network issues and create and preserve capacity for the variety of exciting rail services proposed in the NCDOT applications.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's applications to the Corridor Identification and Development Program

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Ellis".

David Ellis
County Manager

February 28, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Corridor Identification Program:
Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I am writing you this letter to express the City of Goldsboro's support of the North Carolina Department of Transportation in their application for the Corridor Identification and Development Program, specifically supporting the Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC corridor.

I firmly believe that intercity passenger rail is a valuable and necessary component of the future transportation network of North Carolina. The City of Goldsboro would experience multiple benefits through the establishment and future implementation of the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor. The anticipated benefits include safety, intercity connectivity, economic & social advancement, and overall regional growth.

The City of Goldsboro is situated as a midpoint of the corridor and embraces the opportunity to serve as such. The railroad is an important part of the City of Goldsboro's history and I believe that the establishment of this corridor would be an integral building block for the future of not only our city, but for the entire southeast region of North Carolina.

Respectfully,



Mayor David Ham
City of Goldsboro



Dennis J. Newman
Executive Vice President, Strategy and Planning

March 20, 2023

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Application for Corridor Identification and Development Program Funding

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), I am writing to express our support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) applications submitted under the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID Program) for the Charlotte, NC to Washington, DC; Charlotte, NC to Atlanta, GA; Charlotte, NC to Kings Mountain, NC; Charlotte, NC to Winston-Salem, NC; Winston-Salem, NC to Raleigh, NC; Asheville, NC to Salisbury, NC; Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC; Fayetteville, NC to Raleigh, NC; Greenville, NC to Raleigh, NC; Weldon, NC to Raleigh, NC; Hamlet, NC to Raleigh, NC; and Morehead City, NC to Raleigh, NC Corridors.

NCDOT has identified twelve corridors within our state to be supportive of current and future intercity passenger rail service. Each of the corridors that are being submitted are either a part of the current federally designated Southeast Corridor (SEC) or viable to supporting the nationwide network as they provide a connection from each region of the state to the SEC.

These corridors will help strengthen economic growth and mobility throughout the region and the country. Additionally, they will provide public benefits, will make regional travel more available, accessible, and sustainable, will reduce congestion, and will boost the local economy of the cities and towns along the route.

We are excited to potentially work with all of the projects selected through the Corridor ID Program, to help those sponsors move their projects forward towards future implementation. Thank you for your time and consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Newman", written in a cursive style.

Dennis Newman
Executive Vice President, Strategy, Planning & Accessibility

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DON MARTIN, CHAIRMAN
GLORIA D. WHISENHUNT, VICE CHAIR
DAN BESSE
RICHARD V. LINVILLE
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J. DUDLEY WATTS, JR.
COUNTY MANAGER
DAMON SANDERS-PRATT
DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
SHONTELL A. ROBINSON
DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
ASHLEIGH B. MATTHEWS
CLERK TO THE BOARD

FORSYTH COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

February 28, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners strongly support the efforts to participate in the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program, to help plan and develop two proposed rail corridors, connecting Winston-Salem to Raleigh and Charlotte. Including Winston-Salem and Forsyth County as a key linkage in this system is essential for several reasons.

- Forsyth is North Carolina's fourth largest County and providing residents access to low-cost rail travel will enhance the economic and cultural prospects of the region as well as the State.
- A high-skilled workforce is essential to Forsyth County and North Carolina's economic development competitiveness and rail service will allow for residents to commute between regions more easily while providing businesses with a larger talent pool to draw from.
- Charlotte and Winston-Salem are integrally connected through the legacy of businesses founded in Winston-Salem that have expanded in Charlotte. In many cases key business units remain in Winston-Salem and support the continued expansion of companies such as BB&T/Truist, Krispy Kreme and Atrium/Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, among many others.
- The focus of Innovation Quarter in Winston-Salem on innovation and discovery will continue to grow, necessitating the connections that enhanced rail service will provide. A stronger connection between Innovation Quarter, Research Triangle Park, and other research institutions throughout the State will generate new ideas and strengthen North Carolina's reputation as a leader in innovation.
- The opportunity in Winston-Salem meets the goals of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to bring world-class passenger rail service to regions across the county, grow a safer, cleaner, more equitable rail system and build the foundation for a long-term program. The enhanced passenger rail system would enhance access to airports Statewide and allow low- and moderate-income residents to access lower cost rail service.
- The City of Winston Salem has already made a significant investment with the intent of restoring passenger rail, purchasing and restoring the historic Union Station building located adjacent to Winston Salem State University for \$15.9 million. The completed improvements have left Union Station passenger ready.

Thank you for the outreach and education on this critical opportunity. Our community stands ready to assist as necessary for the expansion of rail into Forsyth County.

Sincerely,

Don Martin, Chairman
Forsyth County Board of Commissioners

Southeast Shortlines, Inc.
Caldwell County Railroad Company
Thermal Belt Railway
5725 Giles Farm Road
Morganton, NC 28655

March 1, 2023

Re: Letter of Support to Re-establish Rail Passenger Service from Salisbury to Asheville.

Ms. Cheryl Collins,

I am writing to add my support along with my employees support to re-establish passenger rail service from Salisbury to Asheville and hopefully beyond to St. Louis, MO one day. Note that to get to the West you must go through Chicago or New Orleans, LA currently. Likewise, to get East the same scenario is true.

First however you must crawl before you can walk and run but I believe at least bringing Western, NC into the fold, it will enhance the lives, commerce and industrial development and also greatly increase tourism to Western, NC.

My fellow members of the Western North Carolina Rail Committee have started the ball rolling and I am in total support of their objectives.

I think having a connection to the rest of the country's Amtrak system is vital. Passenger Rail service would provide a viable option to our many residents that do not want the hassle of the parking, waiting, baggage claims etc. for a simple trip to Washington, Atlanta and Florida.

Page 2.

Personally I would enjoy a passenger rail experience to and from Raleigh rather than that Talladega 500 experience I must go through between Winston-Salem and Raleigh now. I feel like in addition to my NC State Wolfpack Magnets on my car that I should add a big number 43 (I am an Old Time Petty Fan). I would love to simply take the train back and forth to Wolfpack Country. Likewise, my many friends in the Raleigh and Garner area would love to take the train from Raleigh to Morganton.

In Closing, please add my name along with my employees to the support list to re-establish passenger rail on the Salisbury to Asheville corridor!

Thanks for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don J. McGrady". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Don J. McGrady

President

Southeast Shortlines, Inc.

Thermal Belt Railway (TBRY)

Caldwell County Railroad Company (CWCY)



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF DURHAM

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation
Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I write to express the City of Durham's support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT is submitting twelve corridors for the program, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, and we appreciate and support the department's extensive vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program in North Carolina connecting urban and rural communities.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor crosses through Durham providing freight and intercity passenger rail service. The corridor has tremendous potential for even more intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities located along the NCRR corridor between Charlotte and Raleigh, as well as more frequent rail connections to Washington, DC and beyond, and new connections between rural and urban communities in eastern and western North Carolina.

The City of Durham's top priority for the FRA Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham. This corridor is used today by the Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes, and more frequent, safer, and more reliable service would be a great benefit for our residents. The City of Durham has participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor. It is well-positioned to move quickly into design, construction, and implementation of enhanced intercity rail service.

We also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. NCDOT has proposed several new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should include the consideration of extension through Durham and beyond to truly provide a statewide interconnected passenger rail network.

The FRA Corridor ID program provides an opportunity to advance Durham's environmental, economic, and equity goals. Intercity passenger rail service provides alternatives to reduce emissions of harmful pollutants while providing more affordable transportation options, along with improved safety at railroad and roadway crossings, access for residents facing significant transportation barriers, enhanced economic competitiveness for the growth of business and industry, and better quality of life for our residents.

The City of Durham supports the FRA's goals to use the Corridor ID program to establish a long-term vision for passenger rail service, and we are excited about the opportunity that this will provide for Durham. Please give NCDOT's applications full consideration, and we strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study. If you would like any additional information about the City's application, please contact Sean C. Egan, Director of Transportation, at sean.egan@durhamnc.gov or 919-937-8883.

Sincerely,



Elaine M. O'Neal
Mayor, City of Durham, NC



KINGS MOUNTAIN
— NORTH CAROLINA —

Living. Elevated.

February 27, 2023

Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Support of New Kings Mountain to Charlotte Rail Corridor

Dear Jason,

With I-85 and Highway 74 becoming heavily traveled, we need to explore the rail option as a viable alternative for travel to Charlotte. This also coincides with the construction of widening US 74 and I-85, so as to relieve the pressure of automobiles on those routes. This corridor offers us the opportunity to use existing infrastructure along with existing equipment from the NC Railroad. This should be a fairly easy proposal to implement because the train and tracks exist already so all we would need to do is construct the terminals. Some of us have them in place already.

Additionally, as a benefit to Norfolk Southern in the moving of freight, doubling the track for increased flow helps them as they expand the intermodal facility at Charlotte/Douglas Airport. It occurred to me that the Norfolk Southern track weaves its way through our municipalities and could easily be used to connect us to Charlotte and beyond. What I would propose is that the Carolinian and Piedmont trains start its journey to Raleigh from the western most stop in North Carolina in Kings Mountain with stops in Gastonia, Cramerton/Belmont. Upon entering Mecklenburg County there would be stops at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, and the new Charlotte Transit terminal. All of which are virtually right beside the track.

It is my pleasure to support such a worthwhile project that responsibly uses taxpayer money to improve quality of life both environmentally and in the efficient moving of people.

