The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Village of Pinehurst I am writing to support the ***Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II*** application for the Federal Rail Administration's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program fiscal year 2022 grant program. The Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program is being advanced as a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

The intent of the program is to advance the development of the federally designated Southeast Corridor by providing engineering design for infrastructure improvements and construction of the S-Line, a critical missing link in the Southeast network. This important step in development will support network resiliency for freight as well as expanded high-performance intercity rail service from Raleigh, North Carolina to Richmond, Virginia and beyond.

Although the current Phase IA and II focus is on the S-Line between Richmond and Raleigh, we recognize that the State of North Carolina, with federal help, plans for expansion of commuter and intercity rail service beyond this initial project. In the future, Pinehurst, the golf capital of America, could benefit from better access by rail. We only have one Amtrak train a day and have not had commercial air service in two decades. Citizens and visitors usually fly in and out of Raleigh/Durham (RDU), 70 miles away. Expanded train service could help in a number of ways, such as offering service to and from Cary, near RDU, with connecting shuttles to the airport terminals. With the current project, which will cut at least one hour from the Raleigh-Richmond running time, using Amtrak service between Southern Pines (the station serving Pinehurst) and Washington, could eventually be a train trip of 4-5 hours compared to 6-7 or often more driving on I-95. Commuters from our area, and there are already many, could also use commuter train service to reach jobs and events in the Raleigh area, or reach other employment areas along the line.

Thank you for your consideration of the ***Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II***, and for support of subsequent developments of the S-Line project that will help our citizens, our visitors, and the environment.

Sincerely,

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The intent of the program is to advance the development of the federally designated Southeast Corridor by providing engineering design for infrastructure improvements and construction of the S-Line, a critical missing link in the Southeast network. This important step in development will support network resiliency for freight as well as expanded high-performance intercity rail service from Raleigh, North Carolina to Richmond, Virginia and beyond. Phases IA and II of the program focus on continuing engineering design, safety improvements, track upgrades, and service development through construction of several grade separations on the active S-Line in North Carolina.

Overall, the program has both local and multi-regional benefits as it directly effects eight counties (Warren, Vance, Franklin, Wake, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield) across North Carolina and Virginia. Phases IA and II of the program will build upon previous federal and state investments in environmental research and documentation of the Southeast Corridor, as well as North Carolina's acquisition of the S-Line. This subsequent step of incremental engineering and construction prepares the regions for future improvements and services along the rail line that will provide economic development, job growth and enhanced mobility opportunities to underserved and growing communities. The program will also support the realization of continued planning efforts of future interstate rail infrastructure and service development partnerships that have been established through the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail Compact and the Southeast Corridor Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of the ***Raleigh to Richmond Innovating Rail Program – Phases IA and II***.

Sincerely,

Village of Pinehurst
395 Magnolia Road
Pinehurst, NC 28374
Phone: 910-295-8646
Fax: 910-295-4434

