

May 11, 2016

Carolyn Flowers
Acting Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY 2016 Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Grant
Longview, Washington (RiverCities Transit)
Downtown Transit Center Expansion and Two Replacement Biodiesel Coaches

Dear Administrator Flowers,

On behalf of the Cowlitz Transit Authority, I am writing to express my strong support for the City of Longview's (RiverCities Transit) applications for their Downtown Transit Center Expansion and Two Replacement Biodiesel Coaches. The facility grant will be used to expand the RiverCities Transit regional transit center located in downtown Longview, providing room for expanded staffing and improving public access to buses, facilities, and RiverCities staff. The bus grant will be used to replace two biodiesel transit coaches that have exceeded their useful life at over 14 years old and 400,000 miles.

In 2008, the citizens of Longview and Kelso voted to increase funding for public transit to provide more frequent service and expand services. Since then, RiverCities Transit has successfully extended hours, decreased wait times from 60 to 30 minutes on nearly half of its routes, and increased on-time performance while increasing customer information through the use of on-board GPS tracking. As a result of these changes, the RiverCities Transit ridership has continued to grow over the past two years. This increased service required more staff and the City's current facilities are undersized. In order to continue to meet the community's needs and expectations of more frequent service and to meet the growing demand, the existing facilities need to expand to accommodate the necessary growth in staff.

As RiverCities Transit has increased the service provided to the communities of Longview and Kelso, the vehicle fleet has expanded and vehicles are running more miles and are in service longer now than in years past. In an effort to continue to provide reliable, efficient service to citizens accessing medical, educational and job opportunities, the City must maintain a reliable fleet and replacing the two oldest vehicles in the fleet will help greatly.

This letter confirms the Cowlitz Transit Authority's financial support of an estimated \$904,000 in local funds to expand the downtown transit center and purchase two replacement biodiesel buses as requested in the Bus and Bus Facilities Program applications. These funds are provided by a transit sales tax our voters approved to enhance transit service, and they meet the local match requirement established in the Notice of Funding Announcement.

I appreciate your consideration and hope you will support this worthy request.

Sincerely,

Don Jensen, CTA Board Chair