Sincerely,

CITY OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

G. Scott Neisler, Mayor



RESOLUTION 20-14
TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF THE PIEDMONT NC BY TRAIN SERVICE TO
KINGS MOUNTAIN - BESSEMER CITY- GASTONIA - RANLO- LOWELL
CRAMERTON - MC ADENVILLE - BELMONT - CHARLOTTE

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and, is a vital tool for economic development, tourism and job creation in the state of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Kings Mountain and Gastonia requested a study to determine the feasibility of implementing a new passenger rail service to connect Kings Mountain, Gastonia, and Belmont with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and Uptown Charlotte; and

WHEREAS, in concept, the passenger rail service would begin in Kings Mountain, passing through Bessemer City, providing a station stop in Gastonia, passing through Lowell, providing a station stop in Belmont, providing a station stop at the airport, and terminating at the new Charlotte Gateway Station; and

WHEREAS, the new service would provide an additional transportation connection between the rural communities west of Charlotte to job centers; and

WHEREAS, while I-85 provides a direct connection from Kings Mountain to Charlotte, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Metrolina Region; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the portion of I-85 from Kings Mountain to Gastonia saw an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 106,393 and the portion running from Gastonia to I-77 in Charlotte; and

WHEREAS, in 2040, the portion of I-85 from Kings Mountain to Gastonia is projected to carry 143,129 vehicles per day (vpd) and 160,156 (vpd) from Gastonia to I-77 in Charlotte; and

WHEREAS, the segment of I-85 between the Catawba River and I-485 in Charlotte has the highest traffic volumes, with a 2015 AADT of 146,181 (VPD), projected to increase to 182,054 (vpd) by 2040; and

WHEREAS, improvements to rail facilities will increase the efficiency and safety of rail service, help attract new freight traffic and provide environmental benefits by reducing the impact of traffic congestion on North Carolina's highways; and

WHEREAS, the future passenger rail track would need to be threaded into the Charlotte Gateway Station track configuration, where space has been reserved at the new station for future passenger rail services.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Kings Mountain City Council through the adoption of this resolution, fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost-effective passenger rail service between Kings Mountain and Charlotte.

Resolution adopted this the 27th day of April, 2021.

CITY OF KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

By: *G. Scott Neisler*
G. Scott Neisler, Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen A. Tucker
Karen A. Tucker, City Clerk





March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Letter of Support-Charlotte Area Corridor Identification and Development Program

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I would like to express my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) Corridor Identification and Development Program grant application. Passenger rail improvements in the Charlotte region provide the mobility that powers the largest metro region in the state of North Carolina and one of the fastest growing economies in the nation.

Specifically, Centralina Regional Council supports improvements to the passenger rail fleet, stations, accessibility and sustainability measures and the increased and new service opportunities made possible through investments in the following corridors:

- Charlotte, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Charlotte, NC to Washington, DC
- Winston-Salem, NC to Charlotte, NC
- Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC

Centralina Regional Council, which serves the nine-county Greater Charlotte region, led the **CONNECT Beyond Regional Mobility Plan**, which will be implemented through this grant proposal. CONNECT Beyond's bold transit vision recommends high-capacity transit, strategic investments in mobility corridors, a robust bus network and local first and last mile investments to support seamless travel throughout the region. The inter-city and commuter rail corridors outlined in this grant provide the backbone of the region's transit network. Strategic investments in these corridors are critical to increasing economic competitiveness, improving transportation choices and advancing social equity in our region.

Furthermore, the **Greater Charlotte Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028** has a key goal of "Building Community Supportive Infrastructure" which includes recommendations for investment in innovative, resilient infrastructure supporting employment and investments in regional mobility initiatives that support movement of the labor force.



704-372-2416 | info@centralina.org | www.centralina.org
10735 David Taylor Drive, Suite 250 | Charlotte, NC 28262

We strongly support the NCDOT's Corridor Identification and Development Program grant application to strengthen investments in new and expanded passenger rail service in the Charlotte region and ensure that our residents have maximum access to opportunity and our that economy remains competitive.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Gardner", enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Geraldine I. Gardner
Executive Director



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

March 1, 2022

Jason Orthner
Director
NC Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601



RE: Support for inclusion of the Raleigh to Fayetteville Route in the FRA Corridor ID Program

Dear Mr. Orthner,

On behalf of the more than 335,000 residents of Cumberland County, please accept this letter in support of the Raleigh to Fayetteville route being included in the FRA Corridor ID Program.

Passenger rail service to Raleigh has been identified by both Cumberland County and the City of Fayetteville as a top priority for our community. Connectivity between Raleigh and Fayetteville via rail will facilitate substantial economic and quality-of-life improvements for our citizens.

Despite recent gains and continued growth, Cumberland County remains North Carolina's most populous "Tier 1" county. Adding this additional mode of transit will provide a critical alternative for our citizens of limited means, allowing them to access their state delegation, state-wide departments, and executive leadership. The Fayetteville to Raleigh route would also provide direct connections to rail services such as the Carolinian (to Charlotte) and the future "S-Line" (connecting to Petersburg, VA).

Beyond our residents, this service would greatly benefit the 30,000+ students attending our local universities and colleges, including our namesake Fayetteville State University (HBCU) and Methodist University, North Carolina's newest medical school. This project would also provide a much-needed transportation option for the 52,000 active-duty soldiers, and their 63,000 family members, serving at the recently renamed Ft. Liberty.

Lastly, we are excited to see the millions of private sector dollars being spent by RJ Corman to improve the newly created "Raleigh & Fayetteville" railroad (RFCC) and believe that now is the perfect time to build the public-private partnerships needed to efficiently deliver the transportation infrastructure our citizens deserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Glenn B. Adams
Vice Chairman



City of Hickory
PO Box 398
Hickory, NC 28603
Phone: (828) 323-7412
Fax: (828) 323-7550
Email: hguess@hickorync.gov

Office of the Mayor

Mr. Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Corridor Identification Program: Asheville, NC to Salisbury, NC

Dear Mr. Orthner:

As Mayor of the City of Hickory, I am pleased to express the City of Hickory's support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's application for the Corridor Identification and Development Program.

We believe that the Asheville, NC to Salisbury, NC corridor could potentially provide tremendous economic impact to our city and region, as well as improve the quality of life for our residents by providing additional transportation options and offering connectivity to our neighboring regions.

As the midpoint of the Asheville, NC to Salisbury, NC corridor, Hickory is in an opportune location to significantly benefit from passenger rail. While this corridor is Hickory's priority, we are also supportive of the program for North Carolina as a whole and believe that this will help build an even stronger transportation system for our great state.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of NCDOT's Corridor Identification and Development Program application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hank Guess", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Hank Guess
City of Hickory
Mayor

**WILMINGTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BOARD**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION'S SUBMISSION OF THE RAIL CORRIDOR BETWEEN WILMINGTON
AND RALEIGH FOR THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION'S (FRA) CORRIDOR
IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization provides transportation planning services for the City of Wilmington, Town of Carolina Beach, Town of Kure Beach, Town of Wrightsville Beach, Town of Belville, Town of Leland, Town of Navassa, New Hanover County, Brunswick County, Pender County, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority, and the North Carolina Board of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program was included as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration established the Corridor Identification and Development Program within 180 days of enactment; and

WHEREAS, Corridor ID creates a foundational framework for identifying and developing new or improved intercity passenger rail (IPR) services; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will submit twelve corridors to FRA for consideration for participating in the program and obtaining grant funding; and

WHEREAS, the rail corridor between Wilmington and Raleigh is one of the twelve corridors that will be submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation is currently refreshing the Southeastern Passenger Rail Study that was completed in 2005 with the update anticipated to be complete later this year; and

WHEREAS, intercity passenger rail is a valuable and necessary component of the future transportation network of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Urban Area would experience multiple benefits through the establishment and future implementation of the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor; and

WHEREAS, these anticipated benefits include safety, connectivity, economic advancement, and supporting overall regional growth.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby supports the North Carolina Department of Transportation's submission of the rail corridor between Wilmington and Raleigh for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Board on March 29, 2023.


Henry E. Miller III, Chair


Mike Kozlosky, Secretary



City of Winston-Salem

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

POST OFFICE BOX 2511 • WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27102

J. ALLEN JOINES
MAYOR

March 10, 2023

Mr. Jason T. Orthner, P.E., CPM
Rail Division Director
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
1553 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

Dear Mr. Orthner,

I write to offer the strong support of the City of Winston-Salem for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's application for grants from the USDOT Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development program for intercity passenger rail community grants.

The City is especially supportive of the corridor from Charlotte to Winston-Salem and the corridor from Winston-Salem to Raleigh. Certainly, the increased service proposed for Charlotte to Raleigh also offers better service for Winston-Salem citizens as well. The new service offered by these routes will contribute significantly in our efforts to be a carbon neutral city by 2050, help grow our economy and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Winston-Salem.

As you may be aware, the City completed the restoration of our historic Union Station and, in fact, received an award for that work by the North Carolina Historic Resources Commission. This is but one simple and demonstrated action that indicates broad support for passenger rail in our City, our region and our state.

Please let me know if I, or my staff, can be of assistance in your efforts to secure these grants.

Sincerely,

J. Allen Joines
Mayor

PC: City Council
City Manager
Aaron King
Jeff Fansler



February 24, 2023

NCDOT Rail Division Director
Jason Orthner
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner,

I wish to express my support for the passenger rail expansion of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC corridor.

