

August 6, 2023

Ms. Felicia James
Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment
U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Transit Administration East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT NORTH SOUTH BUS RAPID TRANSIT 5309 PROJECT RATING REQUEST

Dear Ms. James:

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) strongly supports Chapel Hill Transit's North South Bus Rapid Transit (NSBRT) project and request that our endorsement be considered favorably, as part of Chapel Hill Transit's 5309 New and Small Starts Project Rating request. Chapel Hill Transit provides robust service compared to similar communities, but continued growth and development are quickly outpacing the system's capacity. Frequent, reliable service on a dedicated transit guideway will improve travel times, relieve pressure on non-express service, increase transit capacity in the Town's highest ridership corridor, and help Chapel Hill Transit continue to meet the Town's growing demand for high-quality public transportation service.

Implementing the NSBRT in Chapel Hill will provide new, high-quality transit connections to major Chapel Hill destinations, benefitting people who live and work in this vibrant community and introducing the Town's millions of visitors to the benefits of public transportation. The project will serve Chapel Hill's North-South Corridor - a critical transportation corridor and entryway to Chapel Hill, the home to one of the state's largest healthcare systems and the country's first state university - the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

NSBRT will not only enhance local transit options in Chapel Hill but will contribute to a growing network of regional public transportation connections. Chapel Hill's strong commitment to providing affordable, multimodal transportation options for the Town's diverse residents, employees, students, and stakeholders allows the NSBRT to provide more than just frequent, safe, and reliable BRT service. Complementary multimodal transportation improvements in Chapel Hill's most transit-oriented locations are a hallmark of the Town's recently adopted Complete Community strategy for sustainable and resilient growth. An integrated multiuse path enhances bicycle and pedestrian options along the NSBRT corridor and forms the spine of Chapel Hill's future "Everywhere to Everywhere" greenway network.

The DCHC MPO's fiscally constrained 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes the NSBRT project. This project raises public transit standards in a region already recognized for innovation and creative solutions. Our community is proud of this important project, and we thank you in advance for considering its merit.

Sincerely,



Doug Plachcinski, AICP, CFM
Executive Director