

September 8, 2023

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

Re: Letter in Support of the City of Greensboro's Reconnecting Communities Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Southern Environmental Law Center, I enthusiastically support the City of Greensboro and North Carolina Department of Transportation's collaborative application for a planning grant under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program, in partnership with the Greensboro Metropolitan Planning Organization. The project is called "Accelerating Greensboro Growth by Increasing Equity and Safety" or "AGGIES" for short.

The Southern Environmental Law Center is a non-profit organization that works to protect the basic right to clean air, clean water, and a livable climate; to preserve our region's natural treasures and rich biodiversity; and to provide a healthy environment for all. Among other priorities, we advocate for equitable land use and transportation solutions that reduce carbon emissions and promote better connected communities.

We understand the Plan will study the seven-mile segment of US 29 between I-40 and I-785 in East Greensboro, an access-controlled highway bisecting a historically Black community. Its construction destroyed important community assets, and this physical barrier continues to limit mobility and community connectivity. The neighborhoods impacted by the construction of US 29 have an ongoing legacy of environmental justice concerns related to poverty, vehicle access, and air pollution.

The Plan will be developed through a process to gauge the issues, envision the future, build solutions, and measure success. Local stakeholders will be engaged in each step, and we believe this focus on community involvement will help rebuild community trust and provide valuable insight into the lived experience of local residents. A shared vision for the roadway will help to identify mobility needs and appropriate multimodal solutions to meaningfully address the historical inequities created by US 29. We hope this Plan can serve as a template for future transportation planning efforts in Greensboro as the City and State partner to create a safer, more equitable, and sustainable transportation system.

Greensboro has a deep, nationally significant history of activism dating back to its central role in the civil rights movement. This Plan will build on this legacy by creating a multimodal blueprint to retrofit this critical corridor, mitigate past harm, and serve the community it once marginalized.

We hope you will favorably consider this funding request.

Sincerely,



Megan Kimball
Senior Attorney