

**Durham Chapel-Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Member Organizations: Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, Chatham County, City of Durham, Durham County, Town of Hillsborough, NC Department of Transportation, Orange County, GoTriangle

May 13, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is pleased to provide a letter of support for the City of Durham's application for a BUILD Discretionary Grant that would provide funds to move forward with the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail.

The Durham Belt Line is a 1.7-mile rail corridor that is no longer in use and was purchased by the City of Durham in 2018. The Durham City Council in 2018 adopted a master plan for the trail that was funded by a TIGER planning grant. The Durham Belt Line Trail is included in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the DCHC MPO region.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will enhance overall mobility, livability, and economic competitiveness in Durham and regionally. The trail will connect people to transit and jobs throughout the Triangle by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Durham, the Durham Station (local and regional bus service), and the Durham Amtrak Station.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will help to alter the pattern of regional sprawl by attracting some of the region's future growth to the corridor, while seeking to enhance and preserve existing communities along the trail, and working to ensure equity through Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement. The trail will improve health and quality of life by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history.

DCHC MPO strongly supports and recommends that the 2020 BUILD Grant be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy Jacobs
Chair, DCHC MPO Board