

AGENDA ITEM #12: INFRA GRANT PROPOSALS
Camelia Ravanbakht, HRTPO

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) overhauled the infrastructure grant program authorized by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, replacing the **Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE)** grants program with the **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)** grants program on June 29, 2017.

The INFRA program provides Federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national or regional significance. To maximize the value of FY 2017-2018 INFRA funds, USDOT is focusing competition on transportation infrastructure projects that support four key objectives:

1. Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level
2. Leveraging Federal funding to attract other, non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment, as well as accounting for the life-cycle costs of the project
3. Using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery
4. Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance and achieving specific, measurable outcomes identified by grant applicants

The HRTPO staff is aware of two projects in Hampton Roads being proposed for INFRA grant funding:

A. Regional Express Lanes/Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel Expansion

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) intends to submit an INFRA grant application for this Regional Priority Project. HRTPO staff is part of the working group developing the application, which also includes the Virginia Port Authority and two VDOT consultants. The proposed concept consists of a network of high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and widening I-64 between the I-664 interchange in Hampton and the I-564 interchange in Norfolk, including additional capacity at the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel facility.

B. Freeman Avenue Overpass Project

Attached is a request from the City of Chesapeake for an HRTPO letter of endorsement for a project for which the City intends to submit an INFRA grant application. The proposed project would replace the existing at-grade railroad crossing at Freeman Avenue with an overpass to provide unimpeded vehicular access to and from the Money Point industrial area, thereby eliminating conflicts between roadway and rail traffic.

Attachment 12-B

Dr. Camelia Ravanbakht, HRTPO Deputy Executive Director, will brief the TTAC on this item.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommend HRTPO Board endorsement of the proposed projects for the purpose of applying under the INFRA grant program.

September 15, 2017

Robert A. Crum, Jr., Executive Director
Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
The Regional Building
723 Woodlake Drive
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320

**RE: Freeman Avenue Overpass
FY2017 INFRA Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Crum:

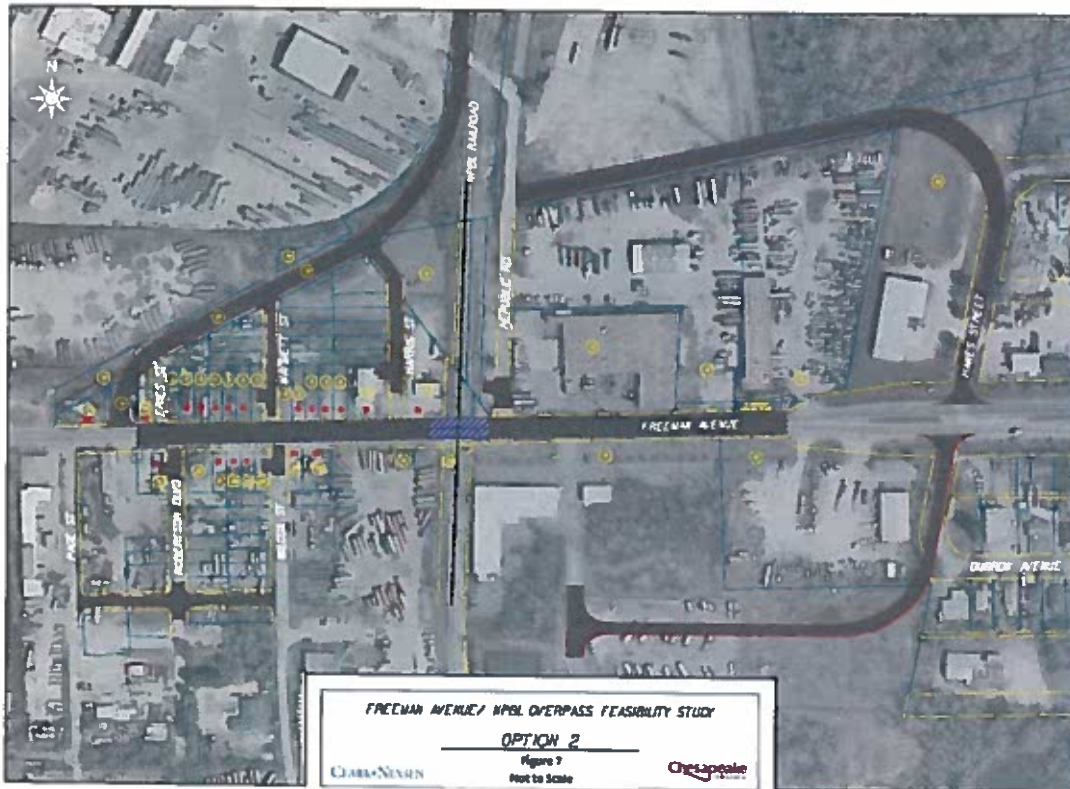
The City of Chesapeake intends to file an application with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program for the construction of the Freeman Avenue overpass and is requesting endorsement by the HRTPO.

The project will replace the existing at-grade railroad crossing at Freeman Avenue with an overpass to provide unimpeded vehicular access to and from the Money Point industrial area, thus eliminating conflicts between roadway and rail traffic. Freeman Avenue connects directly with I-464 and serves as the sole access to this industrial area. The referenced overpass will provide both safety and economic benefits.

From an economic standpoint, the Money Point area is home to a number of major businesses that rely on rail shipments to support their business models. Additionally, both Norfolk Southern Corporation and CSX Transportation have advised that they are moving to larger unit trains to achieve greater capacity. This will require significant infrastructure investments along the Norfolk-Portsmouth Beltline to accommodate the additional rail cars. Similarly, roadway improvements along Freeman Avenue are necessary to accommodate the longer trains.

The City of Chesapeake and the Norfolk-Portsmouth Beltline jointly engaged the consulting firm of Clark Nexsen to conduct a feasibility study and develop cost estimates for construction of the referenced overpass. A copy of one of the options under consideration is shown below. The total estimated cost for the project is \$25,425,000. The City's application will request \$15,255,000 or 60% of the anticipated project cost with the City funding the remaining 40% or \$10,170,000 in matching funds.

Freeman Avenue Overpass



Your favorable response to this request will be greatly appreciated.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 757-382-6002 or sfroncillo@cityofchesapeake.net.

Sincerely,

Steve Froncillo, P.E.
City Traffic Engineer

SJF/

- c: Robert N. Geis, Deputy City Manager
- Eric J. Martin, P.E., Public Works Director
- Earl Sorey, P.E., Assistant Director of Public Works