



A caring and affirming Christ-centered fellowship, lay-led and community focused.

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the city has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I serve as a pastor in Shelby, and this project would benefit the community in a variety of ways. As already noted, it would benefit the underserved and disadvantaged communities by providing a safe route for them to access services and commodities. It would benefit the larger community by providing a safe place to exercise. I currently travel by car 20 minutes to use a similar trail in Rutherford County, NC. Finally, it would benefit the community by providing a "sense of community" and a gathering place for fellowship.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at 704-487-8491.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Blanton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rev. Randy Blanton

1207 West Dixon Boulevard, Shelby, NC 28152
Aldersgateshelby.com
704-487-8491



Atrium Health

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 2 0590

RE: Shelby, NC, 2022 RAISE Grant Application for Regional Access Improvement Line

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC, Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street, 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high-minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Brian Gwyn
Senior Vice President, Market President-West

6/19/2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We are also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project because we know the local community has been asking for a safe bicycling space for years. In addition to the countless safety and health benefits, other nearby local cycling communities have often expressed how amazing it would be to have a safe place to also ride in Shelby. This likely would mean an increase in tourism and interest in the City of Shelby.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,

Pietro Policastro & The Boost Bike Shop Team

6/15/2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I currently travel outside of the city to use facilities similar to this proposed rail corridor for safe biking and walking.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at ccrikard@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Carol Rikard



June 3, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We also support the R.A.I.L. project specifically because we have identified it as critical for advancing our mission of linking towns to towns and lives to nature via healthy transportation modes. Our commitment to the project is evident in the financial resources we have provided in recent years, totaling \$1,200,000. We are literally invested in this.

As the lead organization for developing a regional network of greenways and trails throughout 15 counties and two states in the greater Charlotte region, we have enjoyed a successful partnership with Shelby and Cleveland County, resulting in the implementation over 17 miles of paths in that area. Together we continue to work toward the vision for safe, environmentally friendly transportation, equitable access to daily needs, and a better quality of life overall.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If I may be of further assistance, please contact me at bret@carolinathreadtrail.org or 704-342-3330, ex 2216.

Sincerely,

Bret Baronak, Project Director
Carolina Thread Trail

Led by
Catawba Lands
Conservancy

June 12, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically to increase community and development of our area. I foresee a trail similar to Greenville, SC's Swamp Rabbit Trail. That trail has brought visitors and businesses to the area and increased its community. Our rural area needs a boost and I think this would help our town tremendously.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it.

Sincerely, Cassie Plaster

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing because of my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I believe the R.A.I.L. project will increase livability and interaction among all our small city's residents, making our community more equitable and inspiring friendship and shared outdoor experiences among diverse groups.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it.

Sincerely,

Chrys Riviere-Blalock
www.chrysriviereblalock.com



Town of Mooresboro



Town of Belwood



Town of Patterson Springs



C.A.G.O. *Cleveland Association of Government Officials*

*President – John Barrett
Vice-President – Ronnie Whetstine
Secretary – Doris Weaver
Treasurer – Randy B. Carothers*



June 9th 2022



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Town of Kingstown

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE



Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Town of Earl

I am writing with our support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.



Town of Lawndale

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.



Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Town of Lattimore

Sincerely,


John Barrett
President, CAGO

Town of Grover



**CLEVELAND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**
Office of the President

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

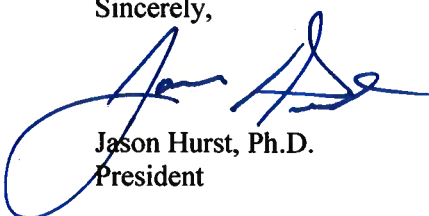
Cleveland Community College strongly supports the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) project Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL) proposed by the City of Shelby, North Carolina. The proposal describes methods to address climate change, ensure racial equity and remove barriers to opportunity for underserved communities. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2 to redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor with 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The RAIL project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The RAIL project helps to address these issues.

Shelby residents comprised nearly one-third of Cleveland Community College's total enrollment in 2020-21. The College also has a high number of low-income students receiving federal Pell grants; therefore, we are supportive of the RAIL project because it will facilitate access to jobs and support worker opportunities and training. As the sole, two-year public institution of higher education serving the City of Shelby, having safe, off-street corridors for alternative transportation is essential. In addition, the College develops apprenticeship programs with local employers and can leverage the new RAIL project for reaching and serving underserved communities, ensuring racial equity and connecting citizens with high-quality job opportunities.

The City of Shelby's application is a stellar example of rebuilding communities with sustainability and equity. Please contact me at hurstj@clevelandcc.edu or 704.669.4004 to discuss our support in more detail.

Sincerely,



Jason Hurst, Ph.D.
President



14 June 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my staunch support for the Shelby, NC, Regional Access Improvement Line [R.A.I.L.] RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle [15.9%] is nearly double the national average [8.6%]. The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because of improved access to small businesses. As we learned through the Covid experience, small businesses are vitally important to the economic well-being of a community. This project could provide increased customer traffic along the route and, therefore, contribute to an improved rate of small business success.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at the mailing address below or 704-669-4146 or padgetts@clevelandcc.edu.

Sincerely,

Steve Padgett, Director
Small Business Center
Cleveland Community College
137 S. Post Road
Shelby, NC 28152



Cleveland County
Arts Council

June 10, 2022

STAFF

Shearra B. Miller
President

Violet Arth Dukes
Marketing Coordinator

2021-2022 OFFICERS

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Michael Harden, Vice-Chair
Erin Borders, Treasurer
Lynn Carter, Secretary
Dr. Kendalyn Lutz-Craver, Past Chair

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Historic Shelby Foundation
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Uptown Shelby Association

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Cleveland County Arts Council I am writing in strong support of the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. It is my understanding that the City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle is nearly double the national average. The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools.

Safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

The Cleveland County Arts Council is also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because there could be opportunities for local artists to contribute public art along the R.A.I.L.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,

Shearra Miller
Executive Director

"Cleveland County
Grows Greater"



RESOLUTION NO. 05-2015

Resolution

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED RAIL TRAIL IN CLEVELAND COUNTY

WHEREAS, outdoor recreation is a cultural and tourism asset valued by the citizens and visitors in Cleveland County; and,

WHEREAS, visitor travel and tourism has emerged as an important segment of the local economy in Cleveland County; and,


WHEREAS, the City of Shelby and Cleveland County have served as overnight hosts to Cycle North Carolina; and


WHEREAS, Cleveland County citizens are actively involved in the promotion of healthy living through outdoor exercise and various programs including the Eat Smart Move More and Step One Challenge initiatives; and,

WHEREAS, a rail trail could become a regional destination with a multitude of benefits to users and non-users and has the potential to offer a safe route for pedestrian and bicycle travel as a transportation alternative, provide outdoor recreation to residents and visitors, attract tourism and stimulate the regional economy, attract and retain employers and new businesses as well as their employees, increase adjacent property values, revitalize communities along the rail corridor, improve quality of life through healthy and active living, and enhance local natural and cultural resources; and,

WHEREAS, the citizens of and visitors to Cleveland County would benefit greatly from the many opportunities brought about by the implementation and access to a high quality rail trail.

NOW, therefore, the Cleveland County Commissioners hereby resolve to declare their support for the proposed Rail Trail in Shelby and Cleveland County as an asset to the cultural and economic vitality of our community and further supports the City of Shelby pursuing the development of a regional coalition of governments, non-profits and private interests toward developing, operating and maintaining said rail trail.


Jason Falls
Chairman

ATTEST:

Henry Earle
County Clerk



June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Cleveland County Schools desires to create an exceptional educational experience for our students and works to prepare students to be successful in their post-secondary careers. The district's mission and vision focus on cultivating excellence in everything that we do. In an effort to cultivate excellence, our Board of Education and staff works with students, parents and community members to create a positive environment in which all students can be successful.

