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News Release

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Share! #Durham applies for @USDOT TIGER Grant to convert downtown loop to two-way traffic #fixtheloop
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Durham Applies for TIGER Grant to Convert Downtown Loop to Two-Way Traffic

DURHAM, N.C. – The City of Durham wants to convert the downtown loop to two-way traffic and is hoping a federal grant will make it happen.

The City's Transportation Department has applied for a \$12 million [United States Department of Transportation \(USDOT\) TIGER Discretionary Grant](#) to convert the loop to allow two-way traffic to improve safety, mobility and accessibility, and to facilitate economic development in downtown. If Durham is selected for a TIGER grant, the funds will be used to convert the loop to two-way traffic by changing pavement markings to accommodate two-way traffic and bicycles, modify traffic signals and construct roundabouts at key intersections.

According to Transportation Director Terry Bellamy, the two-way conversion of the loop would be a Complete Streets project that would increase safety for all roadway users – motorists, bicyclists, transit users and pedestrians. “If we secure this USDOT funding, we’ll be able to decrease speeds in the loop and create or improve facilities such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit amenities and street lighting,” Bellamy said. “Funding for this project would also allow us to explore adding roundabouts to increase safety and traffic flow at key downtown intersections. Ultimately, converting to two-way traffic will increase the transportation choices available to downtown residents and visitors, and contribute to our goal of being a [Vision Zero](#) community by eliminating all fatalities and severe injuries on our roadways.”

For decades the downtown loop, and the system of other one-way downtown streets, has been widely viewed as confusing, unsafe and a detriment to revitalization. The loop, which is comprised of several street segments that form a one-way loop around the City's central business district, was designed and built to funnel traffic through downtown. However, this decades-old design does not support pedestrians, bicyclists or transit users who want to safely get around downtown or the businesses and retailers in the City's central business district. The loop also creates a barrier between downtown and adjoining low-income and minority neighborhoods.

The goal to convert downtown streets to two-way traffic began with the creation of the Downtown Durham Master Plan in 1999. In 2007, the City converted Main Street and Chapel Hill Street to two-way traffic, and Durham has since seen more than \$1 billion invested in restaurants, shops and business along those streets, contributing greatly to the Durham's revitalization. Updates to the [Downtown Durham Master Plan](#) and [a 2015 Charrette Study](#) reiterated the importance of converting the remaining streets in the loop to two-way traffic. A [2010 feasibility study](#) also identified a preferred alternative for the two-way conversion of the loop, which was selected with extensive public involvement.

While seeking the necessary funding to tackle the loop two-way conversion, the City's Transportation Department has used state and local funds to improve and maintain the streets in the loop over the past five years. State funds were leveraged to repave and restripe the loop in 2016, while local funds have been used for signal improvements and to construct sidewalk ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For more information about this TIGER grant application, contact Bellamy at (919)-560-4366, extension 36422 or by email at Terry.Bellamy@DurhamNC.gov.

About the City of Durham Transportation Department

The [Transportation Department](#) is responsible for a broad range of transportation services, which include traffic signs and signals, transportation planning, [parking operations](#), street lighting, taxicab administration, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The department also oversees [GoDurham](#) and [GoDurham ACCESS](#) as well as leads planning functions for the [Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization \(DCHC MPO\)](#), which is the regional organization that is responsible for planning and programming state and federal

transportation projects in the urbanized areas of Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps to strengthen the foundation, enhance the value, and improve the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods that are necessary for a strong and diverse community.

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