Memo

To: Village Council

From: Doug Willardson

Date: June 22, 2023

Re: Naming of the Council Conference Room in Honor of Ginsey Fallon

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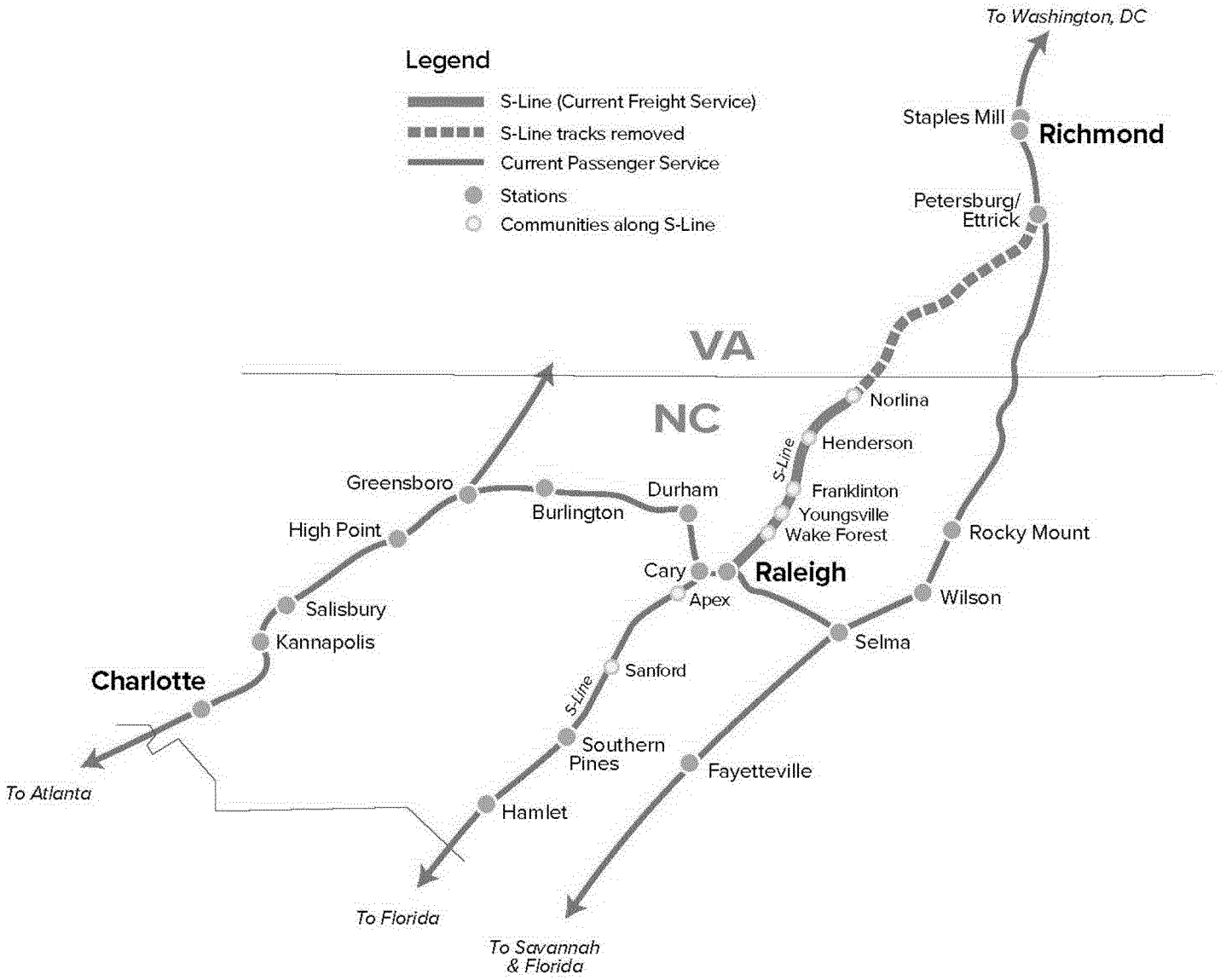
It has been proposed that the Council Conference Room be renamed in honor of Ginsey Fallon, a long-time member of the Village Council and former Mayor of two separate terms. I have reviewed the Recognition and Public Facility Naming Policy and believe that the proposed renaming of the Council Conference Room fully complies with the policy.

I did not have the opportunity to know Mrs. Fallon, but in the background research that I have done I learned that she served the Village of Pinehurst with dedication and was of upstanding moral character. Below are a few of her many accomplishments:

- 18 years of service on the Village Council including terms as Mayor Pro Temp and Mayor;
- Assisted in the approval and construction of the Village Hall after a fire destroyed the old Village Hall;
- Central to the Village purchasing the land for the Rassie Wicker Park and municipal campus;
- Served as Mayor during the 1999 US Open—helped ensure the event was a success for the Village and USGA;
- Supported the construction of Camelot playground and helped that vision be fulfilled;
- Integral part of the planning and development of the Pinehurst Greenway System;
- Driving force behind the preservation and renovation of the Fair Barn;
- Managed the Village's development in a time of rapid population growth; and
- Served as a community volunteer in many different capacities including at the Given Bookstore and the Village Welcome Center.

I recommend the Village Council accept the proposed renaming of the Council Conference Room in honor of Ginsey Fallon.

Map of Proposed S-Line Rail Project



The S-Line

A Brief History

In 1967, two parallel competitive railroads, the Seaboard Air Line (1) and the Atlantic Coast Line merged to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad (SCL). By the 1980s the SCL had become part of CSX, one of two major rail systems forming in the eastern and southern United States, the other being Norfolk Southern.

