

November 18, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Alliance, the voice of the regional business community on transportation across North Carolina's Research Triangle area, I am writing to express our strong support for NCDOT's Connected, Rural, Equitable, and Autonomous Transportation for Everyone (CREATE) grant application to the USDOT's Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Program.

The NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) will partner with May Mobility, Via, Bridgestone, Toyota, the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NC A&T) State University to deliver autonomy-enabled and accessible microtransit services that connect transportation disadvantaged communities to essential services and job opportunities.

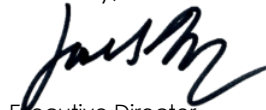
Microtransit is a technology-enabled, shared mobility service to provide pooled, on-demand transportation with dynamic routing. CREATE will enable NCDOT IMD to better understand the impact of AVs within the transit context including assessing the readiness of the state, communities, and the technology, while also providing useful transit service for workforce development and access to key destinations and services.

The application proposes the use of hybrid-electric, Toyota Sienna Autono-MaaS passenger vans. These FMVSS-compliant vehicles can operate up to 30 miles per hour at SAE Level 4 autonomy in mixed traffic with seating for up to five passengers; they can comfortably carry a person using a wheelchair, with safety operators on board trained to assist anyone with mobility limitations.

CREATE will improve the lives and economies of North Carolinians by increasing access to healthcare, employment, education, and other services while piloting and evaluating AVs for those living in rural areas, including several within our extended region. It will also inform and accelerate the adoption of autonomous transit across both rural and metropolitan areas.

The regional business community strongly recommends that the NCDOT CREATE grant application for the ATTAIN program be funded. Please call me at 919.664.7065 or joe@letsgetmoving.org with questions.

Sincerely,



Executive Director,
Regional Transportation Alliance

cc Harold Hicks, RTA chair
Jay Irby, RTA regional transit chair
Chris Cooper, RTA emerging technology chair