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October 3, 2022

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

RE: The Ecusta Trail: A Multimodal Gateway to the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway

Greetings Secretary Buttigieg,

Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is pleased to present this letter of support and CEDS Concurrence for the NSFLTP proposal entitled *The Ecusta Trail: A Multimodal Gateway to the Pisgah National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway*. This initiative will create connections between multiple communities to provide recreational and active transportation opportunities for economic and community benefit.

Land of Sky Regional Council is a multi-county, local government planning and development organization. We reach across county and municipal borders providing technical assistance to local governments and administer projects and programs, which benefit our region's citizens. Our mission is to provide creative regional solutions to relevant and emerging issues in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties while providing a standard of excellence in the delivery of federal, state, and regional services for our member communities.

This project is consistent with the regional priorities outlined in the *Land of Sky Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, specifically in Goal #2: *Opportunity and Prosperity for All*. LOSRC sees significant benefits from this project for our member governments, businesses, and local communities, and looks forward to partnering with the City of Brevard, Henderson County, and partners to help make it a great success. Some of the activities that will directly impact our communities include:

- Completion of a transformational project, long planned for, to connect multiple towns, neighborhoods, and businesses to each other and our robust federal lands network.
- Greater engagement of historically under-resourced communities in accessing active transportation options to job centers, schools, and federal lands in their own backyards.
- Land of Sky businesses and organizations will benefit from this connected network of greenways, a high priority for citizens and tourists alike.

Land of Sky Regional Council welcomes this partnership as we all work to meet the challenge to expand opportunities for connection, community, and economic development. I look forward to the opportunity to work closely with project partners in service to the people of Western North Carolina to make this project a great success.

Sincerely,



Nathan Ramsey
Executive Director