This expansion would benefit our town and Western North Carolina's tourism industry by making it more accessible to all types of travelers. We are currently involved in the development of the Ecusta Trail, a Rails-to-Trails project which will carry walkers and bikers from downtown Hendersonville to Brevard. The Ecusta Trail will serve to enhance the appeal of western North Carolina as a tourism destination.

The Salisbury to Asheville corridor expansion will benefit communities of our region and grow our economies. Please consider our support for this important project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Carey O'Cain".

J. Carey O'Cain, Mayor

Town of Laurel Park



the Catawba Nation
Office of Tribal Government

996 Avenue of the Nations • Rock Hill, SC 29730
p: (803) 366-4792 • f: (803) 327-4853 • e: info@catawba.com

February 28, 2023

Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr, Ortner,

Please accept this letter in support of the expansion of the Piedmont Train Service in the Kings Mountain Corridor. The Catawba Nation values that this expansion could ultimately increase tourism to the Kings Mountain area that will benefit the Catawba Nation's Two Kings Casino. The Catawba Nation also values the environmental benefits associated with this project by reducing the impact of traffic congestion along North Carolina's highways.

In conclusion, the Catawba Nation is in full support of the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost-effective passenger rail service between Kings Mountain and Charlotte.

Best regards,

DocuSigned by:
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Harris".
7DBA779E23D1482...

Jason Harris
Assistant Chief
Catawba Nation



TOWN OF
HILLSBOROUGH
NORTH CAROLINA

March 10, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner,

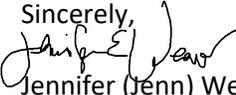
As mayor of Hillsborough and member of the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro MPO (DCHCMPO), I am writing to support the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, Hillsborough, and our MPO's broader three (3)-county study area. I support NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Hillsborough in the future, and freight service. NCR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond.

The DCHCMPO's top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit for our residents. We have participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor, and it can quickly move into design, construction, and enhanced intercity rail service implementation.

I also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should extend through the DCHCMPO study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

I support Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and I am excited about the opportunity that this will provide Hillsborough and other members of the DCHCMPO. I strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

Jennifer (Jenn) Weaver
Hillsborough, NC

From: [Joseph Chesler](#)
To: [Collins, Cheryl J](#)
Cc: freddiek@marionbiz.org
Subject: [External] Support for Re-establishment of Western NC Passenger Rail Service
Date: Monday, February 27, 2023 10:06:20 AM

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Dear Cheryl Collins:

As a member of the City of Asheville Multi-modal Transportation Commission, I firmly believe that passenger rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina. The re-establishment of a passenger rail system that serves the citizens of Western North Carolina will benefit economic development, tourism and job creation throughout our state.

While I recognize that Asheville and Western North Carolina have been without a passenger rail connection since 1975, there is a clear and vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service in our area. An increase in funding for passenger service in North Carolina is necessary to connect our small urban and rural areas of the state with the urbanized centers of our state.

I join with many of my local and state elected officials in support of future alternative transportation measures in North Carolina, such as the successful Amtrak rail service between Salisbury and Asheville. Thank you for your consideration of over twenty years of unified support by communities and chambers of commerce throughout Western North Carolina. Please vote in favor of increased funding for passenger rail service in our area.

-=JOE=-

Joseph Chesler, Commissioner
Multi-modal Transportation Commission
c/o 55 Longview Rd
Asheville, NC 28806
m: 828-808-0513
e: jjchesler@gmail.com



Town of Black Mountain

160 Midland Avenue • Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711
Phone (828) 419-9310 • Fax (828) 669-4204 • TDD 800-735-2962
www.townofblackmountain.org

Mayor
C. Michael Sobol

Town Manager
Josh M. Harrold

Town Council
Vice-Mayor Archie Pertiller
Council Member Alice Berry
Council Member William Christy
Council Member Doug Hay
Council Member Pam King

Town Clerk
Savannah Parrish

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., CPM
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington St. Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Jason:

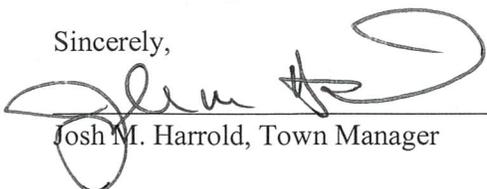
Please let this letter reflect the support of the Town of Black Mountain for NCDOT Rail Division's submittal of the Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC rail corridor to the FRA's Corridor Identification and Development Program. Restoring passenger rail service between Salisbury and Asheville for the first time since 1975 would bring many benefits to Black Mountain, and all of Western North Carolina.

Passenger rail service would provide a travel mode alternative for Asheville and WNC, which already experience high travel demand. The impact of increasing highway traffic is felt in Black Mountain, with I-40 now carrying 11% more traffic than it did in 2009. Passenger rail service would present an opportunity for travel mode-shift, supporting Federal Railroad Administration's goals for a safer, cleaner, and more equitable transportation system.

In addition to being a popular tourist destination, Black Mountain is also a retirement destination. Providing seniors with non-driving travel options to access the rest of the state will take on increasing importance.

Connecting our growing region to the business and governmental centers in other parts of the state would be critical to maintaining safe, accessible, and scenic links across North Carolina. We are excited about the potential for restoration of passenger rail service and its positive social, environmental, and economic multiplier effects. As our region continues to grow and change, we believe the Salisbury to Asheville passenger rail line would be a critical investment to help maintain and improve the quality of life for Black Mountain residents in addition to the many visitors that are currently limited to highway and air travel to the region.

Sincerely,



Josh M. Harrold, Town Manager

March 10, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

RE: NCDOT CORRIDOR ID PROGRAM APPLICATION

Dear Mr. Orthner:

The Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHCMPO) supports the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, Hillsborough, and our broader three (3)-county study area. DCHCMPO supports NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Orange County in the future, and freight service. NCRR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond.

Our top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCRR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit for our residents. We have participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor, and it can quickly move into design, construction, and enhanced intercity rail service implementation.

We also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. The following proposed corridors should extend through the DCHCMPO study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

- Charlotte to Washington, DC
- Wilmington, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Greenville, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Winston-Salem, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Hamlet, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Morehead City, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Fayetteville, NC to Raleigh, NC
- Weldon, NC to Raleigh, NC

We support Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and we are excited about the opportunity that this will provide our member's constituents. We strongly encourage selecting these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Howard

Karen Howard
Vice Chair, DCHC MPO Policy Board



City of Salisbury
North Carolina

Office of the
Mayor

February 28, 2023

Ms. Cheryl Collins
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1553 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

Re: Salisbury to Asheville Passenger Rail Corridor

Dear Ms. Collins:

As Mayor of the City of Salisbury, I write to share our City Council's support for the re-established Salisbury to Asheville passenger rail corridor. Rail service is a critically important component of our local and state infrastructure and as sustainable transportation it is vital for the economy, our community, and the environment.

The Western North Carolina Rail Committee has continuously worked in support of improved rail service and connectivity since 1999. By establishing passenger rail service between Salisbury and Asheville the social, historical, commercial and cultural bonds will be strengthened between the communities along the corridor. It will also provide rail service to Asheville and Western North Carolina, an area that has been without a rail connection since 1975. Restoring passenger service will enhance accessibility and reliability for citizens, tourists and businesses throughout the Piedmont and Western North Carolina regions and each locality in between.

The Salisbury City Council fully supports the re-establishment of the Salisbury to Asheville passenger rail service corridor to provide access and transportation alternatives as well as economic development opportunities for areas currently underserved.

Sincerely,

Karen K. Alexander
Mayor

From: [Katie Kasben](#)
To: [Collins, Cheryl J](#)
Subject: [External] Support for Passenger Rail from Salisbury to Asheville
Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 12:57:21 PM

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Dear Ms. Collins,

Asheville and Western North Carolina have been without direct passenger rail service since 1975. The opportunity to strengthen local economies through station revitalization (which has been demonstrated as successful in Salisbury, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort and Asheville), as well as connection for our rural neighbors to more urban experiences is only possible through the re-establishment of the Salisbury-Asheville rail connection.

The benefits are enormous and the dedicated support of the Western North Carolina Rail Committee would ensure effective marketing to the WNC communities. Opportunities for more tourist and destination travel, as well as accessibility for locals and state representatives to travel more easily to connect with family and places of business.

Finally, the increased efficiency and improvements of rail facilities will attract new freight traffic, but the possibility of alternative transportation (Amtrak passenger rail) will help alleviate congestion on highway 40, thus providing a way to lessen negative environmental impact.

Thank you for this consideration to re-establish passenger rail service from Salisbury to Asheville; the economic benefit, job creation, tourist draw, and incredible opportunity for local travel would be a dream come true.

With sincerest gratitude,

Katie Kasben
Asheville Resident
and Travel Agent



THE CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOR PASSENGER TRAINS



Mr. Jason Orthner
Rail Division Director
NC Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Mr. Orthner:

It is with pleasure on behalf of the Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains to present a strong letter of support for restoration of rail passenger service between Asheville and Salisbury, and the route's inclusion in the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification Program. CAPT has been active in promoting rail passenger service as part of a balanced transportation system since the early 1980's in both Carolinas. During that time we have joined with and supported groups such as the Western North Carolina Rail Committee in those efforts. This letter, and accompanying resolution stand as a strong endorsement for this proposal supported over the years by over 120 resolutions of support from various cities, counties, chambers and other groups for restoration of the service.