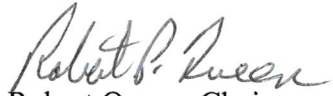
The Cleveland County Board of Education is writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City of Shelby has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

The Cleveland County Board of Education is extremely supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because it directly aligns with our vision and mission. Our Board of Education and school staff are dedicated to making our community a great place to live, work, learn and play. This R.A.I.L. project is a significant piece of the continued and strategic progression of our community. It is our hope that you will acknowledge our letter of support and commitment as an example of partnership and collaboration. Together, we want to make our community the very best it can be.

Enthusiastically, we support this project and the collaborative work of all our community partners. Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for this valuable and important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Queen".

Robert Queen, Chairman
Cleveland County Board of Education



Cleveland County
NORTH CAROLINA

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS
IMPROVEMENT LINE**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Public Health Board for Cleveland County, North Carolina is pleased to submit this letter of support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City of Shelby has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2 of this project to redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged** communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average. The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, especially those which have a high number of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch programs.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare services and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern** as residents often indicate their willingness to engage in positive physical activity yet often cannot find resources easily available for this purpose. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades. As the city has grown, developments have become more isolated and fewer residents have access to personal vehicles for transportation; all of which have contributed to making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The Shelby R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

As the advisory board for public health issues, our purpose is to identify and address those factors which have the greatest health implications on the residents of our county. In our 2019 Community Health Assessment, access to exercise opportunities was identified as a factor

Public Health Center
200 SOUTH POST ROAD • SHELBY NC 28152
PHONE 980.484.5100 • FAX 980.484.5118



Cleveland County
NORTH CAROLINA

needing additional attention by individuals interested in promoting equitable access to health for all. The 2022 County Health Rankings published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation revealed that 30% of our residents reported no leisure time activity on a regular basis. Only 50% of our residents reported easy and safe access to exercise opportunities. These two factors combined with 37% of the adults in the county reporting as overweight/obese have magnified our incidents and rates of chronic diseases, especially cardiovascular disease and diabetes. These high rates have negatively impacted our overall ranking for health outcomes measured by years of life lost prior to age 75 due to preventable chronic disease. This has attributed to Cleveland County's placement in the lowest – unhealthiest – quartile of all counties in the state of NC. While there are recreational facilities across the county, transportation and participant costs leave many adults and children with limited ability to become physically active, potentially impacting their overall physical and mental health. We believe that the Shelby R.A.I.L. project would offer safe, affordable and enhanced opportunities for walking and bicycling along the trail route to residents who might otherwise never participate in physical activity in a meaningful way.

The Shelby R.A.I.L. project will provide a new and safe transportation pathway to residents in Shelby, promoting access to jobs and services as well as enhancing the quality of life in these underserved communities. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential project which will result in benefits to our area.

Sincerely,

Sara Karner, DDS

Chair

Cleveland County Public Health Board

HealthCare Foundation

OF CLEVELAND COUNTY

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mayor Anthony:

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County's mission is to improve the overall health and wellness of our community. Access to safe walking trails and greenways is a critical need for our county and we stand ready to assist the city in making this project a reality. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.

- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Richard F. Baker, Jr. IOM, CFRM
Executive Director

PO Box 550
Shelby, North Carolina 28151
980-487-3586
HealthCareFoundationCC.org

Dr. Michael Barringer
Alex Bell
Amber Brown MMS, PA-C
Ralph "Scoot" Dixon
Emily Epley
Chris Gash

Bryon Gragg
Brian Gwyn
Larry Hamrick, Jr.
Dr. Lauren Massey-Williams, DMD
Tropzie McCluney
Kip Smith

Joseph Suttle IV
Dr. Patrick Vollmer, OD
Skip Warrick
Richard F. Baker, Jr.

**GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Transportation Planning

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1748
Gastonia, North Carolina 28053

Physical Address:
150 South York Street
Gastonia, North Carolina 28052

Tel: (704) 866.6837
Fax: (704) 869.1960

www.gclmpo.org

March 28, 2022

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

RE: Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL) 2022 RAISE Grant

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

GCLMPO coordinates with the City of Shelby and all other municipalities within the MPO area to develop long range transportation plans, such as the MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP identifies the Shelby RAIL (formerly known as the Shelby/Cleveland County Rail Trail) as a need in the overall regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The MPO's goals include improving safety, the efficiency of networks, quality of life, quality of the environment, and equitable distribution of transportation benefits. The Shelby RAIL is a positive step towards all of these goals.

The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The RAIL project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that lack public transportation.
- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

- Increase safety by separating bicyclists and pedestrian from motor vehicle traffic and reducing the number of intersections compared to parallel on-road trips.
- Advance implementation of the regional Carolina Thread Trail connecting both residents and visitors to existing parks and cultural and educational resources.
- Promote sustainability by encouraging alternatives to driving, as more bicycle and pedestrian trips promote physical and mental health, shrink carbon footprints, and reduce pollution of air and stormwater runoff.

The GCLMPO fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Neisler, Chair
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO



May 6, 2020

Mr. Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
PO Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mayor Anthony:

The Alliance for Health in Cleveland County is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) grant for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL) project.

In this project, the City of Shelby plans to connect communities through multimodal transportation, a critical step in moving Shelby forward. Through this project, the city will be able to achieve common goals of safety and economic and community development and will be able to sustain these outcomes for its residents. With the proposed off-street mode of transportation, safety will increase through shared-use pathways. Economic and community development will flourish with this connectivity of new and existing park projects. There will be increases in health and wellness of residents as they access the pathways along with a reduction in carbon footprint and improved environmental qualities.

The Alliance for Health is committed to improving health and wellness for all of the communities of Cleveland County through prevention and education programming and projects. In our 2015 Community Health Assessment as well as updated data from the 2019 assessment we found that our residents needed more access to opportunities for safe physical exercise in order to reduce obesity and the prevalence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes in our communities. We have worked with the City of Shelby previously in re-establishing a Farmers' Market to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables and in marking walking trails for residents in the city proper. This BUILD grant will provide an opportunity for increased access to physical activity for residents through the infrastructure of the RAIL project. BUILD stresses the importance of expanding access to reliable, safe and affordable transportation for communities, addressing public health and safety and promoting regional connectivity and economic growth. Specifically, the RAIL project offers two important outcomes for residents of Shelby and the surrounding communities:

- Providing opportunities for transportation corridors for recreation and alternative modes of transportation
- Developing a pathway providing new, safe access to a variety of neighborhoods for job opportunities

The Alliance for Health supports the City of Shelby's initiative to move forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dotty Leatherwood".

Dotty Leatherwood, Chair
Board of Directors, Alliance for Health in Cleveland County, Inc.



Cleveland County

NORTH CAROLINA

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony,

The Cleveland County Health Department is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City of Shelby plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

The Cleveland County Health Department has worked with the City of Shelby previously to identify safe and secure walking trails within the city and to make city-owned parks smoke free. Currently we feel that addition transportation options will provide residents in underserved areas greater potential to reach the healthcare services that we provide and improve their overall quality of life. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby.

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation. Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

The Cleveland County Health Department fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Hansen
Health Director

Public Health Center
200 SOUTH POST ROAD • SHELBY NC 28152
PHONE 980.484.5100 • FAX 980.484.5118

"Cleveland County
Grows Greater"



RESOLUTION NO. 05-2015

Resolution

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED RAIL TRAIL IN CLEVELAND COUNTY

WHEREAS, outdoor recreation is a cultural and tourism asset valued by the citizens and visitors in Cleveland County; and,

WHEREAS, visitor travel and tourism has emerged as an important segment of the local economy in Cleveland County; and,


WHEREAS, the City of Shelby and Cleveland County have served as overnight hosts to Cycle North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland County citizens are actively involved in the promotion of healthy living through outdoor exercise and various programs including the Eat Smart Move More and Step One Challenge initiatives; and,


WHEREAS, a rail trail could become a regional destination with a multitude of benefits to users and non-users and has the potential to offer a safe route for pedestrian and bicycle travel as a transportation alternative, provide outdoor recreation to residents and visitors, attract tourism and stimulate the regional economy, attract and retain employers and new businesses as well as their employees, increase adjacent property values, revitalize communities along the rail corridor, improve quality of life through healthy and active living, and enhance local natural and cultural resources; and,

WHEREAS, the citizens of and visitors to Cleveland County would benefit greatly from the many opportunities brought about by the implementation and access to a high quality rail trail.

