



**The Honorable Sean Duffy**

Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20590

February 11, 2026

**RE: FY2026 BUILD Grant Application – Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business**

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The **The Art League of Henderson County** is pleased to express strong support for the FY2026 BUILD grant application, *Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business*. This collaborative effort between the City of Hendersonville, Henderson County, NCDOT, and local stakeholders represents a critical investment in the long-term vitality, safety, and economic resilience of our historic downtown.

The proposed project will significantly improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety along two historic downtown corridors while creating a more welcoming, accessible, and family-friendly public realm. By strengthening connections between underserved neighborhoods and downtown, improving resilience to flooding events, and enhancing access to regional trail systems, the project will reinforce downtown Hendersonville as a destination for residents, visitors, and small businesses alike.

For organizations such as **The Art League of Henderson County**, located within the Historic 7th Avenue District, this investment is transformational. As a nonprofit arts organization serving artists, families, seniors, and visitors year-round, The Art League depends on safe, accessible streetscapes to support public programs, exhibitions, workshops, and community events. Improved walkability, visibility, and accessibility will directly increase participation in arts programming while supporting the broader creative economy that anchors this district.

Equally important, the project will benefit the many locally owned businesses—galleries, restaurants, shops, and service providers—that define the character of Hendersonville’s historic downtown. Streets designed for people encourage longer visits, repeat foot traffic, and increased spending, strengthening small businesses and supporting job creation while preserving the area’s historic identity.

By supporting this project, USDOT has the opportunity to highlight a model initiative that aligns closely with the Administration’s priorities, including:

- Creating safer local transportation systems
- Enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors

- Expanding accessible, affordable, and connected transportation options while maintaining roadway capacity
- Supporting local businesses, tourism, and economic opportunity

In summary, the Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project will serve as a catalyst for economic growth, cultural vitality, and community connection—benefiting nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and residents throughout the region.

Thank you for your consideration of this important investment in Hendersonville’s future.

Sincerely,

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**Diane Dean**

**Executive Director, Art League of Henderson County**

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**Patsy DuPre**

**President, Art League of Henderson County**