



September 22, 2024

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

SUBJECT: Reconnecting East Greensboro and Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of *City of Greensboro*, I enthusiastically support the City of Greensboro's application for a planning grant under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program. I understand this proposal has been prepared in partnership with the N.C. Department of Transportation and Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The *Reconnecting East Greensboro Plan* will study the neighborhoods around seven miles of US Highway 29 between I-40 and I-785 in East Greensboro, a 75-year-old, 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 a generational legacy of poverty and disconnect stemming from the barrier created by this multi-lane highway.

Opening transportation corridors and expanding multimodal transportation options in areas impacted by urbanization creates new opportunities where they previously didn't exist. Engaging the East Greensboro community ensures that these efforts align with their specific needs and desires. By removing barriers to access, we help level the playing field, ensuring equitable access to the resources that thoughtful, community-driven mobility planning provides.

An inclusive, community-driven planning process will define issues, identify solutions, and create integrated solutions tailored to our community. Local stakeholders will be engaged in each step, and we believe this focused community involvement will help rebuild community trust and provide valuable insight into the lived experience of residents. A shared vision for the community will meaningfully address the historical inequities created by US 29 and inform future transportation improvements within the corridor.

East Greensboro residents have a prominent history of fighting, and in some cases dying, for equal rights when students from schools in this corridor led one of the first non-violent sit-in protests in the U.S. Our Plan will build on this legacy by creating a multimodal blueprint to retrofit this critical corridor, mitigate past harm, and serve the community it has marginalized.

I hope you will favorably consider this funding request.

Sincerely,

Phanalphie Rhue
Chief Global Communications & Experience Officer
Bennett College