NOW, therefore, the Cleveland County Commissioners hereby resolve to declare their support for the proposed Rail Trail in Shelby and Cleveland County as an asset to the cultural and economic vitality of our community and further supports the City of Shelby pursuing the development of a regional coalition of governments, non-profits and private interests toward developing, operating and maintaining said rail trail.


Jason Falls
Chairman

ATTEST:


Henry Earle
County Clerk



May 7, 2020

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Cleveland County Schools is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

Cleveland County Schools continues to have a wonderful relationship with the City of Shelby and currently partners with the City on several existing projects. Cleveland County Schools stands with the City of Shelby in the pursuit of community safety, economic development and community well-being.

The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.

- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Cleveland County Schools supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Fisher', written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Fisher, Ed.D
Superintendent
Cleveland County Schools

Cc: Rick Howell, City Manager, City of Shelby
Shearra Miller, Chair, Cleveland County Board of Education



Township Three Elementary School

"A School of Community and Family Commitment"

Molly Blanton
Principal

Brandy Curtis
Assistant Principal

Joye Henderson
Assistant Principal

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Township Three Elementary School is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

Township Three Elementary School serves a vast community that will benefit from this project for years to come. We appreciate the support from the City of Shelby with our DARE Officers and Resource Officers which serve all of Cleveland County. It is our desire as a school to help children and families come together to grow safely and play and work well with others. The vision of Township Three is to challenge all students to reach their greatest potential. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.
- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County. I enjoy using various Rail Trails in other counties so I am truly excited to see one in my own community.

Township Three Elementary School fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. I also live in the community and look forward to seeing this development take life. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,
Molly D. Blanton, Principal

July 9, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151



Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Visit Cleveland County is pleased to support the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City's plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby's ability to connect communities will help achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people. These goals that facilitate quality of life can also have positive economic impacts as a tourism driver as well as being conducive to recruitment of new business and industry. The quality of life of existing and future residents would certainly be enhanced and be a draw.

Visit Cleveland County is excited to see this RAIL project move forward due to the many positive impacts it will have for our community and even region. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation.

Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to jobs for residents of Shelby's various neighborhoods while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our full support for the City of Shelby's initiative to move forward with the RAISE application. We are committed to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,


Emily Epley
Tourism Director



A RESOLUTION

Of Support for A Rail/Trail Initiative in Cleveland County

Whereas:

The Norfolk Southern Railway has announced plans to abandon approximately 13.5 miles of Rail Line in Cleveland County
and

Whereas:

Approximately 1 mile of that line lies within the Town Limits of the **Town of Patterson Springs**
and

Whereas:

A Rail-Trail would be beneficial to Cleveland County, the City of Shelby, the **Town of Patterson Springs** AND the Town of Earl.

The Town Council of the Town of Patterson Springs resolves that the **Town of Patterson Springs endorses and supports** a rail-trail initiative that includes said rail right-of-way in and Cleveland County.

Adopted in Regular Session,
this Third Day of August, Two Thousand and Fifteen.



Mayor
Van Canipe


Attest
Bobby Horton, Clerk

TOWN OF EARL

Max H. Hopper
Mayor

PO Box 1 • Earl, NC • 28083

Council Members
Lalade Moss, Pro Tem
Patti Norman
Ann Thackerson
Betsy Lavender

A RESOLUTION Of Support for a Rail/Trail Initiative in Cleveland County

Whereas:

The Norfolk Southern Railway has announced plans to abandon approximately 13.5 miles of rail line in Cleveland County
and

Whereas:

Approximately one mile of that rail line lies within the town limits of the **Town of Earl**
and

Whereas:

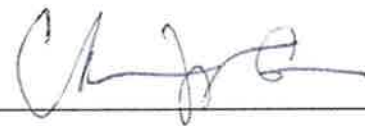
A Rail/Trail would be beneficial to Cleveland County, the City of Shelby, the Town of Patterson Springs AND the **Town of Earl**

**The Town Council of the Town of Earl Resolves that the
Town of Earl endorses and supports a rail/trail initiative
that includes said rail right-of-way in Earl and Cleveland County.**

Adopted in Regular Session,
this, the Twenty Seventh Day of July, Two Thousand and Fifteen.



Mayor
Max H. Hopper



Attest
Cherish Cawthon, Town Clerk





N.C. Cooperative Extension
Cleveland County Center
cleveland.ces.ncsu.edu

130 South Post Road, Suite 1
Shelby, NC 28152
P704-482-4365

June 29, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Mayor:

NC Cooperative Extension is pleased to endorse the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project helps Shelby connect its communities through multimodal transportation, increase modal options and equity for individuals, and increase transport for underserved areas. The resulting shift in passenger movement will reduce the City's carbon footprint, thereby improving quality of life for plants, wildlife, and people.

NC Cooperative Extension has partnered with Shelby on several projects that make the City a progressive and pleasant place to live, work and visit. We engaged community leaders in development of a strategic plan that fostered creation of Earl Scruggs Center and Don Gibson Theater. Extension also helped establish Foothills Farmers' Market and procured significant grant funds for construction of our beautiful Market Pavilion in Uptown Shelby. Our market provides access to the freshest local foods available, and contributes significantly to health, economy and social fabric of the local community. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project aligns with several of NC Cooperative Extension's major program areas, including active living, community economic development, and natural resources conservation.

The RAISE Grant provides the City of Shelby an opportunity to invest in infrastructure that will expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, promote regional connectivity, and facilitate growth in underserved communities. It will contribute to the City's present and future community and economic development efforts by:

- Creating transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes.
- Providing residents with expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation.
- Giving residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods with new, safe access to jobs
- Providing residents and visitors alike with access between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

NC Cooperative Extension fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

Gregory B. Traywick,
County Extension Director





July 7, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Ivar's Display, Inc. is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

Ivar's Display and its workforce would greatly benefit if the City of Shelby were able to enhance and expand its current infrastructure and additional opportunities for various forms of transportation and options for our workforce to commute to and from work. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation.

Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Ivar's Display fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

Jason Gundersen
CEO, Ivar's Display



1028 Railroad Ave
Shelby NC 28152
704-300-3938

alex.taylor@integritymedicalsolutions.com

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Tube Enterprises Inc is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

Tube Enterprises Inc moved to Shelby 6 years ago and is bordered by the rail line that will converted and connected to downtown. We have worked with the city to improve the neighborhood over here off of South Morgan street. We have bought and demolished old houses. We are working with the city to combine our lots and do an addition to improve the view of our building from Morgan Street. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.
- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Tube Enterprises Inc fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex Taylor III".

5/15/2020



EARL SCRUGGS CENTER

MUSIC & STORIES FROM THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

The Earl Scruggs Center is pleased to offer its support for the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

Connectivity is vital for community growth and the City's plan for multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The RAISE program and the RAIL project share the common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, providing increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. This project achieves sustainability by reducing the City's carbon footprint, beautifying our community and improving the quality of life.

The Earl Scruggs Center has a longstanding, collaborative relationship with the City of Shelby as we work together to provide cultural resources and educational opportunities, build community, attract visitors, and improve quality of life for the citizens of Shelby. The City's investment in the RAIL project will expand transportation and access to essential services, including cultural resources, for communities that currently have a lack of public transportation. This innovative project will give residents from a variety of Shelby's neighborhoods access to jobs and provide a new pathway between corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County for both residents and visitors.

The RAISE Grant would provide the City of Shelby with the opportunity to invest in the important Shelby RAIL project. Through this effort, the City will expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation in an equitable way while promoting regional connectivity, and facilitating growth in underserved communities.