In regard to the list of other corridors under consideration for submission to the Federal Railroad Administration, CAPT would also strongly support Winston-Salem to Charlotte due to its connectivity to the Asheville-Salisbury corridor, and its potential for commuter rail services on each end of the line as well as inter-city services linking Charlotte and Winston-Salem. The entire list of corridors have merit and should be supported. We did notice the lack of Charlotte-Wilmington and Charlotte-Statesville segments which also could play vital roles in the rail transportation network.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Wheeler
President
Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains

RESOLUTION
**IN SUPPORT OF CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO RE-ESTABLISH A
PASSENGER RAIL CONNECTION FOR SALISBURY TO ASHEVILLE**

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Western North Carolina Rail Committee, Inc. has worked persistently in support of improved rail service and connectivity since 1999, these local communities, Asheville, Black Mountain, Old Fort, Marion, Morganton, Valdese, Hickory, Conover, Statesville and Salisbury would thus benefit from re-established rail passenger service; and

WHEREAS, economic development, tourism and job creation will benefit through the enhancement of rail passenger service that serves the citizens of North Carolina and visitors to our state; and

WHEREAS, we applaud the State of North Carolina for development of comprehensive intercity rail and transportation services in urban jurisdictions through the state, and recognize that Asheville and Western North Carolina have been without a passenger rail connection since 1975; and

WHEREAS, there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and

WHEREAS, an increase in state funding for rail service in North Carolina is necessary to connect our small urban and rural areas of the state with the urbanized centers of our state; and

WHEREAS, support by local and state elected officials is essential for the future of alternative transportation in North Carolina, such as Asheville to Salisbury rail passenger service; and

WHEREAS, support and utilization of transportation improvements by business and commercial interests is essential for the successful deployment of alternative transportation modes in North Carolina, especially in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, this resolution is a vehicle to express over twenty years of unified support of communities and Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations throughout Western North Carolina for increased statewide funding for rail service; and

WHEREAS, rail and other transportation linkages between communities and regions within North Carolina establish and strengthen social, historical, commercial and cultural bonds; and

WHEREAS, the average return on investment for the surrounding community for station revitalizations throughout North Carolina is more than one dollar for every dollar invested, as demonstrated in Salisbury, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort and Asheville (with purchase of land); and

WHEREAS, the associated improvements to rail facilities have increased the efficiency and safety of rail service, helped attract new freight traffic and provided environmental benefits by reducing the impact of traffic congestion on North Carolina's highways, particularly Interstate 40; and

WHEREAS, an integrated transportation system with rail passenger service being a key component will enhance accessibility and reliability for citizens, tourists and businesses in Western North Carolina, and by extension to the entire State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina Department of Transportation's Rail Division has agreed to manage, subject to NC Legislative appropriation, contract development and implementation of rail passenger service between Salisbury and Asheville; and

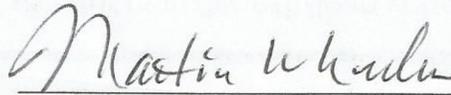
WHEREAS, the WNC Rail Committee is committed to working with the local communities to effectively market the rail service in WNC and provide other local assistance/services as appropriate to help insure the it's long term success.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the **Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains, Inc.**, through the adoption of this resolution, fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost effective rail connection service for Western North Carolina between Asheville and Salisbury, that includes sufficient new funding for operations. This service will be evaluated periodically by Amtrak, the North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division, the Western North Carolina Rail Committee, Inc. and the communities served by the Salisbury-Asheville rail service to assure its continued viability and continued funding from the North Carolina General Assembly.

Adopted this 28th day of February, 2023

CAROLINAS ASSOCIATION FOR PASSENGER TRAINS

By:



Martin Wheeler, President



David Robinson, Vice President – North Carolina

**WILMINGTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BOARD**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION'S SUBMISSION OF THE RAIL CORRIDOR BETWEEN WILMINGTON
AND RALEIGH FOR THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION'S (FRA) CORRIDOR
IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization provides transportation planning services for the City of Wilmington, Town of Carolina Beach, Town of Kure Beach, Town of Wrightsville Beach, Town of Belville, Town of Leland, Town of Navassa, New Hanover County, Brunswick County, Pender County, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority, and the North Carolina Board of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program was included as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed by President Biden on November 15, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Railroad Administration established the Corridor Identification and Development Program within 180 days of enactment; and

WHEREAS, Corridor ID creates a foundational framework for identifying and developing new or improved intercity passenger rail (IPR) services; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will submit twelve corridors to FRA for consideration for participating in the program and obtaining grant funding; and

WHEREAS, the rail corridor between Wilmington and Raleigh is one of the twelve corridors that will be submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation is currently refreshing the Southeastern Passenger Rail Study that was completed in 2005 with the update anticipated to be complete later this year; and

WHEREAS, intercity passenger rail is a valuable and necessary component of the future transportation network of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Urban Area would experience multiple benefits through the establishment and future implementation of the Wilmington to Raleigh corridor; and

WHEREAS, these anticipated benefits include safety, connectivity, economic advancement, and supporting overall regional growth.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby supports the North Carolina Department of Transportation's submission of the rail corridor between Wilmington and Raleigh for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Board on March 29, 2023.


Henry E. Miller III, Chair


Mike Kozlosky, Secretary



March 10, 2023

Mr. Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: Corridor Identification Program: Fayetteville to Raleigh

Dear Mr. Orthner,

I am writing to express the City of Fayetteville's full support of the North Carolina Department of Transportation in their application for the Corridor Identification and Development Program, specifically supporting the proposed route extension from Fayetteville to Raleigh.

We firmly believe that the intercity passenger rail is a valuable and critical pipeline for the residents of our region connecting individuals and families who want to live, work and play in communities throughout North Carolina. In addition, the expansion of our regional intercity rail corridors is an economic driver improving access and opportunities for North Carolinians to jobs and homes. The City of Fayetteville, as the home to Fort Bragg, has a large military affiliated population and defense industry that would be well-served by a direct connection to Raleigh.

The additional service and future implementation of the Fayetteville to Raleigh route has long been supported by City staff and leaders with extensive studies being conducted to examine the feasibility of potential routes by the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in August 2020.

The City of Fayetteville and I believe in the opportunity these rail corridors would provide residents of our state. The rail corridor will only positively impact the safety, connectivity, economic and social advancement and growth of our region and we wholeheartedly endorse your application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitch Colvin". The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Mitch Colvin
City of Fayetteville



North Carolina General Assembly
Senate Chamber
State Legislative Building
Raleigh 27601-2808

March 10th, 2022

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr Orthner,

As a senator for Chatham and Durham Counties, I support the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, Hillsborough, and our broader three (3)-county study area. As a member of the Senate Transportation Committee, I applaud NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Orange County in the future, and freight service. NCR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond.

I support NCDOT's transportation plan for the Corridor ID program to have the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor use the NCR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit to residents. I also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should extend through the DCHCMPO study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

I support Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and I am excited about the opportunity that this will provide for my constituents. I strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

Senator Natalie Murdock
NC Senate District 20

339 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806
p: 828.251.6622 | 800.727.0557
f: 828.251.6353 | w: landofsky.org



February 28, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., CPM
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC, 27601

RE: Letter of Support for Salisbury, NC to Asheville, NC Future Passenger Rail Service via FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program

Dear Jason:

Land of Sky Regional Council strongly supports passenger rail service from Asheville to Salisbury. Our region previously had passenger rail service for almost a century from 1880 to 1975. We believe bringing passenger rail service back to Western North Carolina will benefit our region economically, culturally, and environmentally. There have been efforts in WNC for almost 25 years to support improved rail service and connectivity. Many areas of North Carolina benefit from passenger rail service but unfortunately our region has been left behind. Passenger rail service can reduce vehicle traffic on our congested interstates, provide multiple environmental benefits including cleaner air and it will provide another mode of transportation for the millions of annual visitors who travel to Western North Carolina each year.

The first passenger train to Asheville from Salisbury arrived in 1880 and service continued until Southern terminated it in 1975. In 1989, a Western North Carolina Rail Committee was organized to restore passenger service to Asheville. In 1993-94, a study was commissioned by the North Carolina General Assembly to determine the best route and infrastructure improvements needed to re-establish passenger rail to Asheville from Salisbury (the "S" line). As a result of this study NCDOT's Rail Division began a study of 35 grade crossings along the "S" line and provided funds for upgrading stations along the route for multi-use purposes in Salisbury, Statesville, Morganton, Marion and Old Fort. Property was purchased in Asheville for a new station site. At that time a total of 122 resolutions of support were passed by cities, towns, counties, Transportation Planning Organizations, Councils of Government, Chambers of Commerce and other local economic development organizations along the "S" Line. A similar set of resolutions were passed by the same governmental and economic entities "In Support of a Statewide Initiative To Re-Establish a Passenger Rail Connection" in 2019. These resolutions came as a result of the WNC Rail Committee's renewed efforts begun in 2016 to restore passenger service to Asheville and improve and expand freight and tourist rail opportunities throughout the region.

Land of Sky Regional Council believes after nearly fifty years without a passenger train to Asheville, it is time to restore passenger rail service to Western North Carolina. Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nathan Ramsey".

Nathan Ramsey
Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council



FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE IN TOWN HALL

Mayor Nelson Wills
155 North Main Street
Cramerton, NC 28032

Mayor Scott Neisler
101 West Gold Street
Kings Mountain, NC 28086

Dear Mayor Neisler,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing today to offer you my letter of support for the passenger rail service expansion of the Piedmont NC line between Kings Mountain and Charlotte.

