

23 June 2021

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am a long-time resident of Durham, and a life-long bicyclist. I enjoy biking on our city's trails, and I often commute to work in downtown Durham by bike, along with many of my fellow employees.

I would like to offer a letter of support for the City of Durham's application for a RAISE Transportation Grant that would provide funds for the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail in downtown Durham. The Durham Belt Line is a 1.7-mile railroad 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 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 trail will provide safe transportation options in an area that has a disproportionately high percentage of Durham's bicycle and pedestrian crashes and a significant percentage of households that do not own a vehicle.

The approach outlined in Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement activates local partners to reach deeply into community networks for guidance on the project. The trail will improve health and quality of life for residents by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history.

I strongly support and recommend that the 2021 RAISE Grant be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Feldblum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Feldblum
Senior Epidemiologist
FHI 360