



February 16, 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:

Lakeshore Foundation 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, Freshwater Land Trust, 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.

Lakeshore Foundation is an internationally renowned organization with a mission to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, research, advocacy, and health promotion. Specifically, Lakeshore Foundation serves as an organization that promotes the needs of the disabled community, advocating for inclusive design and access considerations to allow people to live independent lives.

Lakeshore Foundation recognizes that access to outdoor recreation benefits the mental and physical health of people with disabilities; however, we often find that the disabled community is not considered during the development of recreational projects. As such, Lakeshore Foundation believes that the best way to ensure inclusive design is incorporated in outdoor spaces is to be an integral part during project development. For this reason, Lakeshore Foundation has been an active member of trails organizations in the State of Alabama, providing important oversight and guidance during the development of outdoor recreation and alternative transportation trails. Lakeshore Foundation looks forward to the improvements that will be made within the Civil Rights District and Smithfield communities through this project, making it easier and more enjoyable for people to safely travel throughout these areas without the need of a car.

Due to the national significance of the proposed Birmingham Urban Trail + Multimodal Corridor Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads: Reconnecting Historic Neighborhoods Through Active Mobility” project, considerations for disabled communities visiting the project will be critical to the project’s success. Lakeshore Foundation has provided initial feedback to the proposed designs within the Civil Rights District and will continue to serve as an important stakeholder during the development of the project. In partnership with the City of Birmingham, Lakeshore Foundation is excited to support a project that honors the fight for civil rights of our nation’s people.

By supporting these efforts, USDOT can showcase a project that aligns closely with its objectives under the Biden Administration’s objectives, including 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 users. This project will deliver healthy, innovative, resilient, and integrated transportation options for residents and visitors of the City of Birmingham.

Thank you for considering the RAISE Program funding application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Kemp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Kemp" being the most prominent parts.

John D. Kemp
President & CEO
Lakeshore Foundation