I believe that rail service is an integral part of any comprehensive transportation system and extremely important for the future of North Carolina. There is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service in our area and I believe this expansion would only offer to improve the lives of our citizens.

Rail service whether it be freight or passenger are a vital tool for economic development, workforce transit, tourism and job creation in Gaston County. As a Mayor, I hear every day about the congestion between Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties. While I-85 and US 74 provides a direct connection between both counties, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Region. This expansion has the ability to help ease those issues our citizens face.

As the Mayor of Cramerton, I fully support your cause to start the process of expansion through the FRA grant process. I will be speaking with the Cramerton Board of Commissioners about this project and I will work to help you improve this region through this endeavor. I will be presenting the attached resolution to the Cramerton Board of Commissioners at our next workshop on March 2nd, 2023.

If you need anything else to prove my support, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for taking this project on and working to improve our piece of North Carolina.

Best Regards,

Mayor Nelson Wills

Cramerton Town Hall - 155 North Main Street, Cramerton, North Carolina, 28032, USA

Cell: 704.905.1944

Town Hall: 704.824.4337

Email: nelson@cramerton.org

www.cramerton.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TownofCramerton.com

Citizen Portal CTY: townofcramerton.bbcportal.com



Town of Cramerton Resolution No. 23-_____

TOWN OF CRAMERTON RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF THE PIEDMONT NC BY TRAIN SERVICE TO

UPTOWN CHARLOTTE - CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CITY OF BELMONT -
TOWN OF CRAMERTON at the VILLAGE OF MCADENVILLE- CITY OF LOWELL - CITY OF RANLO - BESSIMER CITY - CITY OF
GASTONIA - CITY OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and is a vital tool for economic development, workforce transit, tourism and job creation in both Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties in the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, while I-85 and US 74 provides a direct connection from Charlotte to Kings Mountain, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Metrolina Region; and

WHEREAS, the segment between I-85 between the Catawba River and I-485 in Charlotte has the highest volumes, with a 2015 average daily traffic count of 146,181, with said average daily traffic count projected to increase to a minimum 182,054 by 2040 (actual 2023 figures forecasted much higher); and

WHEREAS, in 2018 Kings Mountain and Gastonia requested a study to determine the feasibility of implementing a new passenger rail service to connect Uptown Charlotte and Charlotte Douglas International Airport to Belmont, Gastonia and Kings Mountain and the implementation of such a new greenfield passenger rail would take substantially longer to physically construct over the upgrading of rails and maximization of existing rail infrastructure according to experts in transportation, and

WHEREAS, in concept the expanded Piedmont passenger rail service would begin in a much shorter time frame that could immediately reduce traffic on I-485, I-85 and US 74 beginning in Uptown Charlotte and ending in Kings Mountain, through Gaston County with a park and ride connecting the following municipalities: Belmont, Cramerton / McAdenville, Lowell, Ranlo, Gastonia and Kings Mountain with the new Charlotte Gateway Station as well as being a connector for the already established Charlotte to Raleigh route.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Cramerton Board of Commissioners through adoption of this resolution fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost effective passenger rail service expansion of the Piedmont NC by Train between Kings Mountain and Uptown Charlotte, with stops at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, Belmont, Cramerton/McAddenville (Christmastown, USA), Lowell, Ranlo, Bessemer City, Gastonia and terminating at and returning from Kings Mountain.

Resolution of support adopted this day the 28th day of February 2023

By: Nelson Wills, Mayor

Attest: Hanna Brown, Town Clerk



Town of Cramerton Resolution No. 23-_____

TOWN OF CRAMERTON RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF THE PIEDMONT NC BY TRAIN SERVICE TO

UPTOWN CHARLOTTE – CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – CITY OF BELMONT – TOWN OF CRAMERTON at the VILLAGE OF MCADENVILLE- CITY OF LOWELL - CITY OF RANLO - BESSIMER CITY – CITY OF GASTONIA – CITY OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and is a vital tool for economic development, workforce transit, tourism and job creation in both Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties in the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, while I-85 and US 74 provides a direct connection from Charlotte to Kings Mountain, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Metrolina Region; and

WHEREAS, the segment between I-85 between the Catawba River and I-485 in Charlotte has the highest volumes, with a 2015 average daily traffic count of 146,181, with said average daily traffic count projected to increase to a minimum 182,054 by 2040 (actual 2023 figures forecasted much higher); and

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WHEREAS, in concept the expanded Piedmont passenger rail service would begin in a much shorter time frame that could immediately reduce traffic on I-485, I-85 and US 74 beginning in Uptown Charlotte and ending in Kings Mountain, through Gaston County with a park and ride connecting the following municipalities: Belmont, Cramerton / McAdenville, Lowell, Ranlo, Gastonia and Kings Mountain with the new Charlotte Gateway Station as well as being a connector for the already established Charlotte to Raleigh route.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Cramerton Board of Commissioners through adoption of this resolution fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost effective passenger rail service expansion of the Piedmont NC by Train between Kings Mountain and Uptown Charlotte, with stops at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, Belmont, Cramerton/McAddenville (Christmastown, USA), Lowell, Ranlo, Bessemer City, Gastonia and terminating at and returning from Kings Mountain.

Resolution of support adopted this day the 28th day of February 2023

By: Nelson Wills, Mayor

Attest: Hanna Brown, Town Clerk

CHAPEL HILL
Mayor Pam Hemminger
Chair

WILMINGTON
Mayor Bill Saffo
Vice Chair

CONCORD
Mayor Bill Dusch
Treasurer

GREENSBORO
Mayor Nancy Vaughan
Past Chair

APEX
Mayor Jacques Gilbert

ASHEVILLE
Mayor Esther Manheimer

BOONE
Mayor Tim Futrelle

BURLINGTON
Mayor Jim Butler

CARRBORO
Mayor Damon Seils

CARY
Mayor Harold Weinbrecht

CHARLOTTE
Mayor Vi Lyles

CORNELIUS
Mayor Woody Washam

DURHAM
Mayor Elaine O'Neal

FAYETTEVILLE
Mayor Mitch Colvin

FUQUAY-VARINA
Mayor Blake Massengill

GASTONIA
Mayor Walker Reid

GREENVILLE
Mayor P.J. Connelly

GOLDSBORO
Mayor David Ham

HICKORY
Mayor Hank Guess

HIGH POINT
Mayor Jay Wagner

HOLLY SPRINGS
Mayor Sean Mayefskie

JACKSONVILLE
Mayor Sammy Phillips

KANNAPOLIS
Mayor Darrell Hinnant

MATTHEWS
Mayor John F. Higdon

MOORESVILLE
Mayor Miles Atkins

NEW BERN
Mayor Jeffrey Odham

RALEIGH
Mayor Mary Ann Baldwin

ROCKY MOUNT
Mayor Sandy Roberson

SALISBURY
Mayor Karen Alexander

STATESVILLE
Mayor Costi Kutteh

WILSON
Mayor Carlton Stevens

WINSTON-SALEM
Mayor Allen Joines

DIRECTOR
William A. (Beau) Mills
Beau.mills@metromayors.com
(919) 637-0873
www.ncmetromayors.com

Mr. Jason T. Orthner, P.E., CPM
Rail Division Director
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

March 10, 2023

Dear Mr. Orthner:

We write on behalf of the members of the NC Metropolitan Mayors Coalition (NC Metro Mayors). As leaders of the NC Metro Mayors, we want to share with you, that our group representing mayors of our state's 32 larger cities have voted unanimously to support expansion of passenger rail service; and, therefore wholeheartedly support North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) application for ALL twelve corridors being submitted for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program.

We believe that NCDOT's vision for a state-wide passenger rail system that connects our cities and rural communities across the state will provide incredible opportunities for our citizens. Adding to a robust and growing effort to improve regional corridors with connections to Washington, DC and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, as well as planned southern connections to urban centers such as Atlanta and Florida, we will grow a passenger rail system to serve generations to come.

The excitement for passenger rail amongst our mayors is palpable, and successful applications for the Corridor ID program will be a huge help in continuing to build on that excitement. As leaders of our state's urban centers, I cannot emphasize enough just how we strongly believe in the opportunity that passenger rail offers as we work hard to connect our citizens, both urban and rural, to tools for a better quality of life and opportunities. Passenger rail is a badly needed complement to our overburdened highway and air travel, one that can also help us combat climate change, connect to urban, suburban and rural residents to jobs as well as open up areas of the state that may not have benefitted from our state's economic and population growth.

As a group, we are already looking for ways that we can aid the growth of passenger rail. Over the coming months we will reach out to you to grow our efforts. We look forward to working with you, Deputy Secretary White, Secretary Boyette, Governor Cooper – and other critical partners, such as our elected representatives in the NC General Assembly and the US Congress, and other partners such, Amtrak, USDOT and our local and state business leaders across our state as we continue to build support for passenger rail.

We strongly support the important step of securing Corridor ID grants in ***all our corridors***. As you know, we stand ready and will work hard - bold action now will bear fruit for many years to come. Sincerely,



Mayor Pam Hemminger, Chapel Hill



Mayor Bill Saffo, Wilmington



Office of Mayor Pam Hemminger
Town of Chapel Hill
415 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-968-2714

March 10, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E.,
Director NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: NCDOT CORRIDOR ID PROGRAM APPLICATION

Dear Mr. Orthner,

The Town of Chapel Hill supports the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, Hillsborough, and our broader three (3)-county study area. Chapel Hill supports NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Orange County in the future, and freight service. NCRR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between North Carolina's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond.

