



News Release

For Immediate Release: October 29, 2018

Durham Wins \$1 Million in Bloomberg Philanthropies U.S. Mayors Challenge

Durham is One of Nine Cities Recognized for Innovative Solutions to Urgent Local Issues

DURHAM, N.C. - Michael R. Bloomberg announced today that the City of Durham is a winner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies [U.S. Mayors Challenge](#), a year-long competition that challenged city leaders to uncover and test bold, inventive ideas to confront the toughest problems faced by cities today.

Durham is among nine cities to now receive \$1 million to begin implementation on potentially breakthrough solutions to issues such as homelessness, the opioid crisis, mobility, climate change, and economic opportunity. Durham joins Denver, Colo., Fort Collins, Colo., Georgetown, TX, Huntington, W.Va., Los Angeles, Calif., New Rochelle, NY, Philadelphia, Pa., and South Bend, Ind. as winners of the U.S. Mayors Challenge.

Durham was selected as a winner for its innovative approach to get residents and visitors to choose to commute by alternative modes to downtown Durham. The goal of the [City's Mayors Challenge Team](#) was to pilot test two low-cost methods that applied behavioral insights to nudge people away from single-occupancy commutes to downtown Durham, which is experiencing significant traffic congestion and parking woes.

"Durham wants to shape its future growth on the mobility options of people and not cars. The ideas developed through the Mayors Challenge helped us divert scarce resources away from parking decks and toward a public transportation system that will truly further Durham's vision of shared economic prosperity," said Mayor Steve Schewel. "We were thrilled with the results of our pilot program, and are so grateful to Bloomberg Philanthropies for awarding us another \$1 million grant so we can focus on testing additional methods to further reduce the number of cars in downtown Durham by another 5 percent, or about 800 vehicles, to help change the Bull City's mobility habits to more efficiently use existing transportation infrastructure."

"Mayors across the country are tackling the big issues that Washington is ignoring. This competition is designed to help them do even more, by incentivizing and supporting big – and achievable – new ideas," said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term mayor of New York City. "Congratulations to all of the winning mayors, who represent cities large and small, in regions across the country. We look forward to seeing the results of their work -- and to helping the ideas that prove most effective spread far and wide."

The Mayors Challenge [Selection Committee](#), co-chaired by Former Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and Former Xerox Chairman & CEO Ursula Burns, is comprised of distinguished policy experts, artists, academics, business executives, and social innovation leaders. The committee evaluated the cities applications based on their idea's vision, potential for impact, implementation plan, and potential to spread to other cities to choose Durham as among the nine winning cities.

New to the Mayors Challenge this year was a 6-month "test and learn" phase where [each of the 35](#)

[Champion Cities](#) received up to \$100,000 and technical assistance to test and build support for their ideas. Cities tested core components of their ideas with residents, improved and refined their proposals, and developed a plan for implementation and impact measurement.

The City's pilot project, which used its grant funds to partner with Duke University's Center for Advanced Hindsight, Downtown Durham, Inc., and several downtown employers, to work with 1,586 downtown employees to rigorously test two strategies aimed at reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips into downtown Durham by 5 percent. The first strategy, a planning tool algorithm, created a personalized route with mapped options, time comparisons, and benefits. Commuters that received the personalized route reported using travel alternatives, instead of driving alone, 12 percent more than employees that did not receive it. The second, a GoDurham bus lottery, created a game that made riding the bus a fun competition. Commuters that were invited to play the weekly bus lottery reported commuting by alternatives 19 percent more, and reported a higher level of happiness and lower levels of stress during the pilot.

For more information about the City's Mayors Challenge Team and the results of the "test and learn" phase, visit the project website at <http://www.durhammayorchallenge.com>, which also includes a [video](#) about the purpose and results of this pilot project.

The U.S. Mayors Challenge builds on the success of previous Bloomberg Philanthropies-sponsored Challenges in the U.S. (2013), Europe (2014), and Latin America and the Caribbean (2016). Previous Mayors Challenge winners include São Paulo, Brazil with a program to increase farmers' income and reduce urban sprawl; Barcelona, Spain for work to create digital trust networks that support at-risk elderly citizens; and Providence, RI, for a program to measure and reduce the "word gap" among low-income children during pivotal brain development years. For more information, visit mayorchallenge.bloomberg.org.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in 480 cities in more than 120 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving. In 2017, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$702 million. For more information, please visit www.bloomberg.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), and [Twitter](#).

###

101 City Hall Plaza, Second Floor, Durham, NC 27701

919.560.4123

DurhamNC.gov

Follow Us @CityofDurhamNC

