



May 15, 2023

Dalia A. Palchik
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 230
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Palchik,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the Virginia Rail Express' (VRE) application to the Commuter Choice grant program for its Crystal City Station project. The Crystal City station project has the potential to improve the transportation landscape in our community by offering a new option for commuters and increasing the capacity of the existing VRE system.

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

In addition to accommodating the planned increase in VRE service, the Crystal City Station will serve as the keystone for a larger set of projects that will generate economic development. The station will include a dedicated platform for Amtrak, which plans to establish service to National Landing. It will also accommodate MARC trains which, under a recently announced framework agreement between Maryland and Virginia, would travel through from their current terminus at Union Station to National Landing and Alexandria. Finally, Crystal City Station is set to serve as the western terminus of the planned pedestrian bridge to National Airport, known as CC2DCA. Together, these projects will create the nation's leading multi-modal, air to rail hub and create a significant competitive advantage for National Landing and the Northern Virginia region. There is currently more than \$4 billion of investment planned or underway in transportation improvements within National Landing to support this strategy.

VRE has already secured most of the \$68.9 million cost for the station project. By approving this request, the NVTC can leverage the existing funds and finalize this important regional project. We strongly support the project, and we encourage the NVTC to grant the request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates".

Kate Bates
President & CEO