Our top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCRR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit for our residents. We have participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor, and it can quickly move into design, construction, and enhanced intercity rail service implementation.

We also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should extend through the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Organization (DCHCMPO) study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations. We support Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and we are excited about the opportunity that this will provide our member's constituents. We strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely

Pam Hemminger
Chapel Hill Mayor

PATRICK T. McHENRY
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
10TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

2004 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2576
FAX: (202) 225-0316
www.house.gov/mchenry

REPUBLICAN LEADER,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3310

DISTRICT OFFICES:

HICKORY DISTRICT OFFICE:
1990 MAIN AVENUE SE
P.O. BOX 1830
HICKORY, NC 28603
(828) 327-6100
FAX: (828) 327-6311

GASTONIA DISTRICT OFFICE:
128 WEST MAIN AVENUE, SUITE 115
GASTONIA, NC 28052
(704) 833-0066
FAX: (704) 833-0887

BUNCOMBE REGIONAL OFFICE:
BLACK MOUNTAIN TOWN HALL
160 MIDLAND AVENUE
BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC 28711
(828) 669-0600

TOLL FREE IN NC
(800) 477-2576

February 27, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

It has recently come to my attention that the City of Kings Mountain, North Carolina has submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation an application for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development Program for the Expansion of the Rail Corridor from Kings Mountain to Charlotte.

As you carefully assess candidates from across the nation, I trust that you will recognize the merit of the proposal submitted by the City of Kings Mountain and appreciate that it upholds the original intent of the Corridor Identification and Development Program.

Specifically, funding of this project will increase the efficiency and safety of rail service, with rail upgrades from single to double track. This change would increase freight traffic efficiency and ridership, while providing environmental benefits with the reduction of traffic congestion on North Carolina's highways.

As a result, this program will help the City of Kings Mountain provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service. This project is a vital tool for economic development, tourism, and job creation in the state of North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of the Kings Mountain's application and my support for it. If you have any questions, please contact MK Sowers of my staff at 202-225-2576 or MK.Sowers@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Patrick McHenry
Member of Congress

From: [Paul Ballard](#)
To: [Collins, Cheryl J](#)
Subject: [External] Support for the Salisbury to Asheville Passenger Rail Corridor
Date: Sunday, February 26, 2023 8:42:01 PM

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Hi Cheryl - Thanks for taking on this role of collecting the support letters and documents for the passenger train corridor and service between Asheville and Salisbury. We will, after a long absence of service, be able to connect once again with the rest of the North American passenger rail network when this effort is successful.

I bought my home in Weaverville, NC (eight miles from downtown Asheville) in 1996, and this has been my base of operations ever since. My children grew up here and have remained in Weaverville and Black Mountain, NC.

I have supported bringing back this service, first as a member of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce passenger rail restoration committee in the late nineties and for the last few years as a member of the Western North Carolina Rail Committee.

I believe in this project and commit to using the train service when it begins.

As you may know, I have started three regional rail lines as CEO of Public Transit and Rail operating entities over the last several years. I have seen first-hand how the communities respond when new passenger rail services are introduced. New customers are created. Seniors and youth in particular embrace the service as an alternative to driving, and progress is made on supporting the environment.

Economic Development also follows new train services. Grapevine, TX is an example of how one of my startups changed travel patterns for the better and continues to generate additional revenues and growth for the community. Retail jobs were created, and new residential development generated. The TEXRail line that serves Grapevine operates around the clock every day of the year. Beautiful new trains were purchased and placed into service on this heavy rail line regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). TEXRail operates between Downtown Fort Worth and DFW Airport.

This train service to Asheville is critically needed for Western North Carolina. Air service in Western NC is limited, congested, frequently delayed and very expensive. Intercity bus service has been reduced to near elimination with one or two buses operating at infrequent times.

The automobile, with all of its financial, safety and environmental drawbacks has been the only option for Western North Carolina residents for too many years. It's time for reestablishment of this viable and desirable alternative.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this critically important issue.

Best regards,

Paul J Ballard
24 Oakland Street
Weaverville, NC 28787
828-989-8143 (C)

**GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Transportation Planning

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1748
Gastonia, North Carolina 28053

Physical Address:
150 South York Street
Gastonia, North Carolina 28052

Tel: (704) 866.6837
Fax: (704) 869.1960

www.gclmpo.org

March 1, 2023

Mr. Jason T. Orthner, Director
NCDOT Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Subject: Letter of Support – Charlotte, NC to Kings Mountain, NC Intercity Passenger Rail
FRA Corridor ID Program

Mr. Orthner,

 The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) recognizes that rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina, and that there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes both freight and passenger service.

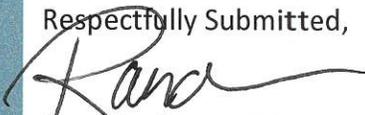


 In December 2018, a study was completed to determine the feasibility of implementing a new rail service to connect Kings Mountain, Gastonia, and Belmont with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and continue to the new Charlotte Gateway Station. As an extension of Amtrak's Piedmont and Carolinian routes, the new service would provide an additional transportation connection between the rural communities west of Charlotte to job centers in center city and beyond, benefiting economic development, tourism, and access to jobs, housing, medical services, education and other key destinations.

In October 2021, CONNECT Beyond was completed as a bold, regional mobility plan that sets the vision for how to better connect the rural, suburban, and urban communities in 12 counties across North Carolina and South Carolina. The CONNECT Beyond plan will guide and coordinate future mobility investments for the next two decades and serve as a blueprint for implementing a robust, integrated public transit network that will combine High Capacity Transit (HCT) lines, enhanced bus services, local mobility options, and innovative transportation technologies to create a total mobility network for the region. A passenger rail corridor from Charlotte to Kings Mountain is included in this plan as a Strategic Mobility Corridor.

The GCLMPO supports NCDOT's application to the Federal Railroad Administration for the Corridor Identification and Development Program for the Charlotte, NC to Kings Mountain, NC Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor.

Respectfully Submitted,


Randi P. Gates, AICP
GCLMPO Administrator



RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT: KINGS MOUNTAIN – GASTONIA – BELMONT - CHARLOTTE

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and,

WHEREAS, there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and,

WHEREAS, economic development, tourism and job creation will benefit through the enhancement of a passenger rail system that serves the citizens of North Carolina and visitors to our state; and,

WHEREAS, in 2018, Kings Mountain and Gastonia requested a study to determine the feasibility of implementing a new passenger rail service to connect Kings Mountain, Gastonia, and Belmont with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and Uptown Charlotte; and,

WHEREAS, in concept, the passenger rail service would begin in Kings Mountain, passing through Bessemer City, providing a station stop in Gastonia, passing through Lowell, providing a station stop in Belmont, providing a station stop at the Airport, and terminating at the new Charlotte Gateway Station; and,

WHEREAS, the new service would provide an additional transportation connection between the rural communities west of Charlotte to job centers; and,

WHEREAS, while I-85 provides a direct connection from Kings Mountain to Charlotte, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Metrolina Region; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, the portion of I-85 from Kings Mountain to Gastonia saw an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 106,393 and the portion running from Gastonia to I-77 in Charlotte had an AADT of 119,756; and,

WHEREAS, in 2040, the portion of I-85 from Kings Mountain to Gastonia is projected to carry 143,129 vehicles per day (vpd) and 160,156 vpd from Gastonia to I-77 in Charlotte; and,

WHEREAS, the segment of I-85 between the Catawba River and I-485 in Charlotte has the highest traffic volumes, with a 2015 AADT of 146,181 vpd, projected to increase to 182,054 vpd by 2040; and,

WHEREAS, improvements to rail facilities will increase the efficiency and safety of rail service, help attract new freight traffic and provide environmental benefits by reducing the impact of traffic congestion on North Carolina's highways; and,

WHEREAS, the future passenger rail track would need to be threaded into the Charlotte Gateway Station track configuration, where space has been reserved at the new station for future passenger rail services; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO Board, through the adoption of this resolution, fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost effective passenger rail service between Kings Mountain and Charlotte.


Richard Turner, GCLMPO Board Chairman
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO

ATTESTED:

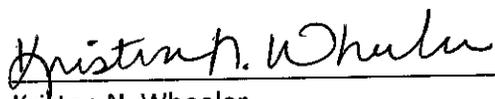

Randi P. Gates, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO Administrator

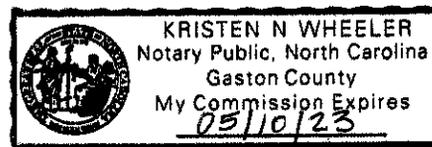
Resolution adopted upon a motion of Mr. Beam, seconded by Mr. Ervin, by a vote of the majority of the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO Board.

North Carolina
Gaston County

I, Kristen N. Wheeler, a Notary Public for said County and State, do hereby certify that Richard Turner personally appeared before me on this the 23 day of January, 2020, and acknowledge the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal, this the 23 day of January, 2020.


Kristen N. Wheeler
Notary Public



My Commission expires May 10, 2023.

**Western North Carolina Rail Committee, Inc.
PO Drawer 700
Marion, NC 28752**

February 24, 2023

As Co-Chair of the Western North Carolina Rail Committee, Inc. made up of local governments, economic developers and passenger and freight rail advocates from Salisbury to Murphy, let me express our organization's strong endorsement of the proposed passenger rail corridor from Salisbury to Asheville.

