

CHUCK EDWARDS  
11TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1505 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3311  
(202) 225-6401

DISTRICT OFFICE  
200 NORTH GROVE STREET, SUITE 121  
HENDERSONVILLE, NC 28792  
(828) 435-7310  
FAX: (771) 200-5795



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3311**

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

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

Secretary Duffy,

I am writing to express my strong support for the City of Hendersonville's application for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation. This funding is critical to advancing Hendersonville's Above the Mud project, which aims to enhance multimodal infrastructure, stimulate small-town economic development, promote tourism, and address the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene and recurring flooding in western North Carolina.

Hendersonville's Above the Mud project presents a transformative opportunity for Hendersonville and the region by:

1. Extending the 19-mile Ecusta Trail, a regional corridor under construction that is expected to generate significant rural economic impact by drawing residents and tourists safely into Downtown.
2. Rebuilding a trail segment damaged by recurring flooding and Hurricane Helene, while also reconnecting underserved neighborhoods, improving safety and access, and fostering equity.
3. Creating a multimodal transportation loop that connects the city-owned Oklawaha Greenway with three major regional trail systems, positioning Hendersonville as a regional hub for tourism and economic activity.

The project also includes vital improvements to an aging three-block stretch of South Main Street near the Ecusta Trail, transforming it into a regional activity hub and festival street that will directly connect downtown Hendersonville with the broader trail network. This initiative will support job creation and improve quality of life for residents while attracting visitors and investment to the region.

Hurricane Helene and subsequent flooding have highlighted the urgent need for resilient infrastructure in Western North Carolina. The Above the Mud project addresses these challenges while creating opportunities for sustainable growth, economic resilience, and enhanced connectivity. Hendersonville's vision for a robust, multimodal network serves as a model of collaboration and forward-thinking urban planning.

On behalf of Western North Carolina, thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to building strong communities. As you consider the City of Hendersonville's application, know I stand in support of their efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if I may provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Chuck Edwards  
Member of Congress

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