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News Release

For Immediate Release: February 21, 2018

Durham Wins Grant to Test Ways to Reduce Downtown Traffic Congestion

*City Awarded Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2018 Mayors Challenge Champion Cities Grant;
Moves to Next Phase in the National Competition*

DURHAM, N.C. – Travelers to downtown Durham may soon see improvements in traffic congestion and parking woes thanks to a recent grant to pilot new approaches to encourage people to try alternative modes of transportation.

The City of Durham is [one of 35 Champion Cities](#) selected today for the [2018 U.S. Mayors Challenge](#), a nationwide competition that encourages city leaders to uncover bold, inventive ideas that confront the toughest problems cities face. Durham is one of 35 urban innovations that rose to the top of a competitive pool of more than 320 applications.

"We received hundreds of bold and creative ideas from cities around the country in response to the 2018 Mayors Challenge, and these 35 really stood out for their potential to improve people's lives. The next six months are a great opportunity for the cities to test their ideas and make them even more innovative and effective," said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term mayor of New York City.

Durham will now begin a six-month testing phase to assess four low-cost methods that apply behavioral insights to nudge people away from single-occupancy commutes. Now that Durham has been named to the Top 35 Champion Cities, it advances to the six-month "Test, Learn, and Adapt" phase of the competition. The City will refine its ideas during this process with up to \$100,000 as well as personalized support from innovation experts to test and begin building support for this urban innovation, and then submit a new application in August 2018. In October 2018, four cities will receive \$1 million awards and one will receive a grand prize of \$5 million to bring their ideas to life.

"I am thrilled that a Bloomberg Challenge grant will enable the City of Durham to pilot four innovative approaches to reducing traffic congestion downtown," Mayor Steve Schewel said. "Durham is a pioneer in the use of behavioral economics to inform strategies for urban reform. I'm proud of that, and I'm optimistic about the results of these efforts."

Durham's proposal seeks to answer the following question: can a mid-sized city - where cars are still the most convenient mode of transportation and only 8 percent of people walk or commute to work by

transit or bike - get residents and visitors to choose to commute by alternative modes a decade before the pains of congestion and a doubling population will force their hand? Durham believes it can, and will use this grant to test a number of innovative approaches that apply insights from behavioral economics to shift commuting behavior over the coming months to determine which ones work best. To help achieve this result, the City will partner with [Duke University's Center for Advanced Hindsight](#) and several other private employers as part of the next phase of the competition.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in over 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 2016, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$600 million. For more information, visit www.bloomberg.org or follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), and [Twitter](#). News media should contact Courtney Greenwald with Bloomberg Philanthropies at (212) 205-0361 or courtney@bloomberg.org for more information.

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