By way of background, you should know that the first passenger train to Asheville from Salisbury arrived in 1880 and service continued until Southern terminated it in 1975. In 1989, a Western North Carolina Rail Committee was organized to restore passenger service to Asheville. In 1993-4, a study was commissioned by the North Carolina General Assembly to determine the best route and infrastructure improvements needed to re-establish passenger rail to Asheville from Salisbury (the "S" line). As a result of this study NCDOT's Rail Division began a study of 35 grade crossings along the "S" line and provided funds for upgrading stations along the route for multi-use purposes in Salisbury, Statesville, Morganton, Marion and Old Fort. Property was purchased in Asheville for a new station site. At that time a total of 122 resolutions of support were passed by cities, towns, counties, Transportation Planning Organizations, Councils of Government, Chambers of Commerce and other local economic development organizations along the "S" Line. A similar set of resolutions were passed by the same governmental and economic entities "In Support of a Statewide Initiative to Re-Establish a Passenger Rail Connection" in 2019. These resolutions came as a result of the WNC Rail Committee's renewed efforts begun in 2016 to restore passenger service to Asheville and improve and expand freight and tourist rail opportunities throughout the region.

The work of the WNC Rail Committee continues and it is hoped that, after nearly 50 years without a passenger train to Asheville, service can be restored to such an important destination location.

Sincerely,

Ray Rapp

Ray Rapp, Co-Chair
Western North Carolina Rail Committee, Inc.



Western North Carolina Rail Committee Inc is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with focus on rail freight, rail excursions and passenger rail access in Western North Carolina.



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 14, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to support North Carolina Department of Transportation's application to the Federal Railroad Administration to expand the state's rail corridor. This project would benefit the first district as Rocky Mount sits on the Raleigh to Weldon portion of the corridor.

Funding for this project will increase the safety and efficiency of rail service in eastern North Carolina by the upgrade from single to double track, thus enabling greater freight volume and additional commuter service. The area's economic development depends on the ability to attract industry which requires the availability of in-demand workers. Fast and easy access to Raleigh and the triangle area is key, which this application would grant.

Thank you for considering this critical infrastructure project which would benefit eastern North Carolina.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Davis".

Don Davis
Member of Congress

DONDAVIS.HOUSE.GOV



Southwestern Commission

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva, NC 28779 | 828.586.1962

regiona.org

February 27, 2023

Jason Orthner
NCDOT Rail Division Director
1 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Support for Salisbury to Asheville Passenger Rail Corridor

Dear Mr. Orthner:

The Southwestern Rural Planning Organization provides transportation planning services to the six far western counties of North Carolina. Our region extends over two hours' drive-time west of Asheville and over six hours from Raleigh, presenting significant challenges for residents who need to access services in our state capital and beyond.

We believe that restoring passenger rail service from Asheville to Salisbury would provide numerous benefits and opportunities for the residents of far western NC. Currently, transportation options from rural western North Carolina to other cities are both costly and time-consuming. A round-trip from Murphy to Raleigh takes 12 hours and costs \$460 at the current IRS mileage rate. This cost limits our ability to actively participate in our state government, restricts opportunities to attend professional development events, access museums and universities, and advocate for our communities in the legislature. The ability to travel by train would be much more cost-effective and enable us to work, study, or rest while traveling, providing greater equity for the residents of western North Carolina.

Additionally, the high crash rate on Interstate 40 between Asheville and Raleigh poses safety concerns for our residents. The implementation of a passenger rail system would offer a much safer transportation option with substantially lower risk of being involved in a catastrophic automobile crash. A passenger rail service from Asheville would decrease the number of passenger vehicles on the road, resulting in a significant reduction in carbon emissions and improvement of air quality and human health.

We are enthusiastic about the possibility of restoring passenger rail service from Salisbury to Asheville, and we strongly support NCDOT's application to FRA's Corridor ID program. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rose Bauguess".

Rose Bauguess,
Transportation Planner

Cherokee County
Andrews
Murphy

Clay County
Hayesville

Graham County
Fontana Dam
Lake Santeetlah
Robbinsville

Jackson County
Dillsboro
Forest Hills
Sylva
Webster

Macon County
Franklin
Highlands

Swain County
Bryson City



North Carolina General Assembly
Senator Graig Meyer
16 W. Jones Street, Room 1121
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096
919 733-5804
Graig.Meyer@ncleg.gov

March 9, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

RE: NCDOT CORRIDOR ID PROGRAM APPLICATION

Dear Mr. Orthner:

As the North Carolina state senator representing Orange County, I am pleased to provide this letter echoing the support that the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHCMPO) has indicated for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, Hillsborough, and our broader three (3)-county study area. I agree with DCHCMPO's support of and also endorse NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Orange County in the future, and freight service. NCRR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond. I believe this will be a vital link for all our communities in the future.

DCHCMPO's top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCRR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit for our residents. The DCHCMPO has participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor, and it can quickly move into design, construction, and enhanced intercity rail service implementation.

I would also be in favor of the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should extend through the DCHCMPO study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

In addition, I also offer my support of Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and I am excited about the opportunity that this will provide to constituents. I strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graig Meyer".

Graig Meyer

GM/dbq



North Carolina General Assembly
Senate

SENATOR TED ALEXANDER
44TH DISTRICT

March 1, 2023

To Whom it may Concern:

As senator of North Carolina District 44, which includes Cleveland County where I reside, and as former Mayor of Shelby, I am pleased to offer my support for the expansion of the Piedmont NC by train service from Kings Mountain to Charlotte.

Being a rural community, Cleveland County has undergone persistent change. Over the past century, our community experienced the dramatic upheaval of the textile industry; however, it has continued to reinvent itself and grow. Today, our diversified economy includes technology-based industry, thriving small businesses, as well as arts and culture pursuits. Cleveland County—Kings Mountain in particular, is rapidly becoming a “bedroom community” to Charlotte commuters.

While I-85 and US 74 provide a direct connection from Kings Mountain to Charlotte, it is one of the most congested transportation corridors in the Charlotte Metrolina Region. The segment of I-85 between the Catawba River and I-485 in Charlotte has the highest traffic volumes in the area. Insufferable traffic congestion affects everyone in the area from residents to visitors to business and deliveries. It is long past time to consider other options.

Transportation studies determined implementing a new passenger rail service would take substantial longer to physically construct over upgrading the rails and existing rail infrastructure. The Piedmont passenger rail service is expected to begin in a shorter time frame that could immediately reduce traffic on roads beginning in Kings Mountain with a park and ride connecting several cities.

I fully support the creation of cost-effective and marketable passenger rail service expansion of the Piedmont NC by Train between Kings Mountain and Charlotte. I humbly appreciate and thank you for this opportunity to express my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Ted Alexander".

Sen. W. Ted Alexander





TIM RADFORD

MAYOR, TOWN OF MURPHY

PO Box 130, Murphy, North Carolina 28906

(828) 837-2510 - MayorTimRadford@gmail.com

Monday, February 27, 2023

SUPPORT OF CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO RE-ESTABLISH A PASSENGER RAIL CONNECTION FOR SALISBURY TO ASHEVILLE

To whom it may concern,

As Mayor of Murphy, NC and a member of the WNC Rail Committee, I see tremendous value in providing passenger service between Asheville and Salisbury.

Western North Carolina has been without a passenger rail connection since 1975 and there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes both freight and passenger service. A passenger rail system will greatly enhance accessibility and reliability for citizens, tourists and businesses in western North Carolina, and by extension to the entire state of North Carolina.

I'm the Mayor of the Town of Murphy which is 2 hours west of Asheville. We are closer to 5 state capitals than we are to Raleigh. There is currently not a great option for the residents in my community to enjoy transportation by rail, but with an expansion to Asheville, that could change how we travel long distances. It would be of even greater value to those citizens who live in and around Asheville.

Rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina and I offer my full support for the Salisbury to Asheville connection.

Sincerely,

Tim Radford



City of Conover

March 1, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you on behalf of the City of Conover to give full support towards the reestablishment of passenger rail service for Western North Carolina (WNC) and particularly for the communities served by the Salisbury-Asheville rail connection which will include the City of Conover.

We recognize that the Western North Carolina region has been without a passenger rail connection since 1975. Rail service is already integral to the transportation system of goods in North Carolina. Now, there is a strong need to provide a transportation system that promotes both freight and passenger service. Economic development, tourism and job creation will benefit through the re-establishment of a passenger rail system that serves the citizens of North Carolina and visitors to our state.

The City of Conover is a growing community with a strong focus on economic development and will have a direct benefit from this installation. Conover's own rail station, called Conover Station, is within walking distance to the Conover business district and other key areas within the Conover community. The rail station is also within a short driving distance to other busy communities in this area being only a ten-minute drive to the City of Hickory and less than an hour drive to Charlotte.

Currently, travel by way of Interstate 40 tends to be slow and congested due to heavy traffic and construction. With the installation of the passenger rail system, our citizens will gain an alternate mode of transportation to the City of Asheville and other stops along the line. It will also create a regional bond that connects Conover's citizens not just to Asheville but by extension to the entire State of North Carolina. An accessible, reliable, and safe mode of transportation is important for citizens, tourists, and local businesses.

The WNC Rail Committee is committed to working with the local communities to effectively market passenger rail service in WNC and provide other local assistance/services as appropriate to help insure the service's long-term success. The City of Conover supports this endeavor and hopes that you will consider the re-establishment of the passenger rail service for Western North Carolina.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Any support that you can give to move this project forward, would be appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail at tom.hart@conovernnc.gov.

