



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

### Commonwealth Transportation Board

W. Sheppard Miller, III  
Chairperson

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*Agenda item # 4*

### RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

May 24, 2023

#### MOTION

**Made By:** Dr. Smoot, **Seconded By:** Mr. Merrill

**Action:** Motion Carried, Unanimously

**Title: Airport Access to  
Blue Ridge Regional Airport  
Project 0698-044-082 – Henry County**

**WHEREAS**, § 33.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* provides funds to “be expended by the Board for constructing, reconstructing, maintaining or improving access roads within localities to licensed, public-use airports”; and

**WHEREAS**, Henry County by formal resolution has requested Airport Access Program funds to serve Blue Ridge Regional Airport, which is located off Route 698 in Henry County, and said access is estimated to cost approximately \$4,768,224; and

**WHEREAS**, it appears that this request falls within the intent of § 33.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* and complies with the provisions of the Commonwealth Transportation Board’s Airport Access Fund Policy and the Airport Access Program guide.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that \$650,000 (\$500,000 unmatched and \$150,000 matched) of the Economic Development, Airport and Rail Access Fund is allocated to provide adequate access to Blue Ridge Regional Airport on eligible property off Airport Road, Project 0698-044-082, contingent upon:

1. All right of way, environmental assessments and remediation, and utility adjustments being provided at no cost to the Commonwealth; and

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2. Execution of an appropriate contractual agreement between Henry County (LOCALITY) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), to provide for the:
  - a. Design, administration, construction and maintenance of this project; and
  - b. Payment of all ineligible costs, and of any eligible costs in excess of this allocation, from sources other than those administered by VDOT; and
  - c. Provision of the required matching funds, up to \$150,000, by the LOCALITY for appropriately documented eligible project costs.

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## CTB Decision Brief

### Airport Access – Henry County Blue Ridge Regional Airport

**Issue:** Pursuant to § 33.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* and the Airport Access Fund Policy of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Henry County has requested funds from the Airport Access Program to assist in constructing road access improvements to serve Blue Ridge Regional Airport off Airport Road (Route 698). CTB approval for the allocation of the requested funds by the CTB is sought.

**Facts:** Section 33.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* authorizes the CTB to expend funds set aside for constructing, reconstructing, maintaining or improving access roads within localities to licensed, public-use airports. The CTB's Airport Access Fund Policy sets forth certain criteria which must be met for projects to be eligible for such funding and directs the Commissioner of Highways to establish administrative procedures to administer to assure adherence to such policy and legislative requirements. The Commissioner established such administrative procedures in the Airport Access Program Guide administered by the Local Assistance Division of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The Policy stipulates that the governing body of the locality shall provide a resolution in request of Airport Access Program funding prior to the Board's allocation of funds.

Blue Ridge Regional Airport is a 390± acre licensed, public-use airport located in Henry County. The Airport serves the City of Martinsville, Henry & Patrick Counties, employs 36 employees and averages 23,500 enplanements (takeoffs & landings) annually. The Airport provides services for aircraft hangars and parking, aircraft fueling, maintenance, flight training, rental cars and restaurant concessions. The FAA requires each airport to identify a critical design aircraft which is the most demanding aircraft that utilizes that airport. Blue Ridge Regional Airport's critical design aircraft is the Gulfstream 450.

Blue Ridge Regional airport will be extending the airport runway 998-feet to increase the useful load of the current design aircraft (Gulfstream 450), and to allow the Gulfstream 450 to operate more efficiently, from a 60% useful load to a 90% useful load. Large cabin class aircraft presently utilize the airport; however, they operate with significant weight restrictions, and depending on weather often divert, particularly on warm weather days. By increasing the useful load, the existing aircraft that use the airport will be able to take on greater fuel loads, and the number of aircraft with this size and performance characteristics will increase as they will be more inclined to fly directly to their final destination rather than diverting. This will result in an increase in the number of operations as well as additional fuel sales. The runway extension will assist in the Airport's ability to accommodate 92% of the nation's business aircraft fleet. These measures will increase the Airport's positive economic impacts to the region in three ways:

- 1) By serving as the region's primary point of entry for business aviation
- 2) Providing the needed infrastructure to support the region's economic development initiatives
- 3) Increase revenue to the region

The proposed Airport Access project will relocate a 0.75-mile portion of Airport Road, removing the roadway from the airport's runway object free area and runway protection zone (RPZ). The

Airport and Henry County coordinated with VDOT's Martinsville Residency office throughout the design process of the project. VDOT staff would not support a request to abandon the roadway segment in place of the 0.75-mile relocation. Any abandonment of Airport Road would add in excess of 5 miles to the traveled path. The Airport Authority's roadway design plans for the proposed access road include a 0.75-mile long, 24-foot wide asphalt roadway with a 2-foot wide gravel shoulder on each side. VDOT Salem District staff concur with the plans for the project and with the estimated project cost for eligible items and quantities of approximately \$4,768,224.

Henry County will be responsible for financial arrangements to provide for the required Airport Access Program matching funds, as appropriate, and all project costs exceeding the state Airport Access Program allocation to fully fund the project.

**Recommendation:** VDOT recommends the allocation of \$650,000 (\$500,000 unmatched and \$150,000 matched) from the Economic Development, Airport and Rail Access Fund be approved for construction of this project, subject to certain contingencies as set forth in the accompanying resolution.

**Action Required by the CTB:** The *Code of Virginia*, the Virginia Administrative Code, and the CTB's Airport Access Fund Policy specify that the CTB shall approve of the allocation of funds for the construction of the access road project. A resolution is provided for formal vote.

**Result, if Approved:** VDOT and Henry County will proceed with the EDA road project.

**Options:** Approve, Deny, or Defer.

**Public Comments/Reactions:** None