The Earl Scruggs Center fully supports the City of Shelby's application for the RAISE Grant. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Beth Martin". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Executive Director
Earl Scruggs Center
704.487.6233
marybeth@earlscruggscenter.org

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Destination Cleveland County is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, RAISE, grant for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line, RAIL.

I see the City's plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation as a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

Destination Cleveland County was pleased to have the opportunity to partner with the City of Shelby to revitalize and re-energize uptown focusing on community and economic development. The RAISE Grant would give the City of Shelby another opportunity to expand this vision by investing in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby RAIL. RAISE emphasizes the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby.

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Expand access for residents to have transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that lack public transportation. This would encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide safe alternative modal options.
- Create a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's diverse neighborhoods and jobs. It will provide access not only to residents but visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Destination Cleveland County fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,


Amanda Gragg, DCC Chair



Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

The Don Gibson Theatre is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

The Don Gibson Theatre is a North Carolina Main Street award winner for Best Public-Private Partnership. We are dedicated to enriching the quality of life for our residents and look forward to another worthwhile venture. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation

Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

The Don Gibson Theatre fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Executive Director,
Don Gibson Theatre

HealthCare Foundation

OF CLEVELAND COUNTY

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mayor Anthony:

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County's mission is to improve the overall health and wellness of our community. Access to safe walking trails and greenways is a critical need for our county and we stand ready to assist the city in making this project a reality. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.

- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

The HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Richard F. Baker, Jr. IOM, CFRM
Executive Director

PO Box 550
Shelby, North Carolina 28151
980-487-3586
HealthCareFoundationCC.org

Dr. Michael Barringer
Alex Bell
Amber Brown MMS, PA-C
Ralph "Scoot" Dixon
Emily Epley
Chris Gash

Bryon Gragg
Brian Gwyn
Larry Hamrick, Jr.
Dr. Lauren Massey-Williams, DMD
Tropzie McCluney
Kip Smith

Joseph Suttle IV
Dr. Patrick Vollmer, OD
Skip Warrick
Richard F. Baker, Jr.



**HOSPICE CLEVELAND COUNTY
FOUNDATION** *Striving to maintain the success
of the hospice tradition in Cleveland County*

June 23, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Hospice Cleveland County Foundation is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will significantly contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby.

As you may be aware, the mission of Hospice Cleveland County Foundation is to strive to maintain the success of the hospice tradition in Cleveland County by supporting efforts to help people lead healthy, productive lives and experience peaceful, dignified deaths. We seek to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and in life. Access to reliable and affordable transportation is a major barrier to healthy living and overall success for so many in our community. With the City's focus on improving and expanding affordable and safe transportation for underserved communities, together we share a common goal.

Hospice Cleveland County Foundation supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Emily Arey
Executive Director
Hospice Cleveland County Foundation
emily@hospiceccfoundation.org
hospiceccfoundation.org

212 South Washington Street
Shelby, North Carolina 28150



211 S. Trade St
Shelby, NC 28150
704-484-3100
www.uptownshelby.com

March 26, 2022

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mayor Anthony,

The Uptown Shelby Association is pleased to offer our enthusiastic support of the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation R.A.I.S.E. grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.).

The Uptown Shelby Association was formed 40 years ago to build partnerships among diverse groups, facilitate development, and enhance our district through revitalization efforts. We have worked closely with the City of Shelby for four decades to accomplish our shared goals of cultivating sustainable development, improving the multimodal transportation network, and creating jobs through economic development to improve our community's quality of life. We believe that the City's plan to connect its residents to important services and amenities through multimodal transportation via the Shelby R.A.I.L. project is an essential step to help our community achieve these goals.

As you know, a higher-than-average proportion of our community relies on walking and biking as their primary mode of transportation. This access line will be a major asset for these residents, as it will be an alternative route to busy city roads and rural state highways where sidewalks are non-existent. The R.A.I.L. project will improve transportation choices for people in our community by recycling a former rail corridor and revitalizing an under-used pedestrian bridge over US-74. Due to the lack of other safe routes, the corridor has already been used for years by students walking to school without proper surfacing, lighting, or other safety features. Once redeveloped, the R.A.I.L. will represent a significant increase in access for the predominantly low-income neighborhoods south of US-74, which have very limited pedestrian/bike access across the highway. According to the EJSCREEN mapping tool, these neighborhoods – specifically those adjacent to the proposed R.A.I.L. corridor – range from the 80th to 98th percentile on the low income indicator when compared to the US average. When considering environmental justice indicators, several of these neighborhoods are also ranked high (90th percentile and above) for high-risk, including lead paint, Superfund proximity, and wastewater discharge.

This project will improve connectivity and increase safety by creating a multimodal route that offers more direct access to opportunities and essential services, including employment, education, public transportation, the library, and the farmers market. Both Shelby High School and Shelby Middle School will be connected to the R.A.I.L. by spur lines. The Foothills Farmers Market accepts SNAP throughout the year and offers matching funds as an incentive for SNAP customers to use their benefits to purchase fresh produce. The R.A.I.L. project will also provide these neighborhoods with safe access to the Cleveland County Transit route and the award-winning West End REACH route. The latter is a free route with stops at the County Health Department, DSS, library, health care providers, several grocery stores, and Cleveland Community College (where a \$15 million workforce development facility is slated to open this summer). The regional access line will also allow low/moderate income and underserved residents to more easily reach the Shelby City Park and attend free events in Uptown Shelby.

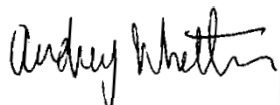
In terms of economic growth, the Shelby R.A.I.L. project has *already* begun stimulating private development and much more is expected once the project is complete. Three formerly-vacant buildings have been renovated by private developers in anticipation of the R.A.I.L. project. One was a former dry cleaner that sat empty for years until a local investor learned of the regional access line proposal, and was willing to navigate the brownfield remediation process. After nearly \$2 million in clean-up fees, plus a full building renovation, the property is now home to two thriving entrepreneurs of color: a successful Black woman-owned bakery and a Thai woman-owned restaurant. Two other large vacant buildings were also renovated as a result of the proposal, totaling over 42,000 sf of commercial space and over \$4.5 million in private investment. In addition, three building renovations are underway by developers whose confidence is bolstered by the R.A.I.L. plans. Three projects on properties immediately adjacent to the corridor are in the planning phase – one under contract and two already purchased; the future of all three is closely tied to the completion of the R.A.I.L. Of these, the two largest properties are brownfields sites, and this access line is a significant incentive to undertake the complicated remediation process. The final major project in the works is a large apartment complex that is proposed on a site across the street from the access line (property acquisition and rezoning are complete). The addition of these apartments would help address a critical need for workforce housing in our community.

Based on the developer enthusiasm for these projects as well as on-going conversations with local business and property owners, we expect an additional increase in investment activity after construction begins on the R.A.I.L. There are a number of other vacant and underutilized commercial properties along the corridor that will be made more valuable and desirable by the conversion of the corridor into a regional access line.

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line represents a major opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in a critical infrastructure project with the help of the R.A.I.S.E. grant. As I hope I have demonstrated here, this project will have a significant impact and is closely aligned with the goals of the R.A.I.S.E. program.

The Uptown Shelby Association is committed to the success of the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project and fully supports the City of Shelby's R.A.I.S.E. grant application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential project.

Sincerely,



Audrey Whetten
Executive Director



March 25, 2022

Oliver Stanhope Anthony, III, Mayor
City of Shelby
P.O. Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

RE: Letter of Support – 2022 RAISE Grant for Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL)

Dear Mr. Anthony, III

On behalf of the Carolina Thread Trail staff and governing board, please accept this letter as our full endorsement of the City of Shelby's effort to obtain funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program, to assist in the development of approximately 10 miles of rail trail from Shelby to the SC state line.