Sincerely,

Tom Hart
City Manager

VALERIE P. FOUSHEE
4th District, North Carolina

1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-5004
(202) 225-1704

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3304

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601
RE: NCDOT CORRIDOR ID PROGRAM APPLICATION

March 14, 2023

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I am writing today to express my support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT will submit twelve (12) corridors for designation, some of which travel through the Fourth Congressional District, including enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham and Hillsborough. As a member of Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the Vice Ranking Member of the Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, I support NCDOT's vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program connecting urban and rural communities across North Carolina.

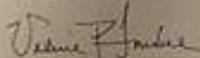
The North Carolina Railroad (NCRR) corridor provides intercity passenger rail, to Durham now and Orange County in the future, and freight service. NCRR has tremendous potential for increased intercity passenger rail service between NC's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities and beyond.

The top priority for the Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCRR corridor through Durham and Orange counties. The Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes use the NCRR corridor and frequent, safer, and more reliable service is a great benefit for our residents. This corridor can move quickly into design, construction, and enhanced intercity rail service implementation.

I also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCRR corridor through Durham. NCDOT proposes additional new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should extend through the DCHCMPO study area including service to Durham's existing station and other future stations.

I support Corridor ID program's long-term vision for passenger rail service, and I am excited about the opportunity that this will provide my constituents. I strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study.

Sincerely,

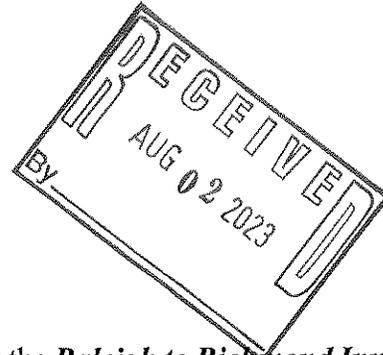


Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



HISTORY, CHARM, AND SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

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



Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Village of Pinehurst I am writing to support the ***Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II*** application for the Federal Rail Administration’s Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program fiscal year 2022 grant program. The Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program is being advanced as a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

The intent of the program is to advance the development of the federally designated Southeast Corridor by providing engineering design for infrastructure improvements and construction of the S-Line, a critical missing link in the Southeast network. This important step in development will support network resiliency for freight as well as expanded high-performance intercity rail service from Raleigh, North Carolina to Richmond, Virginia and beyond.

Although the current Phase IA and II focus is on the S-Line between Richmond and Raleigh, we recognize that the State of North Carolina, with federal help, plans for expansion of commuter and intercity rail service beyond this initial project. In the future, Pinehurst, the golf capital of America, could benefit from better access by rail. We only have one Amtrak train a day and have not had commercial air service in two decades. Citizens and visitors usually fly in and out of Raleigh/Durham (RDU), 70 miles away. Expanded train service could help in a number of ways, such as offering service to and from Cary, near RDU, with connecting shuttles to the airport terminals. With the current project, which will cut at least one hour from the Raleigh-Richmond running time, using Amtrak service between Southern Pines (the station serving Pinehurst) and

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Washington, could eventually be a train trip of 4-5 hours compared to 6-7 or often more driving on I-95. Commuters from our area, and there are already many, could also use commuter train service to reach jobs and events in the Raleigh area, or reach other employment areas along the line.

Thank you for your consideration of the *Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II*, and for support of subsequent developments of the S-Line project that will help our citizens, our visitors, and the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Strickland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

John Strickland

Mayor, Village of Pinehurst

Cc: Jason Orthner, NCDOT Rail Division Director



Office of the Mayor

March 2, 2023

Mr. Jason T. Orthner, Director
NCDOT Rail Division
1553 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

Subject: Letter of Support – Charlotte to Kings Mountain Passenger Rail
FRA Corridor ID Program

Mr. Orthner,

The City of Gastonia recognizes that rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina, and that there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes both freight and passenger service.

In December 2018, a study was completed to determine the feasibility of implementing a new rail service to connect Kings Mountain, Gastonia, and Belmont with the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and continue to the new Charlotte Gateway Station. As an extension of Amtrak's Piedmont and Carolinian routes, the new service would provide an additional transportation connection between the rural communities west of Charlotte to job centers in center city and beyond, benefiting economic development, tourism, and access to jobs.

The City of Gastonia supports NCDOT's application to the Federal Railroad Administration for the Corridor Identification and Development Program for the Charlotte to Kings Mountain Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor.

Sincerely,

Walker E. Reid, III
Mayor



CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DURHAM

March 1, 2023

Jason Orthner, P.E., Director
NC Department of Transportation
Rail Division
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Orthner:

I write to express the City of Durham's support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) applications for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program. NCDOT is submitting twelve corridors for the program, many of which travel through and would provide enhanced intercity rail connections for Durham, and we appreciate and support the department's extensive vision for a safe and efficient passenger rail program in North Carolina connecting urban and rural communities.

The North Carolina Railroad (NCR) corridor crosses through Durham providing freight and intercity passenger rail service. The corridor has tremendous potential for even more intercity passenger rail service between North Carolina's rapidly growing Piedmont Crescent cities located along the NCR corridor between Charlotte and Raleigh, as well as more frequent rail connections to Washington, DC and beyond, and new connections between rural and urban communities in eastern and western North Carolina.

The City of Durham's top priority for the FRA Corridor ID program is the Charlotte to Washington, DC corridor using the NCR corridor through Durham. This corridor is used today by the Piedmont and Carolinian Amtrak routes, and more frequent, safer, and more reliable service would be a great benefit for our residents. The City of Durham has participated in and supported several studies and engineering analyses of infrastructure and new services on this corridor. It is well-positioned to move quickly into design, construction, and implementation of enhanced intercity rail service.

We also support the new service proposed from Winston-Salem to Raleigh that would use the NCR corridor through Durham. NCDOT has proposed several new corridors connecting Raleigh to Wilmington, Greenville, Hamlet, Morehead City, Fayetteville, and Weldon. All these corridors should include the consideration of extension through Durham and beyond to truly provide a statewide interconnected passenger rail network.

The FRA Corridor ID program provides an opportunity to advance Durham’s environmental, economic, and equity goals. Intercity passenger rail service provides alternatives to reduce emissions of harmful pollutants while providing more affordable transportation options, along with improved safety at railroad and roadway crossings, access for residents facing significant transportation barriers, enhanced economic competitiveness for the growth of business and industry, and better quality of life for our residents.

The City of Durham supports the FRA’s goals to use the Corridor ID program to establish a long-term vision for passenger rail service, and we are excited about the opportunity that this will provide for Durham. Please give NCDOT’s applications full consideration, and we strongly encourage the selection of these corridors for further study. If you would like any additional information about the City’s application, please contact Sean C. Egan, Director of Transportation, at sean.egan@durhamnc.gov or 919-937-8883.

Sincerely,

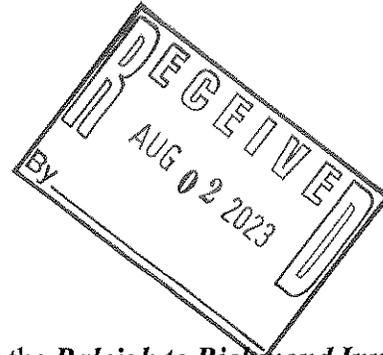


Wanda S. Page
City Manager



HISTORY, CHARM, AND SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

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



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Thank you for your consideration of the *Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II*, and for support of subsequent developments of the S-Line project that will help our citizens, our visitors, and the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John C. Strickland". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

John Strickland

Mayor, Village of Pinehurst

Cc: Jason Orthner, NCDOT Rail Division Director

Tony G. Brown, Chairman
David Walker, Vice-Chairman
Chris Allison, Commissioner
Patrick Ellis, Commissioner
Lynn Greene, Commissioner



Ashley Wooten, County Manager
Victoria Craig, Clerk to the Board
Donald Fred Coats, County Attorney

McDowell County

February 28, 2023

NCDOT Rail Division
Attn: Jason Orthner, Director
1 South Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27699-1553

Re: Corridor ID Program

Dear Mr. Orthner,

McDowell County was served by passenger rail service for over 100 years with the last train passing through Old Fort and Marion in August 1975. The discontinuance of passenger rail service by Southern Railway severed McDowell County's connection to the national passenger rail network and also severed the connectivity to the rest of the country for McDowell County's residents.

Passenger rail was important for McDowell County residents historically due to limited transportation options available for much of the county's history. The service provided access to opportunity for people of every economic station. The discontinuance disproportionately affected those with lack of access to reliable transportation.

McDowell County has also been a haven for visitors for much of its history. Early visitors arrived by train in order to enjoy the natural beauty of the foothills and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The lack of passenger rail service has limited visitation to many who do not have access to motor vehicles for various reasons, especially due to economics and disability.

It is therefore an exciting prospect for McDowell County that NCDOT is studying passenger rail service restoration through the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor ID Program for the Salisbury to Asheville segment. It is the hope of the Board of Commissioners that the Program will present tangible recommendations that can be undertaken to improve the railroad between those two cities.

The restoration of passenger rail service would bring dividends to all, including those who currently live in McDowell County and those who wish to visit. Therefore, the McDowell County Board of Commissioners support the restoration of passenger rail service and offer their encouragement of the efforts of NCDOT to see this project succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley R. Wooten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ashley R. Wooten
County Manager