

January 17, 2024

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

RE: Letter of Support for Valley Transit's FY 2024 Buses and Bus Facilities Grant
Program Application: Whitman Facility Renovation Phase 2, Appleton, Wisconsin
(Census Tract 110.02, APP)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the City of Appleton's application for funding through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) FY 2024 Buses and Bus Facilities (49 U.S.C. 5339(b)) Grant. Valley Transit's Whitman Facility Renovation Project requires funding to complete the second phase of the construction to renew its administration, maintenance, and bus storage facility located at 801 S. Whitman Avenue.

Serving the community for over 44 years, Valley Transit currently operates transit service throughout nine different communities and three counties within the Fox Cities region. The existing Whitman Facility, constructed in 1983, is in census tract 110.02 designated as an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP). The current service needs have exceeded the capacity of the outdated facility. The Project is essential to the continued provision of safe, accessible, and reliable mobility across the Fox Cities.


Phase 2 of the renovation project consists of updated maintenance bays, a new fueling and bus wash lane, and an expanded bus storage area. The renovated facility will also implement the latest in sustainability, resiliency, and green energy. The sustainability aspects of the project will include a PV solar array, rainwater collection for bus washing, geothermal heating and cooling, Smart grid technologies, energy storage, hydrogen fueled back up power, and microgrid capabilities. This project will provide a blueprint for future development projects across the nation. All upgrades are vital to Valley Transit's service expansion and zero-emission fleet transition planning.

The Project aligns with the FTA's priorities to renew outdated facilities; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; advance racial equity; maintain and create good paying jobs; support workforce development; and improve community connectivity. The completion of the Project will contribute to growth in our region, including the anticipated growth of Appleton Metropolitan Planning Organization.

As the Economic Development District for the region and Appleton (Fox Cities) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is excited about the opportunity to provide support for this project. This project aligns with the recommendation within the Appleton (Fox Cities) MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, which is to work with Valley Transit to "*Continue to replace equipment and add technologies to improve system-wide safety.*" Additionally, the Project is included within the Appleton (Fox Cities) Transportation Improvement Program and aligns with the new Federal Highway Administration's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Performance Measure that was recently approved.

I support the City of Appleton's application for the funding of the Whitman Facility Renovation, Phase 2 and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2024 Buses and Bus Facilities Program grant proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 920-886-6828 or mbadtke@ecwrpc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa A. Kraemer Badtke".

Melissa Kraemer Badtke
Executive Director/MPO Director
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission