



JEFFERSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Serving Jefferson County Since 1917

Mark E. Wilson, MD
Health Officer

February 6, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: FY2023 RAISE Grant Application – Birmingham Urban Trail + Multimodal Corridor

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH) strongly supports the RAISE grant application “Birmingham Urban Trail + Multimodal Corridor Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads: Reconnecting Historic Neighborhoods Through Active Mobility,” which is the result of a collaboration between the City of Birmingham, the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, FLT, Urban Impact, REV Birmingham, and other local stakeholders.

This corridor will celebrate, honor, and revitalize the Smithfield neighborhood, the west side of Birmingham, and the Civil Rights District. It will be the spine of a growing multimodal transportation network, providing safe and equitable options via an urban trail and Complete Streets and creating a more walkable, bikeable, safe, connected, and livable community. This project is highlighted in many existing plans, including the Northwest Quadrant Plan and City Center Master Plan, and as a key corridor in the Red Rock Trail Action Plan.

JCDH’s mission is to prevent disease and assure access to quality health care, promote a healthy lifestyle and healthy environment, and protect against public health threats. Simply put, JCDH aims to create a healthier Jefferson County for everyone.

JCDH recognizes the importance of the built environment in providing equitable access to vital health services and supporting healthy lifestyles. Moreover, JCDH has participated in studies that show that many low-income residents are disproportionately affected by preventable diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension due to inactive lifestyles and limited access to healthy foods. For this reason, in 2010, JCDH partnered with Freshwater Land Trust to create the Red Rock Trail System, a network of planned and existing trails and alternative transportation routes connecting residents of Jefferson County, Alabama to the places they live, work, and play. Through the Red Rock Trail System, residents are connected to greenspaces where they can get outside and active, as well as transit, health clinics, and healthy food options through a series of safe, free, and

enjoyable trails and alternative transportation routes. By investing in safe trails and alternative transportation routes, JCDH hopes to improve the overall health of the communities we serve.

The Birmingham Urban Trail + Multimodal Corridor project footprint is within an area with a particularly high rate of preventable consequences of uncontrolled high blood pressure such as stroke and heart failure, and we have been promoting various strategies to help address this disparity. By making substantial changes to the built environment within this community, residents will be given more opportunities to live more active lifestyles while also gaining access to important community amenities like healthcare facilities and healthy foods. By supporting these efforts, USDOT will be making substantial changes to the built environment that will help improve community health outcomes, in addition to showcasing a project that aligns closely with its objectives under the Biden Administration. These objectives include enhancing access to opportunities for historically marginalized communities, creating an equitable transportation system that works for everyone, and transitioning to a more environmentally conscience network that prioritizes non-motorized transportation. This project will deliver healthy, innovative, resilient, and integrated transportation options for residents and visitors of the City of Birmingham.

Thank you for considering this application for RAISE Program funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "ME Wilson MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "ME" being prominent.

Mark E. Wilson, MD
Health Officer, Jefferson County Department of Health