

(919) 777-1103  
P.O. Box 3729  
Sanford, NC 27331-3729



City of Sanford

Residence: (919) 774-7494  
Email: chet.mann@sanfordnc.net

T. Chet Mann  
Mayor

March 23, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my support for the **North Carolina Regional S-Line Mobility Hub Plan** application for the Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for fiscal year 2022. This grant is being submitted by the City of Sanford in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and other communities along the S-Line corridor.

The North Carolina Regional S-Line Mobility Hub Plan ("Mobility Hub Plan") will serve to advance regional multimodal transportation along the S-Line Rail Corridor in central North Carolina – enhancing mobility options, improving social equity, increasing the resilience of the transportation network, and spurring economic growth. The S-Line corridor is a key component in making the Southeast Corridor a reality. The Southeast Corridor is a planned network of passenger and freight rail lines that would run between Florida and Washington. The intent of the overall S-Line project is to have passenger rail stops that accommodate multiple modes of transportation at mobility hubs along the corridor.


Each mobility hub will be a place of accessible, multimodal connectivity, offering an integrated suite of mobility services, amenities, and supporting technologies, allowing passengers to transfer modes in a safe and convenient manner. The Mobility Hub Plan will focus on defining the scope and physical location of each mobility hub, evaluating potential environmental impacts, and completing preliminary design activities. These mobility hubs will address issues of social equity in communities by expanding access to jobs, healthy food, recreation, and social services. By planning and designing future S-Line rail stations as mobility hubs, each community will be prepared to maximize the benefits of the rail service by optimizing first and last mile solutions.

The City of Sanford has a long history of its relationship with rail, as its very existence is owed to the crossing of two rail lines in 1871. The passenger depot built just south of the junction, served as the transportation hub for the City for nearly a century, which eventually included a nearby taxi stand and bus stop for last mile service. Unfortunately, Amtrak pulled its operations from the depot in the mid-70s, which in part, led to a decline of the downtown and surrounding areas for nearly twenty-five years. In the late 1990s, the City piloted an effort to build a park around the historic passenger depot, which further spurred both private and public investment in the area, including streetscape improvements and the purchasing of the depot for a future Visitors Center. In recent years, the City of Sanford as part of NCDOT's resurfacing program has been able to shrink several four-lane roads bisecting a historically minority neighborhood (adjacent to the potential mobility hub area) through a road diet, thereby reducing automobile speed, improving pedestrian safety, and allowing the installation of over five miles of bike lanes. Planning staff is currently working with NCDOT and others at the viability of a Microtransit Service to complement the existing County's Transit Service and develop future networks using advanced technology. A mobility hub in Sanford would bring all these transportation efforts together and make Sanford once again the epicenter for transportation in the area.

The S-Line corridor is both historically significant and important to the future of central North Carolina. The partnerships between the communities along the S-Line and regional and state agencies will further the economic strength of the region, leading to new economic opportunities in communities that were quite literally built on the success of rail. The Mobility Hub Plan will be an incredibly important factor in the connectivity, innovation, growth, and overall vibrancy of our communities.

I respectfully urge your full and fair consideration of the *North Carolina Regional S-Line Mobility Hub Plan* grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Chet Mann", written in a cursive style.

T. Chet Mann  
Mayor