

## **Letters of Support**

56 letters were written in support of the City of Durham's BUILD application for the Durham Belt Line. This file contains letters from the following Individuals:

- Dave Connelly (chair of the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission)
- David Fellerath (member of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission)
- David Green (chair of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission)
- John Goebel
- Tony Reevy
- Frank White (member of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission)

May 4, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I'm a resident of Durham County, NC. I chair the Durham Open Space & Trails Commission (DOST), a citizen-led board that advises the Durham City Council and the Durham County Commissioners on preserving open space and advocating for shared-use paths. Currently state and local COVID-19 restrictions do not permit us to meet in person to offer and pass motions, so these comments are merely my own and should not be construed as representing any official board.

I'm pleased to provide this personal letter of support for the City of Durham's application for a BUILD Discretionary Grant that would provide funds to move forward with the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail.

The Durham Belt Line is a 1.75-mile, 17-acre abandoned rail segment. Durham had attempted since about 2005 to purchase this inactive line. In 2018, with the help of The Nature Conservancy, the City of Durham succeeded in acquiring the corridor, and the City Council then adopted a master plan for the trail, funded by a TIGER planning grant.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will enhance overall mobility, livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness in Durham and regionally. The trail will connect people to transit and jobs throughout the Triangle by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Durham, the Durham Station (local and regional bus service), and the Durham Amtrak Station.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will help to alter the pattern of regional sprawl by attracting some of the region's future growth to this urban corridor, while seeking to enhance and preserve existing communities along the trail, and working to ensure equity through Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement. The trail will improve health and quality of life by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history. The City intends to connect the Belt Line Trail with the American Tobacco Trail (North Carolina's most popular rail-trail) and the East Coast Greenway.

I strongly support and recommend that the 2020 BUILD Grant be awarded to the City of Durham for the Belt Line Trail. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David T Connelly  
3 Bland Spring Place  
Durham NC 27713  
919-357-6409 mobile

May 7, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am a member and vice chair of the City of Durham's Recreation Advisory Commission (RAC). We meet monthly to receive updates on the Parks and Recreation department's work and to provide feedback on its priorities. We serve as a conduit for the community's needs and concerns, and we work to help the department's work stay in alignment with the community's needs.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, the RAC has not met since March 11, so our body is unable to offer a formal endorsement of the City of Durham's application for a BUILD Discretionary Grant that would provide funds to move forward with the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail.

Representing myself alone, I am submitting the following letter of support for the project.

The Durham Belt Line is a 1.75-mile, 17-acre rail corridor that is no longer in use and was purchased by the City of Durham in 2018. The Durham City Council in 2018 adopted a master plan for the trail that was funded by a TIGER planning grant.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will enhance overall mobility, livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness in Durham and regionally. The trail will connect people to transit and jobs throughout the Triangle by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Durham, the Durham Station (local and regional bus service), and the Durham Amtrak Station.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will help to alter the pattern of regional sprawl by attracting some of the region's future growth to the corridor, while seeking to enhance and preserve existing communities along the trail, and working to ensure equity through Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement. The trail will improve health and quality of life by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history.

I strongly support and recommend that the 2020 BUILD Grant be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Fellerath  
Vice chair, Recreation Advisory Commission  
City of Durham

May 7, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am a member and chair of the City of Durham's Recreation Advisory Commission (RAC). We meet monthly to receive updates on the Parks and Recreation department's work and to provide feedback on its priorities. We serve as a conduit for the community's needs and concerns, and we work to help the department's work stay in alignment with the community's needs.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, the RAC has not met since March 11, so our body is unable to offer a formal endorsement of the City of Durham's application for a BUILD Discretionary Grant that would provide funds to move forward with the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail.

Representing myself alone, I am submitting the following letter of support for the project.

The Durham Belt Line is a 1.75-mile, 17-acre rail corridor that is no longer in use and was purchased by the City of Durham in 2018. The Durham City Council in 2018 adopted a master plan for the trail that was funded by a TIGER planning grant.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will enhance overall mobility, livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness in Durham and regionally. The trail will connect people to transit and jobs throughout the Triangle by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Durham, the Durham Station (local and regional bus service), and the Durham Amtrak Station.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will help to alter the pattern of regional sprawl by attracting some of the region's future growth to the corridor, while seeking to enhance and preserve existing communities along the trail, and working to ensure equity through Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement. The trail will improve health and quality of life by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history.

