NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT *of*
COMMERCE

Josh Stein
GOVERNOR

Lee Lilley
SECRETARY

Date: February 3, 2026

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

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center, under the Rural Economic Development Division of the NC Department of Commerce, is pleased to express strong support for the BUILD grant application titled *"Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business."* This initiative represents a collaborative effort among the City of Hendersonville, Henderson County, NCDOT, and numerous local stakeholders.

The Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization project will:

- Enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along two historic downtown corridors.
- Create a comfortable and welcoming public realm for families, residents, and visitors.
- Reconnect underserved neighborhoods with downtown.
- Serve as a catalyst for tourism and economic development.
- Improve resilience to flooding events; and
- Strengthen connections to multiple major regional trails.

By supporting this effort, USDOT can highlight a project that aligns with key federal priorities, including:

- Building a safer local transportation system.
- Improving quality of life for residents and visitors.
- Expanding accessible, affordable, and connected transportation options while maintaining roadway capacity.
- Creating local jobs, supporting businesses, boosting tourism, and promoting economic opportunities.

In summary, the Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization project will serve as a transformative engine, advancing healthy, climate-friendly, resilient, and integrated transportation and recreation options while driving economic growth for the region.

Thank you for considering this application for BUILD funding.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Parham

Elizabeth H. Parham, CMSM
Director, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center