



Rutherfordton

A MINTED ORIGINAL

March 23, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the **Partnership for Active Regional Transportation and Neighborhood Equity in Rutherfordton and Spindale (PARTNERS)** grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's RAISE Program. This project is the result of a collaborative partnership between the Town of Rutherfordton, the Town of Spindale, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to convert Charlotte Road/Main Street into a complete street that safely and equitably serves all modes of transportation connecting these rural communities. The project begins in Rutherfordton at Maple Street and continues 2.5 miles east to Oakland Road in Spindale and will include sidewalks, a multi-use path, safer intersections and crossing opportunities, bus shelters, EV charging capabilities, improved stormwater management, and connections to existing greenways.

This corridor is the primary connection between the two towns and is a critical route to essential community resources such as the Rutherfordton Hospital and Spindale Elementary School. While the existing roadway primarily serves motorists, this project will build on past investments to provide safe and efficient transportation options for all modes, with an emphasis on the needs of the low-income neighborhoods along the corridor and the historically disadvantaged community of Spindale. The project is a critical step forward to enhance the vitality, vibrancy, and economic competitiveness of our rural downtowns and public spaces.

All project components were strategically developed to meet the current and future needs along the corridor. This project will increase multimodal access along the roadway with the goal of increasing the share of bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders; as such, the project prioritizes improvements that will facilitate safe transportation for all modes as well as safe roadway interactions. This includes strategically placing bus stops, upgrading intersections with crosswalks, bump-outs, and pedestrian signals, and providing pedestrian facilities that are better separated from vehicular traffic. Removing barriers to pedestrian and bicycle travel along the corridor will make the roadway work just as well for those who rely on active modes of transportation as it does for vehicles – creating a more equitable and vibrant corridor. By providing connections to the Purple-

Town of Rutherfordton
129 N. Main St. Rutherfordton, NC 28139 828-287-3520

www.rutherfordton.net

“Service Forged at the Highest Standard”

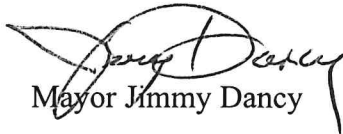
Martin Greenway and the Thermal Belt Rail Trail, the project will create regionally significant multimodal connections that enhance access to employment opportunities, such as the planned Rutherfordton Industrial Park, as well as recreational amenities that promote public health and community engagement. Together, these improvements will create a corridor where people live, work, and play – an asset that is rare in many rural communities.

In addition to supporting this transformative project through planning support, the Town of Rutherfordton has committed \$250,000 in funding and, together with the Town of Spindale, is responsible for funding any project cost increases with NCDOT.


The transformation of this corridor has been years in the making for Rutherfordton and Spindale. From a planned industrial park and workforce housing development to streetscaping and a new skate park, both towns have prioritized development along this corridor. This RAISE grant project would allow Rutherfordton, Spindale, and NCDOT to create a vibrant and inclusive transportation corridor that connects people to places, serves the existing and planned investments in the area, encourages further investment, and fosters community cohesion and a sense of local pride.

Thank you for considering the PARTNERS grant application for RAISE program funding.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jimmy Dancy



Councilmember Stanley Clements



Councilmember Doris Crute



Councilmember Henry Giles



Councilmember Dr. Doug Sheets