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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:

The St. Paul United Methodist Church 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 Downtown Quadrant Plan and City Center Master Plan, and as a key corridor in the Red Rock Trail Plan.

The St. Paul United Methodist Church is listed as a contributing property in the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District, NRIS Reference Number 06000940 listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District is directly associated with the African American Civil Rights movement in the 20th century. St. Paul is listed as a site in the Presidential Proclamation issued by President Obama establishing the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. St. Paul is listed on the Historic Site Register for Jefferson County, Alabama. St. Paul’s location is across the street from the Civil Rights Institute, and we are on the opposite corner of 16th Street Baptist Church. We work closely with these organizations and have been neighbors for many years.

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 application for RAISE Program funding.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Richard L. Stryker, III
Pastor, St. Paul United Methodist Church

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