



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

October 11, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing in support the City of Durham's application for a TIGER Discretionary Grant for the Downtown Durham Loop Two-Way Conversion project. For decades the downtown Durham Loop and the system of other one-way downtown streets have been widely viewed as confusing, unsafe, and a detriment to downtown mobility and revitalization. The Downtown Loop was designed to funnel traffic through downtown, and does not support pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users wishing to move around downtown, or the businesses and retailers in Durham's central business district. Converting the Downtown Loop to two-way traffic and adding pedestrian, bicycle, and transit amenities will give Durham's growing population safer options for moving around downtown, and support economic growth in the City.

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is committed to providing multi-modal transportation options for residents and visitors within our jurisdiction. This project is listed in the DCHC MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and will support our commitment to providing multi-modal transportation infrastructure in the region by adding pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities to the converted Loop. Converting the Loop will also support two key objectives of the MPO's long-range planning, connecting people to jobs and opportunities using all modes and ensuring that transportation needs are met for those who are economically disadvantaged, mobility impaired, and minorities. The Downtown Loop creates a barrier between downtown Durham and nearby low-wealth neighborhoods. Converting the Loop to two-way traffic and adding pedestrian, bicycle, and transit amenities will also increase access to jobs, education, and healthcare for some of Durham's most vulnerable residents.

I believe that this project is an excellent candidate for the TIGER Discretionary Grant program. It supports the US Department of Transportation's overall goals of increasing economic activity and supporting more livable communities. It will lead to economic opportunities for the City of Durham and some of its most vulnerable residents, and I urge you to give it all due consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Schewel, Chair
DCHC MPO Board