

August 5, 2019

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing, on behalf of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, to offer our support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) *I-85/I-40 Foundations for Safer and Automated Transportation (FAST)* application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD Program.

The I-85/I-40 corridor is critical to east-west long-distance travel regionally and is vital for local trips between three of North Carolina's major metropolitan areas. This project, when combined with other recent grant applications, demonstrates how complementary investments and a coordinated strategy can improve corridor performance, user safety, freight mobility, and digital connectivity of communities in central North Carolina.

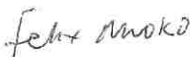
We understand the how the project elements will benefit the transportation system in the state:

1. Completes the NCDOT fiber-optic backbone from Raleigh to Charlotte, allowing operations personnel and first responders immediate and reliable access to a variety of traffic management systems.
2. Supports the eventual interconnection of freight facilities.
3. Supports the deployment of connected and automated vehicle technology.
4. Introduces new state-of-the art technology to improve traffic safety along the heavily traveled corridor, by focusing on risky driver behavior and non-ideal road conditions.
5. Provides the potential for improved cutting-edge broadband access to both urban and rural communities along the corridor.

These are just a few of the many reasons we strongly support the NCDOT I-85 / I-40 application. We fully endorse the plans and goals of the project and will work with NCDOT as needed during the implementation and operation phases of the project.

Thank you for your consideration of this BUILD grant request from NCDOT. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contract Felix Nwoko at felix.nwoko@durhamnc.gov or (919) 560-4366.

Sincerely,



Felix Nwoko, PhD, Executive Director

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization