February 18, 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:

Wingate University-Hendersonville campus strongly supports the BUILD grant application "Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization Project: New Streets for New Business," which is the result of a collaboration between the City of Hendersonville, Henderson County, NCDOT, and other local stakeholders.

The Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization project will improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along two historic downtown corridors; provide a comfortable and welcoming public realm for families, individuals, and visitors; rebuild connections between underserved neighborhoods and downtown; act as a catalyst for tourism and economic development; improve resilience to flooding events; and create improved connections to multiple major regional trails.

By supporting this effort, USDOT can showcase a project that aligns closely with the Trump Administration's objectives, including:

- Creating a safer local transportation system,
- Increasing quality of life for local families and individuals, and visitors,
- Providing improved accessible, affordable, and connected transportation options while
- maintaining vehicular roadway capacity,
- Creating local jobs and supporting local businesses, increasing tourism, and promoting
- economic opportunity

In summary, the Hendersonville Downtown Streets Modernization will act as an engine—powering healthy, climate-friendly, resilient, and integrated transportation and recreation options and economic transformation for this region.

Thank you for considering our application for BUILD Program funding.

Respectfully,

Karen Friel

Karen Friel, PT DHS
Vice-Provost
Dean, Levine College of Health Sciences