

Letters of Support

Northwoods Rail Transit Commission

Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025

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A. Applicant Letters and Partnership Letters

Northwoods Rail Transit Commission

Members: Ashland, Clark, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Price, & Rusk
Counties of WI and Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Marquette, Menominee & Ontonagon Counties of MI.
Visit us at: www.ncwrpc.org/NorthwoodsRail/

June 24, 2025

Carl Ringgold, Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE; Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
202-913-3748
Carl.ringgold@dot.gov

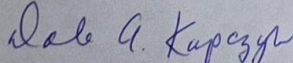
Dear Mr. Ringgold

Subject: **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025**

On behalf of the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission, the applicant for the 2005 Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Program (DOTBSB01062025) we are committed to the development and support of the **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage Federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required. We have identified more than \$900,000,000 in eligible projects.

Our region has many disconnected segments of railroad, and because of recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance program can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA grant funding, to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Signed: 

c/o NCWRPC, 210 McClellan St. Suite 210, Wausau WI 54403 / 715-849-5510 ext. 308 / northwoodsrail@ncwrpc.org

Northwoods Rail Transit Commission

Members: Ashland, Clark, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Price, & Rusk
Counties of WI and Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebin, Houghton, Marquette, Menominee & Ontonagon Counties of MI.
Visit us at: www.ncwrpc.org/NorthwoodsRail/

June 24, 2025

John Duncan Varda

Great Lakes Freight Rail c/o DeWitt LLP
2 E. Mifflin Street, Suite 600
Madison, WI 53703
Tel. 608-252-9311; Fax 608-252-9243
jdvarda@dewittllp.com

Dear Mr. Varda

The Northwood Rail Transit Commission agrees to work with the Great Lakes Freight Rail organization in partnership to secure a Build America Bureau to secure a Regional Infrastructure Grant titled: **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025**.

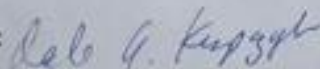
We understand that you are the author of the application and that you will be the executive director of this proposed technical support agency if funded. It is our understanding that you will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization and will comply with all contracting requirements of the federal government including:

- Contract management
- Performance reporting
- Staffing decisions
- Invoicing and reporting on a monthly basis
- Grant documentation requirements
- Communication and reporting to the NWRTC Board

The NWTRC understands that this is a cooperative agreement, and the Build America Bureau will play an active role in the oversight, development, and direction of the award. We understand the goal of this program is to generate transportation projects which will be competitive applicants for RRIF, TIFIA and other competitive discretionary grants.

The term of this agreement will run from the grant award, if successful for a two-year period and maybe extended one year, at the discretion of the Build America Bureau.

Signed:



B. State DOT Letters of Support



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
4822 Madison Yards Way, S903
Madison, WI 53705

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Kristina Boardman
wisconsindot.gov
Telephone: (808) 286-1114
FAX: (808) 286-9912
Email: DOTExec@dot.wi.gov

June 17, 2025

Carl Ringgold
Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov
202-366-0751

RE: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission

Dear Program Manager Ringgold,

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission *Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator* application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount being requested is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

Wisconsin and neighboring states have many disconnected segments of railroad, and because of recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) program also supports passenger rail activities, and can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail, marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIAs in the U.S. today, but very few midwestern programs are aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA grant funding, to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristina Boardman", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kristina Boardman
Secretary



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764
Telephone 217/782-6149

June 23, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) application for the Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator. This initiative will support a two-year technical assistance period for predevelopment activities that will leverage Federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA.

Illinois and neighboring states have many disconnected segments of railroad, and because of recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. This grant will support the reconnection of those rail and marine, freight and passenger terminals. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. This technical assistance will help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects to compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

IDOT supports this application to provide additional technical support through RIA grant funding, to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers across the Midwest and the country.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gia Biagi'.

Gia Biagi
Secretary



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

BRADLEY C. WIEFERICH, P.E.
DIRECTOR

June 24, 2025

Carl Ringgold, Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE; Room W12-426
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Carl Ringgold:

On behalf of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), I am writing to express support for the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission's Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) application for a two-year technical assistance period. This would support predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America Loan Programs such as the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing and the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act. The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission has identified more than \$900 million in eligible projects and is requesting \$1.5 million for this project.

