

**DURHAM • CHAPEL HILL • CARRBORO**  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

4307 Emperor Boulevard • Durham, NC 27703 • Phone (919) 503-4123 • [dchcmpo.org](http://dchcmpo.org)

September 6, 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-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO, 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 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 organization supports this application because the study will further strengthen and build upon **regional partnerships**. This 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. The study will follow 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. 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 is a long-standing **community priority**. The trail was originally recommended 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 during the adoption of the more recent 2011 Trails and Greenways Plan for the City and County. It will provide access to downtown Durham and **the network of trail, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks** in central Durham. Furthermore, the trail overlaps with the East Coast Greenway, is on the NC Great Trails State Plan, and intersects with the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The trail will connect urban and rural areas of Durham as well as connect to **statewide and national trail networks**. 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**. Combined with the Downtown Rail Trail and American Tobacco Trail, it will provide more than 30 miles of continuous trail through Durham County.

Our organization 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,

Jenn Weaver, Chair  
DCHC MPO Board