As the lead organization for developing a regional network of greenways and trails throughout 15 counties and two states in the greater Charlotte region, we have enjoyed a successful partnership with Shelby and Cleveland County, resulting in the implementation 17+ miles of trail in that portion of our region. Moreover, financial resources provided through the Carolina Thread Trail total \$1,200,000; this includes \$35,000 awarded in 2017 specifically to develop a trail plan for the subject rail corridor, and \$200,000 awarded in 2021 to assist with construction.

The mission of the Carolina Thread Trail centers on connectivity, linking lives to nature and towns to towns. We have identified the Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL) project as one the most prominent in our entire region. Given its length and accessibility, it will have a profound impact on community transformation by providing safer, off-road, environmentally friendly transportation options, spurring economic development, and encouraging healthy recreation. All of these benefits improve the quality of life for the wide range of neighborhoods, towns, and rural areas traversed by the corridor.

Again, I am pleased to endorse your application efforts and stand ready to assist in future efforts to advance this regional access project. I am confident that your application will be evaluated with favorable consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you need additional information.

Kindest regards,

Bret Baronak, Project Director
Carolina Thread Trail

Led by
Catawba Lands
Conservancy



June 29, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III:

Foothills Farmers' Market wholeheartedly supports the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project help Shelby connect its communities through multimodal transportation, increase modal options and equity, and increase transport for underserved areas. This shift in passenger movement will reduce the City's carbon footprint, thereby improving quality of life for plants, wildlife, and people.

Foothills Farmers' Market has been a part of what makes Shelby so special since 2009. We provide equitable community access to healthy, whole foods produced within 50 miles of Cleveland County. We value and support family farms, foster entrepreneurship, promote good nutrition, and strengthen the social fabric of the local community. Our programs and services help citizens enjoy the economic, health, environmental, and social benefits of a resilient local food system. Foothills Farmers' Market has become widely recognized as the cornerstone of Shelby's local food movement and a Saturday morning destination in Uptown Shelby.


The RAISE Grant aids the City of Shelby in creating infrastructure that improves community access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation, addresses racial equity, promotes regional connectivity, and facilitates economic and social growth in underserved communities. It will bolster the City's community and economic development efforts by:

- Creating transportation corridors that reduce environmental pollution
- Expanding community to transportation and essential services through new connections, critical to communities with a lack of public transportation.
- Giving Shelby's residents new, safe access to jobs and other essential services
- Providing residents and visitors with access between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Foothills Farmers' Market fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,


Vanne Young, Board Chair
Foothills Farmers' Market

fresh. local. friendly.

130 S. Post Road, Suite 1 · Shelby, NC 28152

6/15/2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I currently travel outside of the city to use facilities similar to this proposed rail corridor for safe biking and walking.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at ddrikard@gmail.com

Sincerely,

David Rikard

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

6/16/2022

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my *enthusiastic* support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Independent of this project, the City of Shelby and Cleveland County are growing and will continue to grow. *The opportunity for impact is of the greatest importance due to this growth*. This project and others will benefit people across the region immediately and for hopefully generations to come. As our somewhat rural area increases in population, many of those in historically disadvantaged communities will have their existing problems compounded. This project specifically will aid in their time of need.

Pros of the Shelby Rail Trail include tourism, short *and* long term job creation, and the beautification of infrastructure turning an eyesore into an amenity to be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. The *double-edged reality* is there will also be the attraction of investors to increase property values and tax base to fund further projects. Other than creation of new housing, those increases to property values will also become a detriment to these same at-risk communities. Shelby's future growth will make housing even more expensive for families in historically disadvantaged communities. As prices and expensive housing density increase, more families will move into rural settings. They will need access into town even more than before. Vehicle costs and increasing vehicle maintenance costs continue to be out of reach for most. This project will become a lifeline to schools, grocery, services, and cultural events. Funding this project in Shelby, North Carolina will have an immeasurable impact on our region, businesses, families, and their children. If the DOT can advance the movement of people in ways beyond motor vehicles, this is the first step for Shelby.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me 704-418-6200.

Sincerely,

David Royster, IV
Citizen of Shelby

June 12, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

This project not only connects disadvantaged and underserved communities to the wider opportunities the city provides, but serves as a social thread that weaves our community together for the betterment of all. This completed trail will solve some mobility problems, provide an easily accessible and safe environment for outdoor exercise and create equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community. For decades, the City of Shelby has struggled with the challenge of safe accessibility as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

As a volunteer, I co-founded the 1,500-acre Broad River Greenway, with a network of 12 miles. I have seen the delight on the faces of citizens of all ages as they have safe access to the outdoors. This project not only offers the same opportunity but provides the backbone of a corridor through our city. As a tax payer and one who has observed the leadership of our city as it has demonstrated its thoroughness and accountability, I can't imagine a worthier candidate.

If I can be of any help, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Martha R. "Brownie" Plaster
Broad River Greenway, founding co-chairman
Destination Cleveland County, founding chairman



June 20,2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because this city is poised for growth due to the proximity of major interstate corridors. This project reinforces a commitment to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Cleveland County. Additionally, this important revitalization work benefits regional partners like us!

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at CatherineH@discoveryplace.org.

Sincerely,



Catherine Wilson Horne
President & CEO, Discovery Place

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

The Don Gibson Theatre is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

The Don Gibson Theatre is a North Carolina Main Street award winner for Best Public-Private Partnership. We are dedicated to enriching the quality of life for our residents and look forward to another worthwhile venture. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation

Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

The Don Gibson Theatre fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Executive Director,
Don Gibson Theatre



June 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line project will provide access not only to its residents but visitors alike. It will offer a place to not only ride/walk safely away from road traffic, but a place of peace, a place to be in nature, a place to enjoy the beauty within the City of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at atgragg@gmail.com or 704-476-6505.

Sincerely,

Amanda Gragg
Executive Director, Dover Foundation





EARL SCRUGGS CENTER
MUSIC & STORIES FROM THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

The Earl Scruggs Center is pleased to offer its support for the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

Connectivity is vital for community growth and the City's plan for multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The RAISE program and the RAIL project share the common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, providing increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. This project achieves sustainability by reducing the City's carbon footprint, beautifying our community and improving the quality of life.

The Earl Scruggs Center has a longstanding, collaborative relationship with the City of Shelby as we work together to provide cultural resources and educational opportunities, build community, attract visitors, and improve quality of life for the citizens of Shelby. The City's investment in the RAIL project will expand transportation and access to essential services, including cultural resources, for communities that currently have a lack of public transportation. This innovative project will give residents from a variety of Shelby's neighborhoods access to jobs and provide a new pathway between corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County for both residents and visitors.

The RAISE Grant would provide the City of Shelby with the opportunity to invest in the important Shelby RAIL project. Through this effort, the City will expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation in an equitable way while promoting regional connectivity, and facilitating growth in underserved communities.

The Earl Scruggs Center fully supports the City of Shelby's application for the RAISE Grant. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Beth Martin". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Executive Director
Earl Scruggs Center
704.487.6233
marybeth@earlscruggscenter.org



June 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

My name is Roy Jones, CEO of Electricities of NC, Inc. I am writing with Electricities' full support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City of Shelby, North Carolina has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs.

Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as Shelby has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

The City of Shelby is one of Electricities' North Carolina public power member communities and we strongly support their efforts to improve their city and the lives of their citizens. Specifically, using the R.A.I.L project to benefit the lives of many underserved community members who, at minimum, deserve safe, alternative transportation routes.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and Electricities' support for the application. Please feel free to contact me through my contact information below if I can be of further assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Roy Jones", written in a cursive style.

Roy Jones





June 16, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, a nationally-accredited land trust serving eight counties in Western North Carolina, including Cleveland County, I am writing to express strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina's support for it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Kota".

Andrew Kota
Executive Director

akota@foothillsconservancy.org





June 29, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III:

Foothills Farmers' Market wholeheartedly supports the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project help Shelby connect its communities through multimodal transportation, increase modal options and equity, and increase transport for underserved areas. This shift in passenger movement will reduce the City's carbon footprint, thereby improving quality of life for plants, wildlife, and people.

