



May 12, 2022

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

RE: I-64 OpportUNITY Connector/I-64Gap – Federal Funding Request

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and the Hampton Roads Transportation Accountability Commission (HRTAC), we are writing in support of the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) application with the U.S. Department of Transportation for the FY 2023 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program. The HRTPO is our region's federal transportation planning partner, the HRPDC promotes regional cooperation among the region's 17 local governments, and the HRTAC is the regional commission that has worked with VDOT to provide the majority of funding for nearly 200 lane miles of congestion relief improvements to the I-64 corridor. In cooperation with our VDOT partners, these projects will be completed by the end of 2026.

This grant request would provide critically needed funding for the I-64 OpportUNITY Connector, which is a 29-mile gap of needed improvements on Interstate 64 between Hampton Roads and Richmond. The I-64 Gap extends from the end of the HRTAC/VDOT jointly-delivered 21 miles of improvements on the Peninsula at Exit 234 (Lightfoot) in the Hampton Roads region to Exit 205 (Bottoms Bridge) in the Richmond region. The completion of this 29-mile segment is critically important to the Commonwealth and the nation to support military operations in national defense, the Port of Virginia and the Commonwealth's tourism economy. I-64 is the only interstate that provides direct access to the Mid-Atlantic coast of multiple states. The completion of this segment is also strategically important to efforts to better connect the nation to the global economy and align the economies of the Hampton Roads and Richmond Regions as government, business and nonprofit leaders continue to identify ways that these regional economies can leverage their shared assets to create job opportunities along the I-64 corridor.

The Hampton Roads region has demonstrated the importance of Interstate 64 by completing unprecedented investments in the I-64 corridor through the HRTAC. Working with VDOT, over \$5.3 billion of transportation projects have been funded and/or completed in the I-64 corridor in the last six years, including critical projects such as I-64 on the Peninsula, Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, I-64/I-264 Interchange, I-64 Southside/High Rise Bridge and Hampton Roads Express Lanes Network projects. Using local/regional sales and use and gas tax funds, HRTAC has funded nearly 90% of these generational transportation investments. Included in these projects has been the widening and expansion of over 21 miles of I-64 on the Peninsula, extending to Exit 234 just west of Williamsburg. The time is now for Federal and State investment in the remaining 29-mile gap to Richmond which is so critical to our regions, Commonwealth and Nation.

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The HRPDC and HRTPO collectively represent 17 local governments with over 1.7 million people. HRTAC collectively represents 14 local governments with local elected officials, legislators and appointed state officials. Our region is home to the largest naval base in the world and contains the second highest number of military personnel of any region in the United States. In addition, Hampton Roads is home to the Port of Virginia, which is one of the fastest growing ports in the country and a key component of the supply chain for the eastern and central United States. All of these assets located in Hampton Roads rely on I-64 to successfully fulfill their missions as critical assets for our country.

The HRPDC and HRTPO Boards have unanimously included the completion of the I-64 Gap project in our Regional Legislative Agenda. HRTAC has partnered and co-funded with VDOT for delivery of \$5.3 billion in improvements to I-64 east of the I-64 Gap (including 92% of funding to the HRBT expansion project – the largest single transportation project in the history of Virginia).

We are pleased to stand united and speak with one voice in our support of VDOT’s request for funding to finish the I-64 Gap. Based on the significant non-federal funding that has been invested by our region’s local residents, businesses and guests to complete unprecedented improvements to the I-64 corridor, we respectfully request that priority be placed on the completion of the remaining 9 miles of the I-64 Gap in the Hampton Roads region as funding is allocated to complete this 29-mile project.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with our Federal and State partners as we move forward to complete this highway of national importance.

Sincerely,


Donnie R. Tuck, Chair
Hampton Roads Transportation
Planning Organization


Andria P. McClellan, Chair
Hampton Roads
Planning District Commission


Donnie R. Tuck, Chair
Hampton Roads Transportation
Accountability Commission