



March 29, 2024

Martha Shickle, Executive Director
Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
424 Hull St. Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23224

Subject: Letter of Support for PlanRVA's application for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, Funding Opportunity EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07

Dear Ms. Shickle:

On behalf of Sports Backers, I am writing to express my strong support for the CPRG Implementation Grant application, led by PlanRVA, in coalition with the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA) and the City of Petersburg, for gap fill funding for the Fall Line Trail.

The Fall Line is a transformative multi-modal project designed to connect 340,000 people within two miles of the trail by active transportation. Unlike many trail projects, the Fall Line was designed from the start to connect existing communities throughout Central Virginia to destinations such as 95 public schools, six colleges and universities (including two HBCUs), and dozens of major destinations such as Richmond's developing Diamond District, Henrico's Green City, and Chesterfield's Courthouse Landing.

This application, if successful, will fill critical gaps in the ambitious and transformative Fall Line Trail project, as well as the first planned spur trail to connect Petersburg to the Richmond region. The scale and complexity of the 43-mile shared-use Fall Line Trail, which passes through dense urban areas and rural communities, has exhausted existing bike/ped funding sources, and the gaps and spur named in this application have been especially difficult to fund due to the complex trail design needs. Without CPRG Implementation Funds to complete construction in these critical gaps, the function of the Fall Line Trail as a continuous shared-use north-south active transportation artery will be compromised. This project brings together seven jurisdictions and will be the foundation of an expanding bike/ped network across the region. The complete Fall Line Trail, from Ashland to Petersburg, Virginia, will be transformative for the Richmond MSA and will especially bring benefits to low-income disadvantaged communities through improved air quality, improved physical fitness, increased community cohesion, and safe transportation access.

Our organization has supported the Fall Line Trail development since its inception and is dedicated to seeing it through to completion.

About Sports Backers: Since 1991, Sports Backers has led the active living movement in Central Virginia. The organization established the Bike Walk RVA program to develop active transportation infrastructure through targeted advocacy campaigns. Since then, the Richmond region has more than quadrupled its bike and multi-modal infrastructure and completed hundreds of traffic calming improvements. We partner with localities, PlanRVA, CVTA, and Crater PDC to plan, fund, and develop critical life-saving active transportation infrastructure projects vetted through extensive community engagement.

Sports Backers provides no-cost advocacy training to hundreds of residents, fitness classes and fitness instructor training in communities with low walkability scores and exercise programs in low-income schools across the Richmond region. Our programs and events directly serve more than 300,000 people each year.

PlanRVA, CVTA , and the City of Petersburg are trusted partners and uniquely well-suited to help close these critical last gaps in our ambitious regional active transportation project. We look forward to the modality shift that the Climate Pollution Reduction Program can help bring to the Richmond MSA and want to reiterate our strong support for this coalition application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Lugbill", written over the printed name and title.

Jon Lugbill
Executive Director