I strongly support and recommend that the 2020 BUILD Grant be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Green', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Green  
Chair, Recreation Advisory Commission  
City of Durham

May 6, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

My name is John Goebel and I have served the City and County of Durham in several capacities. I was president of the Triangle Rails-to-Trails Conservancy over 30 years ago and led the campaign to secure a twenty-mile rail corridor that runs from Durham to points south. The line had been unused for years and we were successful to partner with the NC Department of Transportation, Rail Division, to buy the corridor from the railroad. The State has given the City and County of Durham a lease to maintain this as a rail-trail. The trail has been incredibly successful. I later served on the Durham Open Space and Trail Commission and was president of this body when we made the initial push to acquire the 1.75 mile rail corridor, originally called the Duke Belt Line, from Norfolk-Southern. With the help of the Conservation Fund of North Carolina, the City of Durham was able to buy this corridor in 2018 (for roughly the same price that we paid for the above twenty-mile corridor 30 years ago). I am now a member of the Durham Parks Foundation and we are prepared to help raise local money to enhance the Durham Belt Line.

The Durham Belt Line is a 1.75 mile, 17 acre rail corridor that was purchased by the City of Durham in 2018. In 2018 the Durham City Council adopted a master plan for the trail that was funded by a TIGER planning grant.

Because of its location, the Belt Line will greatly enhance mobility, livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness for Durham. This corridor will enable a large segment of the population of Durham to reach downtown Durham, including our new Innovation District, in a matter of minutes by foot or by bike. The in-town terminus of the Belt Line will be within feet of both the Durham (Bus) Station and the Amtrak Station.

I feel very strongly that this short rail-trail will have a profound impact on Durham. Durham essentially was built around the tobacco and textile industries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Now Durham is a hub of medicine and innovation. This trail, this green transportation corridor, will help make Durham the city that we all want. I am immensely proud of the American Tobacco Trail, which is primarily a recreation and fitness trail. This new rail trail will be a major transportation route for many residents of Durham.

I strongly recommend that the 2020 BUILD Grant for trail construction be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*John A Goebel*

John A. Goebel

Tony Reevy  
2222 W Club Blvd  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-416-0965  
reevys@msn.com

May 7, 2020

Secretary Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am a resident of Durham who has written a number of articles, and five books, about American railroad history. My articles include the first article summarizing the railroad-related history of Durham, North Carolina. I serve on the editorial board of the journal, *Railroad History*.

I strongly support the City of Durham's application for a BUILD Discretionary Grant that would provide funds to move forward with the construction of the Durham Belt Line Trail.

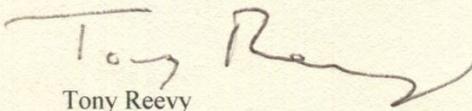
The Durham Belt Line is a 1.75-mile, 17-acre rail corridor that is no longer in use and was purchased by the City of Durham in 2018. The Durham City Council in 2018 adopted a master plan for the trail that was funded by a TIGER planning grant.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will enhance overall mobility, livability, environmental sustainability, and economic competitiveness in Durham and regionally. The trail will connect people to transit and jobs throughout the Triangle by improving bicycle and pedestrian access to downtown Durham, the Durham Station (local and regional bus service), and the Durham Amtrak Station.

The Durham Belt Line Trail will help to alter the pattern of regional sprawl by attracting some of the region's future growth to the corridor, while seeking to enhance and preserve existing communities along the trail, and working to ensure equity through Durham's Blueprint for Equitable Community Engagement. The trail will improve health and quality of life by increasing access to parks and open space, restoring the environment, and showcasing art, culture, and history.

I strongly recommend that the 2020 BUILD Grant be awarded to the City of Durham. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tony Reevy

## Support for The Durham Belt Line and Corridor

Frank White <frank@ewhitecap.com>

Fri 5/8/2020 10:01 AM

To: McKeel, Dale <Dale.McKeel@durhamnc.gov>

Cc: David Fellerath <david.fellerath@gmail.com>; Merritt, Lynda <lynda.merritt@durhamnc.gov>; David Green <davidgreen1220@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. McKeel:

As a resident of Durham, NC I wanted to convey to you and the City of Durham that I fully support the

1.75 miles, 17 acre Durham Belt Line and corridor. The Belt Line is another element to encourage Durhamites to stay active and healthy as well as to provide a recreational and transportation corridor. Additionally, as the city's population density increases it becomes ever more important to carve out public land uses for both current and future generations of Durham citizens.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think there is more I can do or say to help move this project forward.

Sincerely,

--

-----

*Frank White*  
*719 Da Vinci Street*  
*Durham, NC 27704*  
*(919) 530-9821 (voice/text)*