Foothills Farmers' Market has been a part of what makes Shelby so special since 2009. We provide equitable community access to healthy, whole foods produced within 50 miles of Cleveland County. We value and support family farms, foster entrepreneurship, promote good nutrition, and strengthen the social fabric of the local community. Our programs and services help citizens enjoy the economic, health, environmental, and social benefits of a resilient local food system. Foothills Farmers' Market has become widely recognized as the cornerstone of Shelby's local food movement and a Saturday morning destination in Uptown Shelby.


The RAISE Grant aids the City of Shelby in creating infrastructure that improves community access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation, addresses racial equity, promotes regional connectivity, and facilitates economic and social growth in underserved communities. It will bolster the City's community and economic development efforts by:

- Creating transportation corridors that reduce environmental pollution
- Expanding community to transportation and essential services through new connections, critical to communities with a lack of public transportation.
- Giving Shelby's residents new, safe access to jobs and other essential services
- Providing residents and visitors with access between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Foothills Farmers' Market fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,


Vanne Young, Board Chair
Foothills Farmers' Market

fresh. local. friendly.

130 S. Post Road, Suite 1 · Shelby, NC 28152



Laura Lynch
Interim Dep. Director

Fred Baisden
Chairman

Executive Committee
Max Hopper
Bryan King
Dean Buff
Jimmy Dancy
Jack Shytle
Ashley Wooten

111 West Court Street | P. O. Box 841
Rutherfordton, North Carolina 28139-0841

www.FoothillsRegion.org

June 9, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with [my/our] strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We are also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because it provides an opportunity for regional multimodal connectivity between Shelby/Cleveland County and the other three counties within our region. The possibility of being able to link the Thermal Belt Rail Train in the future with the Shelby Rail Trail would be invaluable to our economic development efforts promoting regional tourism.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If we can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Baisden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Fred" being more prominent.

EMAIL letters to Leslie Mozingo at leslie@strategics.consulting with copy to Rick Howell at rick.howell@cityofshelby.com

**GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Transportation Planning

June 6, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1748
Gastonia, North Carolina 28053

Physical Address:
150 South York Street
Gastonia, North Carolina 28052

Tel: (704) 866.6837
Fax: (704) 869.1960

www.gclmpo.org

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) is pleased to offer its strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor with 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

GCLMPO coordinates with the City of Shelby and all other municipalities within the MPO area to develop long range transportation plans, such as the MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP identifies the R.A.I.L. project (formerly known as the Shelby/Cleveland County Rail Trail) as a need in the overall regional network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The MPO's goals include improving safety, the efficiency of networks, quality of life, quality of the environment, and equitable distribution of transportation benefits. The R.A.I.L. project is a positive step towards all of these goals.

The GCLMPO supports the R.A.I.L. project because it will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that lack public transportation.
- It is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.
- Increase safety by separating bicyclists and pedestrian from motor vehicle traffic and reducing the number of intersections compared to parallel on-road trips.

- Advance implementation of the regional Carolina Thread Trail connecting both residents and visitors to existing parks and cultural and educational resources.
- Promote sustainability by encouraging alternatives to driving, as more bicycle and pedestrian trips promote physical and mental health, shrink carbon footprints, and reduce pollution of air and stormwater runoff.

The GCLMPO fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Randi P. Gates, AICP
GCLMPO Administrator

6/15/2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I currently travel outside of the city to use facilities similar to this proposed rail corridor for safe biking and walking.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at ggrikard17@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Grady Rikard

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,

Corine Guseman
Hal Dedmond



**HOSPICE CLEVELAND COUNTY
FOUNDATION** *Striving to maintain the success
of the hospice tradition in Cleveland County*

June 23, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Hospice Cleveland County Foundation is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will significantly contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby.

As you may be aware, the mission of Hospice Cleveland County Foundation is to strive to maintain the success of the hospice tradition in Cleveland County by supporting efforts to help people lead healthy, productive lives and experience peaceful, dignified deaths. We seek to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and in life. Access to reliable and affordable transportation is a major barrier to healthy living and overall success for so many in our community. With the City's focus on improving and expanding affordable and safe transportation for underserved communities, together we share a common goal.

Hospice Cleveland County Foundation supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,



Emily Arey
Executive Director
Hospice Cleveland County Foundation
emily@hospiceccfoundation.org
hospiceccfoundation.org

212 South Washington Street
Shelby, North Carolina 28150



July 7, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Ivar's Display, Inc. is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation, this being a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of increasing modal options and equity for individuals, provide increased transport for underserved areas, and support a modal shift in passenger movement to reduce emissions. Sustainability can be achieved by reducing the City's carbon footprint, and improving the quality of life of plants, wildlife, and people.

Ivar's Display and its workforce would greatly benefit if the City of Shelby were able to enhance and expand its current infrastructure and additional opportunities for various forms of transportation and options for our workforce to commute to and from work. The RAISE Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. RAISE stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate growth in underserved communities. The RAISE Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

Encourage and provide opportunities for transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes. Residents will have expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation.

Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Ivar's Display fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

Jason Gundersen
CEO, Ivar's Display

June 16, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The city of Shelby has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the city has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because it should bring more commerce to a historically economically depressed rural community, and thus should enhance the quality of life for the entire community.

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at 704-692-2988.

Sincerely,

John E. Crosland, DDS

6/15/2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I currently travel outside of the city to use facilities similar to this proposed rail corridor for safe biking and walking.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at jjrikard@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Josie Rikard

June 17, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If we can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at jqbrackett@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Julie Brackett
Mark Brackett

June 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The city has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the city has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Kim and Sam Davis: Dragonfly Marketing are supportive of the R.A.I.L. As lifelong residents of Shelby and as small business owner we are continually looking for ways to enhance the quality of life in our community. Right now, to enjoy a long bike ride or hike on a solid service you must travel to another county. I can see the health and quality of life benefits this trail would give to our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,
Kim and Sam Davis
Dragonfly Marketing and Events



June 15, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The City of Kings Mountain, NC strongly supports the City of Shelby, NC's effort in applying for a RAISE Grant for the purpose of completing Phase 2 of the Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.). The \$24,998,438, requested would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor with 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. This project will provide transportation for the underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where 15.9% of residents have no vehicle which is nearly double the national average of 8.6%. The R.A.I.L. project provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition, it will provide equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, The City of Shelby has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Kings Mountain is supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because Cleveland County has been identified as the 83rd worst counties out of 100 for healthy outcomes. Obesity and lack of exercise is one of the worst problems facing us. So, it stands to reason we need opportunities for our citizens, identified above, to be able to safely improve their lives through exercise.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at 704-734-0333

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Scott Neisler".

G. Scott Neisler
Mayor
City of Kings Mountain



June 20, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We are also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because it will bring tourism dollars to our community. As a small business, we rely on foot traffic in Uptown Shelby. The R.A.I.L. project will substantially increase business for all retail establishments.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If we can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at any time: meghan.stout@gmail.com or 828-446-9278.

Sincerely,

Meghan Stout

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

June 16, 2022

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

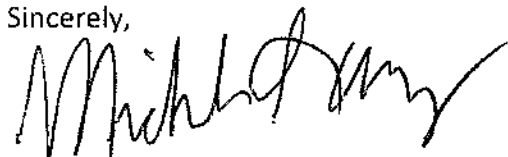
In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I am part of Shelby's cycling community and know how important safe biking paths are for small rural towns who are attempting to join biking enthusiasm with economic development. A neighboring county installed a rails trail several years ago which has led to dramatic growth in the downtown district. Many cyclists from our county pack up their bikes and travel elsewhere to take advantage of bikes paths. They, unfortunately, spend their dollars in other counties, not our own! We have a population here in Shelby that has been waiting with anxious anticipation to see progress on our own rails trail. With the help of this grant, it could finally become a reality. I believe this would become a well used thoroughfare for many other citizens as well, helping to seal Shelby's reviving uptown and connecting parks and neighborhoods throughout our diverse little hamlet.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it.