In 1986, CSX made the decision to eliminate part of the former Seaboard (the S-Line), in favor of the Atlantic Coast Line (the A-Line), between Petersburg, Va., and a point north of Raleigh. While this saved money, it also severed one of the two through routes creating occasional operational problems for freight and a reroute of passenger service. The last direct Amtrak *Silver Star,* a New York-Florida train, operated over that portion of the S-line October 26, 1986.

Since then the *Silver Star*, instead of operating directly between Raleigh and Petersburg, takes a detour at Raleigh and heads east/southeast to Selma where it meets the A-line and then heads north through Rocky Mount.

After the 1986 elimination of the through freight and passenger service, CSX removed the track in Virginia, but the right-of-way remained. In North Carolina, the state made sure the track and right-of-way was preserved. Some local CSX freight service continued over the years between Raleigh and Ridgeway, N.C.

As part of a massive program to improve passenger rail service throughout the state of Virginia in conjunction with CSX, the Commonwealth acquired 65-miles of the S-Line between Petersburg and the North Carolina border in 2020. With federal funding, North Carolina purchased 10-miles between the Virginia border and Ridgeway, and 56 miles of the somewhat active portion between Ridgeway and Raleigh.

Plans for the Future

With the S-Line secured by Virginia and North Carolina for future rail use, work is already underway to upgrade the line for operation at 110 mph. This will involve closing some grade crossings and making physical improvements to support substantially higher speeds and volumes. This is Phase I of a Southeast Corridor plan for higher-speed rail (110 mph) between Washington (the end of the Northeast Corridor), Richmond, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, Charlotte and Atlanta. (2)

The *Silver Star,* which serves **Southern Pines** daily, would be rerouted on the new S-Line and would have one hour or more removed from its current schedule. With improvements already underway between Washington and Richmond, today's 7h 45 min schedule between Southern Pines and Washington could be reduced to approximately six hours.

The Southeast Corridor plan also envisions more frequent long-distance/inter-regional service on several lines. Instead of just the *Silver Star* calling at Southern Pines as many as three or more trains might be possible (3).

North Carolina DOT plans a Raleigh-centric commuter rail service north on the S-Line, west on the Piedmont corridor (2), east to Selma , and south to Sanford and other locations such as Southern Pines and Aberdeen, and possibly Hamlet, where servicing facilities would be available.

The Ask

All of this will take time, just as does highway planning and development. The earliest positive effect for Pinehurst will be the improvement of the *Silver Star* schedule serving the Southern Pines, Pinehurst, Aberdeen metro area.

Implementation of commuter service south on the S-Line would be next, and that could possibly be in two phases, Raleigh-Sanford and Sanford-south. A park-and-ride lot at Sanford could serve Moore County residents and save them the trouble of continuing beyond Sanford on an increasingly congested US-1. Extending the commuter rail service south of Sanford could include convenient stops at Vass, Southern Pines, Aberdeen, Rockingham raceway, and Hamlet. A connecting bus shuttle between Cary and RDU would provide an alternative to driving/parking, or expensive limo/taxi service.

NCDOT is asking for support now for the S-Line project from Raleigh north, even from communities that will not be served initially such as the Pinehurst area. Much of the funding will come from the federal government, where infrastructure deficits and future needs are now being addressed, and it is important to let both Raleigh and Washington know that Moore County supports mobility and improved transportation options.

Notes

(1) The term Air Line has nothing to do with aviation. Prior to the Wright Brothers, Air Line referenced a direct route such as a bird might fly. Ironically, the Seaboard was a less direct route than competitor Atlantic Coast Line, proving exaggeration in advertising is nothing new.

(2) The Piedmont Corridor between Raleigh, Greensboro and Charlotte is already one of the fastest growing rail corridors in the U.S. That schedule expands in July to 10 trains a day, five in each direction.

(3) An historical note: As recently as the early-to-mid 1960s, 16 passenger trains a day passed through Southern Pines, 12 stopping and four "express" not stopping.

