

May 11, 2022

Ms. Nuria Fernandez
Office of the Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
United States

Dear Ms. Fernandez:

I write this letter to express strong support for the City of Durham to receive funding under the FY2022 Low-No and 5339(b) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. The city is submitting two applications under this program to acquire Battery Electric Buses and to design and construct access to transit improvements within 0.5 miles of bus stops along GoDurham Route 9.

GoDurham provides residents and visitors with an affordable and reliable transportation option and is vital for riders, who are often essential workers, seniors, students, people of color, and low-wealth individuals. 80% of GoDurham riders are people of color and 72% of riders report incomes of less than \$25,000.

The City of Durham received federal funding in FY2019 for procurement of two Battery Electric Buses and is seeking funding for six additional Battery Electric Buses to continue to move towards its goal of a zero-emission transit fleet. The GoDurham fixed route active fleet consists of fifty-eight 40' ADA accessible buses. Of these vehicles six were manufactured in 2008 and all six have met the federal 'useful life' requirements in that they are over 12 years and have passed 500,000 miles. The city is requesting funding for the purchase of six Battery Electric vehicles to replace and retire these vehicles. A successful funding award will continue to move the city towards providing transit services with clean, quiet zero emissions technology in line with the city's Strategic Goal of a Sustainable Natural and Built Environment. This move also responds to input from community engagement to improve air quality and reduce noise pollution, particularly for historically disadvantaged communities served by GoDurham.

Under the Bus and Bus Facilities program, the city proposes to construct improvements improving residents access to bus stops along route 9, which connects Downtown Durham with Duke Regional Hospital and disadvantaged communities such as Bragtown, consistent with the federal Justice40 initiative to focus investment in these areas. The city has evaluated bus stops in need of improvement considering those stops which are most used, applying equity considerations, stops serving youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities, and stops with safety concerns. Access to transit improvements will include construction of sidewalks to meet ADA standards, the addition of high-visibility crosswalks to improve safety and accessibility and intersection improvements. These improvements will strengthen residents' ability to walk or bike to the critical transit services they rely on.

Construction of these improvements and procurement of Battery Electric Buses will help advance the city's goals of a cleaner city and advance the Racial Equity vision to improve the quality of life, access to transit and health of Durham residents. I advocate for the City of Durham to receive federal funding to advance these projects and respectfully request your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

Jenn Weaver
Chair, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization