

August 6, 2023

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt  
Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: GOTRIANGLE PROTECT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Dear Administrator Bhatt,

The Durham-Chapel Hill- Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization strong support for GoTriangle's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Program application for the Nelson Road Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility – Modernization and Expansion Project.

GoTriangle's mission is to improve the region's quality of life by connecting people and places through safe, reliable, and easy-to-use travel choices. GoTriangle provided 1.8 million annual trips in 2019, removing 24 million passenger vehicle miles from regional highways. Additionally, GoTriangle operates two battery-electric buses, and recently procured five (5) more, demonstrating the agency's commitment to cost-saving, efficient and resilient operations.

With PROTECT program support, the project will incorporate best practices to enhance resiliency amidst increasing climate hazards. When fully implemented, the project will increase the Nelson Road facility's capacity to accommodate up to 120 buses, extend the facility's expected lifespan, support electric charging infrastructure, and improve safety and working conditions. Further, the project design will include a vulnerability assessment and incorporate resilient improvements such as grey water reuse, heat resistant and permeable pavement, urban trees, and efficient solutions to stormwater. The project will advance GoTriangle's sustainable initiatives by supporting the agency's transition to zero-emissions buses and will accommodate on-site solar photovoltaic electricity generation.

The project is in strong alignment with the U.S. Department of Transportation's strategic goals. Incorporating resilience in the design will improve workplace safety and allow the facility to better support life-critical missions in response to natural disasters. Expanding GoTriangle's capacity and improving the resiliency of operations will provide economic strength and global competitiveness while also creating equity for transit dependent populations. The project will be sustainably designed to handle hazardous weather events while reducing GoTriangle's carbon footprint thereby bolstering GoTriangle's goals for transformative and resilient operations.

The DCHC MPO requests that FY23 PROTECT Program funding is awarded to GoTriangle for the Nelson Road Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility – Modernization and Expansion Project.

Sincerely,



Doug Plachcinski, AICP, CFM  
Executive Director