Michigan and neighboring states have many disconnected segments of railroad, and because of recent mergers and acquisitions, these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA technical assistance program supports passenger rail activities by providing technical assistance that is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail, marine, freight, and passenger connections. There are 24 RIAs in the U.S. today, very few in the Midwest, aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

MDOT supports this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA grant funding, to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact either me or Eric Mullen, Administrator, Asset Management and Policy Division, at 517-331-6169, or MullenE@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

E-SIGNED by Bradley C. Wieferich, P.E.
on 2025-06-24 17:56:16 EDT

Bradley C. Wieferich, P.E.
Director

Enclosure

cc: Eric Mullen

MURRAY D. VAN WAGONER BUILDING • P.O. BOX 30050 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.Michigan.gov/MDOT • 517-241-2400

C. University Letters of Support



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Rail Transportation Program
318 Dillman Hall
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
906-487-3547
www.rail.mtu.edu

June 25, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Michigan Tech University supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million.

Michigan Tech University is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Michigan Tech has been leading entity on several studies over the past twenty years that have been investigating the state of freight rail transportation in the area and Dr. Lautala has been an appointment member to a State of Michigan Logistics and Supply Chain Collaboration Commission.

The extent of network in the region has been witnessing decline over a long period of time, partially due to changes in industrial landscape, partially due to changes in network ownership. As a results, the system no longer connects to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.



Rail Transportation Program
Michigan Tech Transportation Institute • Michigan Technological University

Michigan Tech's Rail Transportation Program (RTP) is interested in supporting educational and outreach activities which may include webinars or other special projects as identified. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pasi Lautala', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pasi Lautala, Ph.D., P.E.
Professor, Civil, Env. & Geospatial Engineering
Associate Dean for Research, College of Engineering
Director, Rail Transportation Program
Michigan Tech University

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

***Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by
the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission***

Michigan State University's Eli Broad College of Business, through the Center for Railway Research and Education (CRRE), supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission's application for the **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator**. The proposal seeks \$1.5 million in federal funding for a two-year technical assistance effort, no local match required, to advance predevelopment activities that will position eligible projects to pursue grants and Build America Bureau loan programs such as RRIF and TIFIA.



**The Eli Broad
College of
Business**

Center for Railway
Research and
Education

James B. Henry Center for
Executive Development
3535 Forest Road
Lansing, MI 48910

Tel: +1-517-353-5667
reliaeducation.com

CRRE is positioned to support railroads and ports in the region that require technical assistance to address infrastructure gaps stemming from recent network changes, including disconnections from key marine terminals, intermodal facilities, and Class I railroads. The Accelerator's inclusion of passenger rail development also aligns with regional needs and offers a pathway for improved project competitiveness.

If awarded, the Accelerator would help strengthen freight and passenger connectivity across the Great Lakes. While 24 Accelerators currently operate across the U.S., there is limited representation in the Midwest focused specifically on rail and marine infrastructure redevelopment in support of regional logistics and manufacturing.

MSU's Department of Supply Chain Management - ranked #1 nationally for undergraduate and #2 for graduate programs, offers unmatched expertise in logistics, procurement, transportation, and operations. These capabilities are directly relevant to modal shift strategies and can inform infrastructure planning that enhances economic vitality and quality of life across the Great Lakes region. MSU's research and outreach in sustainable logistics and intermodal freight systems can help quantify and amplify the benefits of shifting freight and passenger traffic to rail, including reduced emissions, congestion relief, and improved regional mobility.

In addition, MSU brings unique institutional resources that extend beyond what traditional consultants can offer. The university's faculty and students are actively engaged in applied research, data analysis, and policy evaluation. MSU's experience in successful grant writing and administration, supported by dedicated research offices and distance learning platforms, enables scalable support for technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, and workforce development. These assets can be mobilized to support the Accelerator's mission and ensure long-term impact.

As part of this initiative, CRRE is available to contribute to associated educational and outreach activities, including webinars and special projects. We support the Commission's application and welcome opportunities to assist in the planning and advancement of transportation infrastructure projects in the region.