- Kevin McKinney

NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD COMPANY

Freight Routes

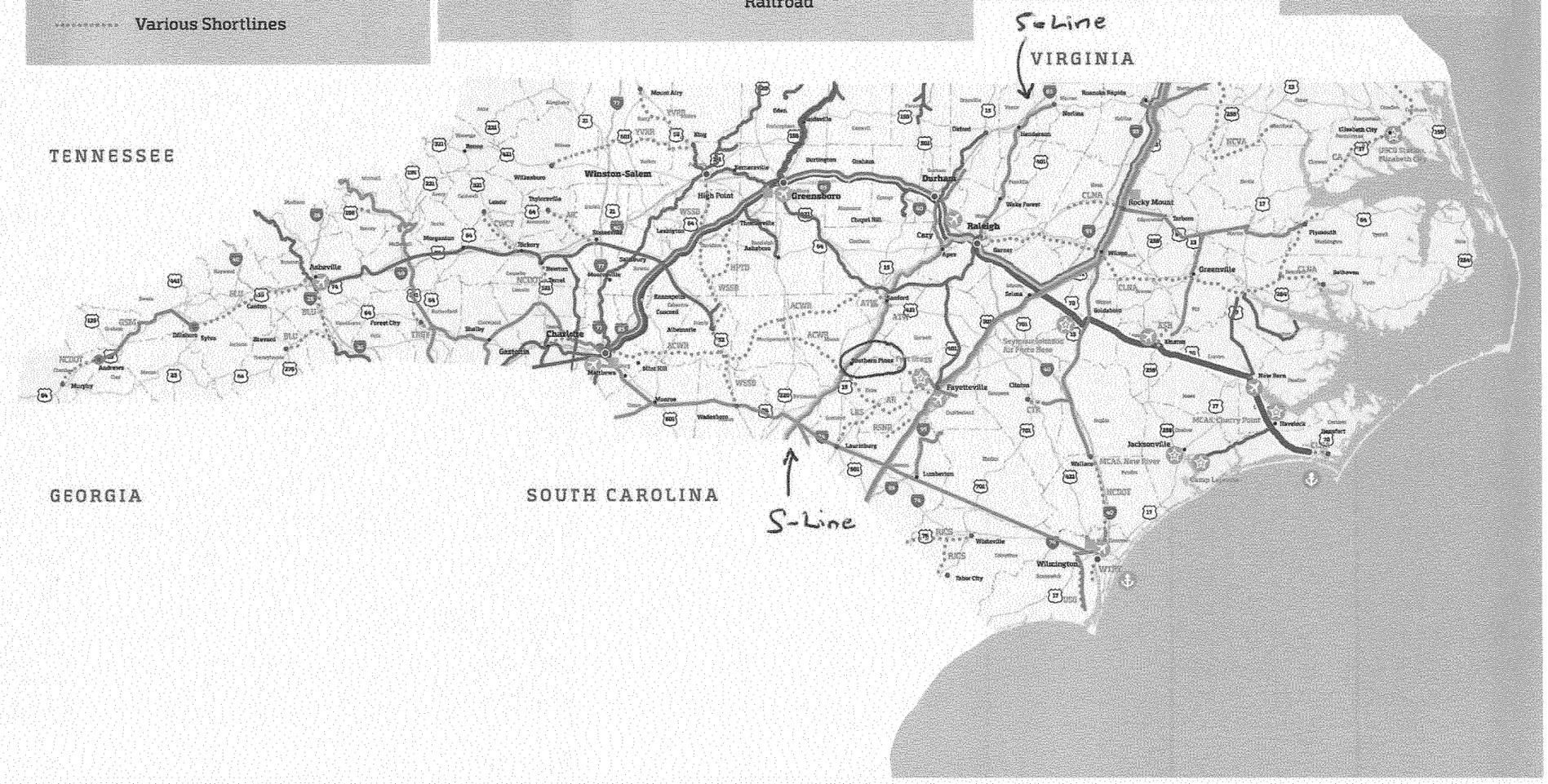
- North Carolina Railroad Company
  *Norfolk Southern Class I Freight Service
- Norfolk Southern
- CSX Transportation
- Various Shortlines

Passenger Routes

- Carolinian
- Crescent
- Piedmont
- Palmetto/Silver Meteor
- Silver Star
- Great Smoky Mountains Railroad

Intermodal Terminals

- Norfolk Southern
- CSX Transportation

Logistical Centers

- Military Bases
- Seaports
- Airports