I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at #704-477-7717.

Sincerely,



Michelle Garey

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing with my **strong** support for the **Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application**. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%).

The **R.A.I.L. project** also provides low income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch. In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The **R.A.I.L. project** helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the **R.A.I.L. project** specifically because as a *small business owner for over 5 decades in Shelby*, our community has continued to weather one economic storm after the other. It is *awesome* to be considered for such a grant that would in fact be life changing for our community! I love to travel and can say that I have ventured into every state with the exception of Alaska. My wife and I have ridden 28 rail trails across the country...in fact, that is one of the key factors in determining our stays! We have noticed that communities with trail systems are more healthy and inviting. It simply amazes me at the number of folks that utilize such a great resource. My curiosity has me asking random folks why they enjoy the trails. The number one answer..."*I don't have to worry about getting run over by a car!*"

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at 704.418.5435 or email cm@monroetire.com

Sincerely,

Chris Monroe



515 S. Lafayette St.
Shelby, NC 28150
704.482.8381
www.monroetire.com

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of Mountain BizWorks and our affiliate WNC-MADE X MTNS Regional Economic Development Initiative with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We are also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project because of its strong regional economic and community development potential. Mountain BizWorks and WNC-MADE X MTNS are building a vibrant and inclusive entrepreneurial community and supporting communities to advance their outdoor recreation economy priorities. Strategic investments in outdoor infrastructure act as catalyst for transformative growth that can enhance the people and places in this exceptional part of the country.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,



Matthew Raker
Executive Director, Mountain BizWorks



N.C. Cooperative Extension
Cleveland County Center
cleveland.ces.ncsu.edu

130 South Post Road, Suite 1
Shelby, NC 28152
P704-482-4365

June 29, 2021

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Mayor:

NC Cooperative Extension is pleased to endorse the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation RAISE grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project helps Shelby connect its communities through multimodal transportation, increase modal options and equity for individuals, and increase transport for underserved areas. The resulting shift in passenger movement will reduce the City's carbon footprint, thereby improving quality of life for plants, wildlife, and people.

NC Cooperative Extension has partnered with Shelby on several projects that make the City a progressive and pleasant place to live, work and visit. We engaged community leaders in development of a strategic plan that fostered creation of Earl Scruggs Center and Don Gibson Theater. Extension also helped establish Foothills Farmers' Market and procured significant grant funds for construction of our beautiful Market Pavilion in Uptown Shelby. Our market provides access to the freshest local foods available, and contributes significantly to health, economy and social fabric of the local community. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project aligns with several of NC Cooperative Extension's major program areas, including active living, community economic development, and natural resources conservation.

The RAISE Grant provides the City of Shelby an opportunity to invest in infrastructure that will expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address racial equity, promote regional connectivity, and facilitate growth in underserved communities. It will contribute to the City's present and future community and economic development efforts by:

- Creating transportation corridors to reduce pollutants and provide access to modes.
- Providing residents with expanded access to transportation and essential services through new connections, especially for communities that have a lack of public transportation.
- Giving residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods with new, safe access to jobs
- Providing residents and visitors alike with access between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

NC Cooperative Extension fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the RAISE application.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

Gregory B. Traywick,
County Extension Director





June 12, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

“If you build it, they will come.”

Sure, it’s a famous line from a famous movie but, as you well know, there is much truth to those words.

I am hopeful that this is one of many letters of support for the City of Shelby’s RAISE Grant application of some \$24M for redevelopment of a former railroad corridor into a multi-use venue for a wide variety of persons, among who would be the traditionally underserved and disadvantaged.

I suspect that you will be seeing a lot of statistics within the letters of support you receive, and appropriately so. Grant awards should be based on merit and need. I leave it to others to supply those key metrics.

I wish to share a slightly different approach with you, specifically my use of, and familiarity with trail/corridor systems, not only in our country but in places around the world. In short, I have experienced rail/corridor trails in eight countries and almost a third of our states. The most recent of these was along the Greater Alleghany Passage (GAP) Trail located in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Like the development of many recreational trails, the GAP Trail did not meet with great support in its early days. But then an amazing turnaround occurred. Why? It’s simple ... dedicated people somehow got part of it built. And then, odd things started to happen. Businesses and accommodations that had been failing started seeing people they’d never seen before and they were coming to those businesses because they had been on the trail.

Today, the GAP Trail, which cost less than \$20M to complete in the late 90s and early 00s, has conservatively generated more than \$130M in revenues to local economies. And not only has it brought income, jobs and even tax revenues, it has also become a highly used resource by the people who live along its entire stretch. I know this for a fact as I met and talked to many of them on my recent trip, a trip I took before I was asked to write this letter of support for the Shelby grant request.

My first corridor trail experience was along the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Path that runs from Cumberland, Maryland to Washington, D.C. I noticed on my recent trip, that this historic trail, part of our National Park Service, is currently undergoing millions of dollars in upgrades and repairs. The reason for this is simple ... the

NPS, like everyone else, has realized that the C&O is a priceless resource.

I'd like to share a couple of other observations I've had over the past couple of years. First, as the NPS and virtually every other 'nature oriented' locale has learned as a result of COVID, our citizens are flocking to them, to the point we now have to regulate entry, not only by capacity but by specific time. This means we absolutely need to be aware of 'natural experience infrastructure' needs not only at the national level but local levels as well. I applaud our Federal and State governments for realizing and supporting worthy initiatives such as Shelby's grant request.

This growth in pursuit of outdoor experiences will likely be with us for years to come. But there is another driver, a demographic one, that I think is worth considering. That is bicycle ridership. We know that it has increased drastically since 2019 and many may assume it has been solely due to the response to COVID. But my own age, and experience, has made me realize that the growth of e-bike popularity is going to further change the nature of 'eco-touring' and even every day local experiences and a lot of that growth will be in an older age cohort.

Such bikes, certainly more affordable for the relatively affluent at the moment, may dramatically change not just the recreational aspects of cycling, but could also affect our economy, as well as our environment. Consider that more people may be able to go to work on bikes, go shopping on bikes and even recreate on bikes.

Imagine our surprise!

Thus, I fully support the City of Shelby's grant application, especially because I believe, first, that it will be a good thing for the citizens of our community in terms of their health and happiness, and secondarily because of its potential economic impact, which, appropriately, could also benefit our citizens ... all of our citizens.

I also support it because, while it is one step among many that may add to our community's quality of life, it unexpectedly, at least to me, seems to be something that could create benefits that we are only just beginning to understand. And that would be a wonderful gift for future citizens.

I understand that grant opportunities such as this are highly competitive and that often, some of the material that is presented tends to stress numbers more than the people who may ultimately benefit. But I have shared my thoughts on the basis of my life experiences with nature, and access to nature. Simply put, being outside and close to nature is healthy ... for everyone.

Build it, and they WILL come.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit this Letter of Support. If you have need of additional input, please reach out to me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Alan Hudson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark Alan Hudson, LFACHE
(704) 482-5751
mshudson138@gmail.com

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because I am a mom of two school aged children, and I would love for them to have a safe place to ride bikes and be outdoors where there are no cars to worry about. I also want them to be a part of this project and see what helping a community grow really means, and how important it is to take care of our city.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at hjames02@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Haley Amanda James Whisnant, RN, BSN

June 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with [my/our] strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

We are also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because, the opportunities for the use of trails are limited for those of over 70, who wish to exercise by walking on a safe level surface without traffic threats.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If we can be of further assistance, please contact at 704-482-0531

Sincerely,
Robin Brackett

June 6, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Dept. of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Shelby, NC 2022 RAISE Grant Application for Regional Access Improvement Line

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Thank you for the leadership you provide in difficult times. Your calm demeanor is much appreciated.

We are writing in support of the Shelby, NC RAISE grant application for the Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL). The City of Shelby has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3 mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor including 3.9 miles of connecting spurs.

We are native residents of Shelby, NC. Our families have operated diverse businesses and have been active in a variety of volunteer community projects. We are excited about the wholesome, inclusive, and positive effect this project offers to everyone in our community. We support the grant because:

- 1) The project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%).
- 2) The project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternative route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.
- 3) Safety is a primary concern in addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare and critical destinations throughout the community. The City has struggled with these challenges for decades as Shelby has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The RAIL project helps to address these issues.
- 4) The project will also provide for many types of new economic development from beginning to end of the rail corridor and will open up areas that have previously been difficult to develop for jobs, housing and small business growth.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. We appreciate your vision for better and more diverse transportation opportunities. If we can be of further service please contact us at (704) 418-2793.

Sincerely,

Sally and David Royster
PO Box 146
Shelby, NC 28151



Shelby High School

230 East Dixon Boulevard • Shelby, North Carolina 28152
Tel. 704-476-8325 • Fax 704-487-2869

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for underserved, historically disadvantaged communities where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, safety is also a primary concern. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because of the proximity to Shelby High School and Shelby Middle School, the project would provide avenues for students to be involved with conservation projects and healthy living options. The community as a whole would benefit as well from these same opportunities as well as the economic boost to property values and ultimately the attraction of others to our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please contact me at 704-476-8325 x 3208.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent than the last name "Allen".

David Allen
Principal

June 18, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because it will further enhance recreation options for residents and visitors which I believe will translate to further economic growth for our community. As a board member for the Uptown Shelby Association and the owner of a small business very near the proposed bicycle and pedestrian corridor I am very excited about the potential for increased business traffic. As an avid runner and cyclist, I am excited about the potential for a safe place to run, walk, and ride. As a caring member of my larger community I am excited about the potential safe options for moving to and from school and work for our low income residents. Many people will benefit from the construction of this R.A.I.L. Project and the RAISE Grant is critical for its completion.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (704) 472-7329 or jonessb91@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Susan Jones

A RESOLUTION

Of Support for A Rail/Trail Initiative in Cleveland County

Whereas:

The Norfolk Southern Railway has announced plans to abandon approximately 13.5 miles of Rail Line in Cleveland County
and

Whereas:

Approximately 1 mile of that line lies within the Town Limits of the **Town of Patterson Springs**
and

Whereas:

A Rail-Trail would be beneficial to Cleveland County, the City of Shelby, the **Town of Patterson Springs** AND the Town of Earl.

The Town Council of the Town of Patterson Springs resolves that the **Town of Patterson Springs endorses and supports** a rail-trail initiative that includes said rail right-of-way in and Cleveland County.

Adopted in Regular Session,
this Third Day of August, Two Thousand and Fifteen.



Mayor
Van Canipe


Attest
Bobby Horton, Clerk



Town of Waco



June 10, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with [my/our] strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern.** The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it. If I can be of further assistance in this effort, please feel free to contact me at the number or email listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Barrett".

John Barrett, Mayor
Town of Waco
P.O. Box 249
Waco, North Carolina 28169
704-718-8475
jbarretttownofwaco@gmail.com



Township Three Elementary School

"A School of Community and Family Commitment"

Molly Blanton
Principal

Brandy Curtis
Assistant Principal

Joye Henderson
Assistant Principal

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Township Three Elementary School is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

Township Three Elementary School serves a vast community that will benefit from this project for years to come. We appreciate the support from the City of Shelby with our DARE Officers and Resource Officers which serve all of Cleveland County. It is our desire as a school to help children and families come together to grow safely and play and work well with others. The vision of Township Three is to challenge all students to reach their greatest potential. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.
- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County. I enjoy using various Rail Trails in other counties so I am truly excited to see one in my own community.

Township Three Elementary School fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. I also live in the community and look forward to seeing this development take life. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,
Molly D. Blanton, Principal



1028 Railroad Ave
Shelby NC 28152
704-300-3938

alex.taylor@integritymedicalsolutions.com

Oliver Stanhope Anthony III, Mayor
City of Shelby
Post Office Box 207
Shelby, NC 28151

Dear Mr. Anthony III,

Tube Enterprises Inc is pleased to offer its support to the City of Shelby's application for the US Department of Transportation BUILD grant (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) for the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line (RAIL).

The City plans to connect its communities through multimodal transportation is a critical step in moving Shelby forward. The City of Shelby will be able to achieve common goals of safety, economic & community development, and sustainability. With a safe off-street mode of transportation, safety is increased through shared-use pathways, economic & community development flourish with town connectivity and existing parks, along with cultural and educational resources. Sustainability is increased through health and wellness, reducing carbon footprint, and the improvement/balance of environmental qualities.

Tube Enterprises Inc moved to Shelby 6 years ago and is bordered by the rail line that will converted and connected to downtown. We have worked with the city to improve the neighborhood over here off of South Morgan street. We have bought and demolished old houses. We are working with the city to combine our lots and do an addition to improve the view of our building from Morgan Street. The BUILD Grant is an opportunity for the City of Shelby to invest in an infrastructure project as important as the Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line. BUILD stresses the importance to expand access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities, address public health and safety, and promote regional connectivity and facilitate economic growth. The BUILD Program will contribute to the present and future community and economic development efforts throughout the City of Shelby. The Shelby Regional Access Improvement Line project will:

- Encourage and provide opportunities of transportation corridors for recreation and access to alternative transport. Residents will have the opportunity to improve their health and lifestyle with access to this transportation corridor.
- Shelby RAIL is a transportation pathway that will give new, safe access to residents of Shelby's variety of neighborhoods to jobs, while providing access to residents and visitors alike between different corridors of Shelby and Cleveland County.

Tube Enterprises Inc fully supports the City of Shelby's initiative for going forward with the BUILD application. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support and commitment to this essential regional transportation project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex Taylor III".

5/15/2020

June 3, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590



RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing with my strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (R.A.I.L.) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

I am also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because equity, safety and connectivity in our community serve to also bolster economic impact opportunities through Tourism. These important outcomes that will serve our community and citizens also provide an interconnected trail system for visitors. The addition of this project will be a catalyst for our growing tourism industry and economic impacts. In addition to our rich musical heritage, events and attractions, current national trends show visitors prefer small towns like ours as well as comprehensive trail systems and outdoor experiences like the R.A.I.L. project would provide. With this project would come new businesses, more jobs and greater economic impacts on our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and my support for it. If I may be of assistance providing specifics for how this project will impact tourism, contact me at 704-692-5463.

Sincerely,


Emily Epley





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

June 15th, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: SHELBY, NC 2022 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION for REGIONAL ACCESS IMPROVEMENT LINE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Cleveland County Family YMCA, I am writing with our strong support for the Shelby, NC Regional Access Improvement Line (**R.A.I.L.**) RAISE Grant application. The City has requested \$24,998,438 for Phase 2, which would redevelop a former railroad corridor into a safe, off-street 9.3-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor and 3.9 miles of connecting spurs. Specifically, this project provides transportation justice for **underserved, historically disadvantaged communities** where the percentage of residents who do not have access to a vehicle (15.9%) is nearly double the national average (8.6%). The R.A.I.L. project also provides low-income and high minority population neighborhoods a safe alternate route to and from local schools, many of which have the highest number of students eligible to receive free lunch.

In addition to equitable access and connectivity to jobs, healthcare, and critical destinations throughout the community, **safety is also a primary concern**. The City of Shelby has struggled with this challenge for decades as the City has grown and developments have become more isolated, making non-vehicular transportation options more dangerous. The R.A.I.L. project helps to address these issues.

The YMCA is also supportive of the R.A.I.L. project specifically because we understand the economic, health, quality of life and social benefits. This will help our community exponentially.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Shelby's application and our support for it.

Sincerely,

Cameron Corder, CEO
Cleveland County Family YMCA



Cameron Corder
CEO, Cleveland County Family YMCA

P.O. Box 2272
Shelby, NC 28151