Sincerely yours,
Valerii Kucherenko, MBA, CCLP, M.ENG
Director, Railway Education

Educational and Outreach Activities in support of Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission

1. Intermodal [Freight] Connectivity Enhancements

Opportunity: Expand intermodal capacity and capability at underutilized terminals such as Monroe, MI; Burns Harbor, IN; Duluth, MN; and Cleveland, OH to utilize potential Great Lakes containerized shipping services and then explore potential locations of smaller inland terminals that, with innovative operations, could support intermodal train blocks (e.g., Grand Rapids, MI) to stimulate growth in their hinterland and remove congestion from the crowded highway system and potentially reduce traffic accidents.

Rationale: Canadian National Railway is already investing in these areas to improve yard operations and intermodal throughput (1). RIA support could accelerate these upgrades and integrate them with regional supply chains.

2. Reconnection of Disrupted Freight Corridors [Multi-modal]

Opportunity: Restore and/or reconfigure rail connections severed by recent mergers and acquisitions with service improvements potentially available via shortline and regional rail operators.

Rationale: Many rural and industrial areas have lost direct access to Class I railroads and marine terminals. A targeted study and infrastructure plan could identify reconnection points and prioritize investments.

3. [Passenger] Rail Expansion and Modernization

Opportunity: Support Amtrak's State-supported and Inter-City passenger services such as the Wolverine and Blue Water routes by restoring double-track segments for potential additional service frequencies, improved customer choice and enhanced station infrastructure and local transit connectivity.

Rationale: Amtrak received funding to restore double-track capacity between Glenwood Road and Niles (2). Additional RIA support could extend these improvements and enhance service reliability and speed. The success of additional frequencies on the Borealis route between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Chicago indicates a real opportunity to cost-effectively improve service frequency, and modal transfer from road with associated safety benefits.

4. Rural Rail Safety and Grade Crossing Improvements

Opportunity: Expand on MSU's LiDAR and radar-based rural crossing safety research to implement physical upgrades across high-risk corridors in the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest.

Rationale: MSU's Connected and Autonomous Networked Vehicles for Active Safety (CANVAS) research center has developed advanced sensing and perception technologies, including LiDAR and radar fusion, for hazard detection in low-visibility and rural environments (3). These capabilities, originally designed for autonomous vehicles, are being adapted to improve situational awareness at rural rail crossings. Leveraging this research (4) to guide infrastructure upgrades, such as enhanced signage, lighting, and sensor-based warning systems, can reduce collisions and improve safety across underserved regions.

5. Marine-Rail Integration for Port Access

Opportunity: Build on recent multimodal investments in Ludington and Alpena by expanding last-mile rail access and transload infrastructure at regional ports across the Great Lakes.

Rationale: While Michigan's \$16.4M investment in Ludington and \$27.1M in the Alpena corridor are important precedents, similar needs exist throughout the region. According to the European Union Agency for Railways, seamless rail-port integration is essential for reducing emissions, improving freight efficiency, and supporting modal shift goals (5). Enhancing terminal infrastructure and intermodal connectivity at smaller ports, such as those in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, can unlock new opportunities for bulk commodity movement and regional economic development (6).



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College of
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Center for Railway
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James B. Henry Center for
Executive Development
3535 Forest Road
Lansing, MI 48910

Tel: +1-517-353-5667
rail@education.com

6. Regional Rail Innovation Hub

Opportunity: Establish a technical assistance and innovation hub in partnership with MxV Rail, ENSCO, and other subject matter experts (SMEs), including independent consultants, to support predevelopment, modeling, and stakeholder engagement.

Rationale: MxV Rail, the research subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads, and ENSCO, a leader in rail safety and inspection technologies, both offer deep expertise in testing, data analytics, and infrastructure innovation (7). MSU's CRRE maintains strong working relationships with both organizations. Partnering with MSU's academic resources and leveraging SMEs' flexibility can create a centralized, multidisciplinary hub to help rural and regional stakeholders develop competitive federal grant applications. This model would provide services beyond what traditional consulting firms offer, such as applied research, workforce development, and long-term institutional support (8).



