



September 11, 2023  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation  
Pete Buttigieg  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the **Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission**, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for Durham County's FY24 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program for the Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail Planning Study. The Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) is a joint City and County-appointed citizen advisory board that advises the City Council and the Board of County Commissioners on matters relating to the development of trails and other appropriate recreational and transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Durham County application is for \$500,000 to conduct a planning study, focused on the feasibility, benefits, cost, and impact of developing a non-active rail corridor into a multi-use trail. This trail will provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection between the City of Roxboro, Person County, Durham County, and the City of Durham. This study will be a joint City and County effort focused on the 18 miles of rail corridor in Durham County and will complement a feasibility study already underway in Person County.

Our Commission supports this application because this trail is a **long-standing community priority**. The trail corridor was originally realized in the adopted 2001 Trails and Greenway Plan for the City and County of Durham and the trail was reaffirmed through public engagement activities conducted in partnership with BPAC during the adoption of the more recent 2011 Trails and Greenways Plan for the City and County. The study will further strengthen and build upon **regional partnerships** as it will be a joint effort between the Durham County Transportation Department and the City of Durham Parks and Recreation Department and complements a feasibility study underway in Person County.

BPAC fully supports the **community engagement approach** in the City's **Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement** which activates local partners and community networks for guidance on the project and the process for this trail planning study will follow the Blueprint. The City and County are committed to ensuring that **those most affected by the trail** have the opportunity to participate in the planning and design process.

The trail will provide a **high-quality and separated** bicycle and pedestrian facility through a **historically disadvantaged area of Durham** including the Bragtown neighborhood, a prioritized community within the City's Equitable and Green Infrastructure program. The trail will improve **access to transit** on GoDurham Route 9/9A/9B, employment centers in downtown and northern Durham, and community resources such as multiple schools, the Bragtown Library, and multiple parks and conservation areas. The bicycle and pedestrian facility will provide an option for residents to **replace vehicle trips** with walking and cycling trips reducing congestion and pollution.

The trail will be a **northern extension of the Durham Rail Trail** currently under development by the City of Durham. It will provide **access to downtown Durham** and the network of trail, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks in central Durham. The trail provides a transportation and recreational resource **in rural northern Durham County**, an area with very few sidewalks or bicycle facilities.

The 18-mile trail will be one of the **longest trails in the Triangle** and is expected to attract a multitude of users **boosting tourism and recreation-based economic development**. With the Downtown Rail Trail and American Tobacco Trail, it will provide **more than 30 miles** of continuous trail through Durham County.

Our Commission strongly supports RCN funding the Durham to Roxboro Rail Trail Planning Study, and we look forward to participating in a successful study that helps advance this transformational project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deniz', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

Deniz Aydemir  
Chair, Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission