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January 22, 2025

U.S. Department of Transportation
The Honorable Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SW Washington, D.C., 20590

RE: FY2025 USDOT RAISE Grant Application – City of Hendersonville – Above the Mud: Creating Connections, Promoting Small-Town Economic Growth, and Strengthening Resilience

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of **<Henderson County NAACP, Unit #5477-B,** we are writing to express our full support for the City of Hendersonville's RAISE Grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation. We believe this project represents a critical opportunity to promote small-town tourism and economic development, respond to Hurricane Helene flooding impacts, enhance the quality of life in our region, and provide a solution for connecting the 4-mile existing City-owned Oklawaha Greenway with the RAISE-funded 19-mile Ecusta Trail, which is under construction and nearing completion.

The proposed project is essential to creating a multimodal network for the community. This will not only benefit the residents of downtown / 7th

Avenue and the Barker Heights community but also positively impact residents as far-reaching as the county line. The greenway will also have a tremendous impact on rural job growth, promoting tourism and economic development for the City and the region, and responding to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene and other recent floods.

We strongly believe that the City of Hendersonville's Above the Mud project is an exemplary model of collaboration and problem-solving and we fully support their efforts. We hope the U.S. Department of Transportation will recognize the significance of this project and award funding to enhance the safety and connectivity for residents and visitors to the City of Hendersonville and Henderson County.

Thank you for your attention to this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Melinda P. Lowrance, President