Thomas A. McKenney
Associate Professor of Engineering Practice
Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering
2600 Draper Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-2145
tmckenne@umich.edu

June 15, 2024

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Dear Mr. Ringgold,

I would like to express my support for the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission ***Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator*** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

As part of University of Michigan's Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, I am interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator, if funded. As the leader of the State of Michigan's ongoing Maritime Strategy project, it has been identified that these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

As a university we are interested in supporting educational and outreach activities which may include webinars or other special projects as identified. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail and marine networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely,

Thomas McKenney



Joseph P. Schwieterman, Ph.D.
Development Director

Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan
14 East Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60604-2206
312/362-5731
FAX: 312/362-5506
chaddick.depaul.edu

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

DePaul University's Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development, which focuses on transportation and economic development, supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission's **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support predevelopment activities that leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs, such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

Our university center, located in downtown Chicago, is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities, supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions, these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities, for which RIA technical assistance can provide critical support, which is essential for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIAs in the U.S. today, and this program has very few Midwestern initiatives aimed at revitalizing rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects that can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

Our university center is interested in supporting educational and outreach activities, which could include webinars or other special projects as identified. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to assist in planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph P. Schwieterman".

Joseph P. Schwieterman, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Public Service, DePaul University
Director, Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development |jschwiet@depaul.edu

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Northwestern University Transportation Center (NUTC) supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

NUTC is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

As a university-based transportation research center, we are interested in supporting educational and outreach activities that may include webinars or other special projects as identified. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Kind regards,



Breton L. Johnson
Senior Associate Director
Northwestern University Transportation Center (NUTC)



June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 – Sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

The University of Wisconsin-Superior's Transportation & Logistics Research Center (TLRC) supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission's application for the 2025 Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA). This two-year technical assistance program will provide essential predevelopment support to help leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs, including RRIF and TIFIA.

We are interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance, which this RIA Initiative can offer if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions, critical rail networks no longer connect efficiently to key marine and intermodal terminals and Class I railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections.

The University of Wisconsin-Superior's TLRC would be pleased to participate in any, all or some combination of:

1. Host educational sessions on topics such as benefit-cost analysis, project development frameworks, and related areas.
2. Participate in or co-host a podcast to share insights, highlight case studies, and explore common challenges.
3. Assist with applicant screening to evaluate project readiness and identify areas for targeted support to improve competitiveness.

We are also open to helping shape resource toolkits or training curricula, especially for smaller communities, shippers, or short line operators that may face capacity constraints or entry barriers. We can support the R.O.U.T.E.S Initiative in tribal communities in the Great Lakes Region.

As a university research center, we are committed to supporting educational and outreach efforts. This may include hosting webinars or contributing to special projects as needs arise. We fully support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and look forward to contributing to planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

Mei Cao

Mei Cao, PhD, Director and Professor
Transportation & Logistics Research Center
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Phone: 715-394-8281
EMAIL: mcao1@uwsuper.edu

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS RESEARCH CENTER

Erlanson Hall, Room 5 • Belknap & Catlin • PO Box 2000 • Superior, WI 54880-4500
Phone: 715-394-8254 • FAX: 715-394-8374

D. Project Letters of Support



June 25, 2025

Carl Ringgold
Program Manager -Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE -Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure 2025 RIA Application

Wisconsin Transit & Realty Group supports the **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Application**, and my organization is interested in the support services proposed by the 2025 Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Technical Assistance Center provided by the Build America Bureau. I have submitted a project for the technical assistance pipeline. If the proposed project, Kenosha Train Station TOD, after consultation and review with the technical assistance center, is considered financially viable and is publicly supported, and if the funding program offered by the Build America Bureau is a cost competitive solution for this transportation project the Wisconsin Transit & Realty Group would consider moving forward with an Innovative financing program provided by the Build America Bureau.

The RIA program supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance program can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections.

We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA grant funding, to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

Michael J. Garven
Executive Vice President
Wisconsin Transit & Realty Group
mgarven@wisconsintr.com
414-403-6205



