

VIRGINIA BEACH
VISION

July 3, 2019

David L. Hansen
City Manager
City of Virginia Beach

Dear Mr. Hansen:

On behalf of the Virginia Beach Vision Board of Directors, I write in support of the City of Virginia Beach's grant application with the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD Program for the Virginia Beach Trail Phase I Project.

The requested grant will provide 80% funding toward the completion of a 10-foot wide shared-use path for the first 1.8 miles of trail within the former Norfolk Southern railroad 66-foot wide right-of-way that runs approximately 10.5 miles. This first phase will connect multiple sub-areas of the Pembroke SGA between Witchduck Road and Thalia Creek.

The completion of the Virginia Beach Trail Phase I Project will provide a non-vehicular travel corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, strollers, and runners, offering easy access from adjacent neighborhoods to shopping, entertainment and educational institutions within the Town Center area.

The former Norfolk Southern Right-of-Way was purchased by the City of Virginia Beach for the express purpose of serving as a dedicated transportation corridor from the city line to the oceanfront. The Virginia Beach Trail Project will begin the process of realizing its intended purpose. In succeeding years, we anticipate that the pedestrian trail will be fully completed along the length of the corridor and that remaining right-of-way will be developed as a dedicated public transit pathway.

It is imperative that the corridor ultimately become a public use connector between the Norfolk City-line eastward to the oceanfront that includes public transit, becoming a spine for connectedness to neighborhoods, businesses and attractions while reducing vehicular dependence and parking access.

Respectfully,



Paul L. Merritt
President/Chairman of the Board
Virginia Beach Vision, Inc.
757-499-7003