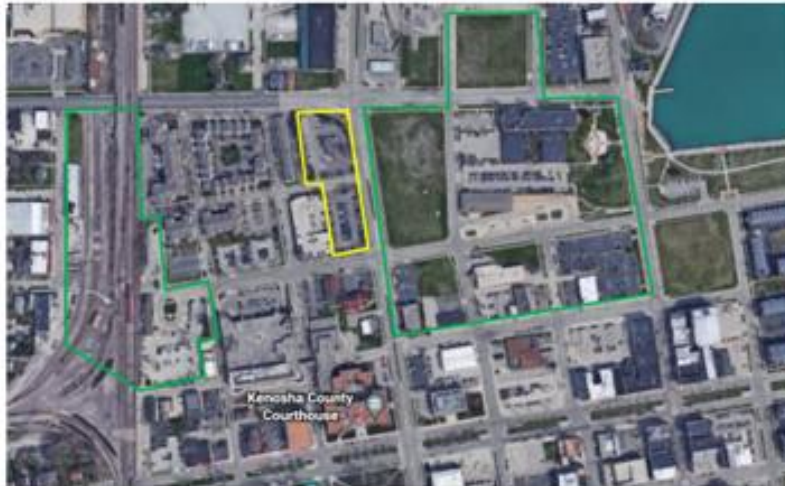
WTRG
Downtown Kenosha Aerial Map
TOD Districts



TOD #1 – Kenosha Train Station TOD
TOD #2 - Downtown Kenosha TOD



Development Potential



<i>Kenosha - Green</i>		<i>Development Potential (4 to 10) Years</i>	
Acreage	30 ac	Residential Exec.	\$ 275,000,000
Ownership	Public	Housing other	\$ 65,000,000
Market Value	\$22,000,000	Commerical	\$ 50,000,000
Option Costs	\$4,000,000	Retail	\$ 20,000,000
		Total	\$ 410,000,000



Great Lakes Basin Transportation, Inc.

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Great Lakes Basin Transportation supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million.

Great Lakes Basin Transportation is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIAs in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

As a Surface Transportation Board class III railroad, we are interested in exploring RRIF, TIFIA and other competitive grants. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to develop a rail project to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Patton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Patton
Founder/Chairman
www.greatlakesbasin.net
708.212.1260



June 25, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

City of Rochelle supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

The City of Rochelle is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

The City of Rochelle Railroad is interested in exploring RRIF, TIFIA loans and other competitive grants. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to develop a rail project to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

Jeff Fiegenschuh - City Manager

CC: Sam Tesreau, PE – City Engineer/Railroad Manager



ABDW Logistics LLC

ABDW Logistics LLC
5166 Century Heights Ave
Bettendorf, IA 52722

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

My business, **ABDW Logistics LLC**, supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission ***Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator*** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

ABDW Logistics LLC is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in our region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads. The RIA program also supports passenger rail activities for which the RIA technical assistance can provide technical assistance which is critical for program funding. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and this program has very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

Specifically, my business is actively pursuing multiple opportunities in the Midwestern US to develop facilities which look to strengthen the supply chain by providing rail-to-truck interfaces for consumer products in markets where existing intermodal options are less viable or lacking altogether. These facilities represent significant investment in the community, provide job creation, as well as act as a hub of activity related to freight logistics, including future warehousing and manufacturing opportunities.

As a rail transloader, my organization is interested in exploring RRIF, TIFIA and other competitive grants. We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to develop a rail project to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely yours,

Drew Wilson
Owner
ABDW Logistics LLC



ABDW Logistics LLC

Summary of Projects:

IL – Galesburg

- Land acquisition - \$350,000
- Equipment - \$1,200,000
- Structure - \$400,000

IN – Gary

- Rail upgrades - \$125,000
- Equipment - \$1,200,000
- Structure - \$400,000

WI – Pleasant Prairie

- Rail upgrades - \$250,000
- Equipment - \$1,200,000
- Structure - \$400,000

MI – Dearborn

- Property Lease - \$100,000
- Equipment - \$1,200,000
- Structure - \$400,000

MN – Lakeville

- Property Lease - \$100,000
- Equipment - \$1,200,000
- Structure - \$400,000

In each case, project is expected to target consumer goods currently moving over-the-road by strategically placing projects on the rail network in a way that maximizes the speed and efficiency of that carrier. Facilities utilize automated technology to handle products with minimal touch, reducing labor cost and increasing efficiency. Each location is expected to create ~5 jobs, as well as to provide as a catalyst for additional ancillary growth in related industries such as warehousing and manufacturing.

E. Trade Association Letters of Support



June 25, 2025

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Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Michigan Soybean Committee supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

Michigan Soybean Committee is interested in supporting the railroads and ports in the region in need of technical assistance activities supported by this Regional Infrastructure Accelerator if funded. Due to recent mergers and acquisitions these networks no longer connect to important marine and intermodal terminals and Class 1 railroads that are key to economic shipping of agricultural products. If awarded, this grant will support rail and marine, freight and passenger connections. There are 24 RIA's in the U.S. today and there are very few midwestern programs aimed at the revitalization of rail and marine infrastructure to support regional agriculture, manufacturing and distribution. These technical assistance centers help rural and regional industries and producers develop better projects which can compete more effectively for federal transportation program dollars.

We support this application to provide additional technical support through this RIA program and hope to assist planning efforts for the redevelopment of the Great Lakes rail networks to better serve freight and passengers.

Sincerely,
Hanna Campbell
Michigan Soybean Committee
Market Development Director

3055 W. M-21, ST. JOHNS, MI 48879
MICHIGANSOYBEAN.ORG
(989) 652-3294

FLETCHER & SIPPEL LLC

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June 25, 2025

Carl Ringgold
Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov
202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 RIA Application /

Dear Mr. Ringgold:

I am a partner in the law firm of Fletcher & Sippel LLC. Our clients are actively engaged in the transportation sector. The firm's focus is on rail transportation, although we also represent other transportation sectors, such as ports and rail or port-served shippers. Our clients are located throughout the U.S. and Canada but, given our Midwest base, we have numerous clients within the geographic area within the five states which are party to the Northwood Rail Transit Commission application. As a partner in Fletcher & Sippel LLC, I support the NWRTC 2025 ***Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Application*** and I am confident many of my clients share the goals of NWRTC to strengthen and grow the economic vitality of the area served by NWRTC, most particularly in its efforts to reconnect to the region's rail network.

Fletcher & Sippel LLC has worked with a number of its clients in developing public-private partnerships and securing and carrying out grant and loan projects designed to improve the rail infrastructure network in the Midwest and other parts of the U.S. Our firm has also represented, or worked cooperatively with, a number of state and local transportation or economic development departments on such projects as rail infrastructure development, bridge improvements, installation of rail-highway warning devices, intermodal development, and improvement of rail service at a number of major port locations. My biography is attached and more information about Fletcher & Sippel can be found on its website: www.fletcher-sippel.com.

I understand my assistance, if requested, will be provided based upon on-call support services contract which will be competitively procured based upon the pipeline of projects identified by the GSGP 2025 Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Technical Assistance Center. I understand that the pipeline of projects may vary and that this Center, if awarded, will be active for a two-year period. I understand I am not obligated to participate in any on-call assignment if project time requirements or project skills do not fit my or my organization's work workload or the specific project involved raises a conflict of interest with services I or my firm may be providing to clients.

Sincerely yours,

Janet H. Gilbert
Partner
Fletcher & Sippel LLC
29 N. Wacker Drive Suite 800
312/252-1507 (office)
708/829-3380 (mobile)
jgilbert@fletcher-sippel.com

June 23, 2025

Carl Ringgold - Program Manager
Regional Infrastructure Accelerator
Build America Bureau
1200 New Jersey Ave SE Room W12-426
Washington, DC 20590
RIA@dot.gov 202-366-0751

Subject: Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator 2025 sponsored by the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission.

Barbara W. Wilson supports the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission **Great Lakes Regional Infrastructure Accelerator** application for a two-year technical assistance period to support the predevelopment activities to leverage federal grants and Build America loan programs such as RIFF and TIFIA. The amount The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission is requesting is \$1.5 million. No match is required.

My company is qualified in the area of raising capital for rail investment, capital projects and rail equipment. In my position as CEO of RailUSA, LLC we submitted and received approval for a Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement (RRIF) loan from the Build America Bureau of the United States Department of Transportation. In addition, I have 30 years of experience raising private capital to invest in railroad infrastructure and rolling stock from private investors, commercial banks, and private equity investors. I have served as the CEO at both short line railroads and rail equipment leasing companies.

I understand that assistance will be provided based upon on-call support services contract which will be competitively procured based upon the pipeline of projects identified by the GSGP 2025 Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Technical Assistance Center. I understand that the pipeline of projects may vary and that this center if awarded, will be active for a two-year period. I understand that I am not obligated to participate in any on-call assignment if project time requirements or project skills do not fit my organization's workload.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara W. Wilson

Barbara W. Wilson
Hill Road Partners, LLC
905 E Boca Raton Road
Boca Raton, FL 33432