

September 8, 2010

The Honorable Dave Norris
Mayor of Charlottesville
P.O. Box 911, City Hall
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Mayor Norris:

On behalf of the Southern Environmental Law Center, I am writing to voice strong support for the City's application for a TIGER II Discretionary Grant for the Hillsdale Drive Extension.

There are numerous reasons why the Hillsdale Drive Extension has been recognized as a priority project for many years by both the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Most importantly, it would establish a vital link in the area's local road network, creating an alternate route for local drivers along one of the most heavily traveled stretches of U.S. Route 29 in the Charlottesville area. By providing a new path drivers can use to access destinations along Route 29 located between Rio Road and Hydraulic Road, the Hillsdale Drive Extension would reduce traffic at two highly congested intersections and remove thousands of vehicle trips each day from the corresponding segment of Route 29. In addition to reducing congestion, the roadway would help decrease maintenance costs for Route 29 and prolong the utility of existing improvements along this stretch.

The project would also offer other important transportation and community benefits, including:

- Enhancing the area's multimodal transportation network and providing alternatives to driving by incorporating pedestrian-friendly design aspects and bicycle facilities along the roadway's route;
- Addressing existing safety issues along the existing portion of Hillsdale Drive as well as nearby intersections along the Route 29 corridor;
- Improving access to existing and future businesses, and providing economic development and redevelopment opportunities; and
- Promoting a pattern of interconnected land uses in the Route 29 corridor that reduces the strain on the transportation network.

In short, the Hillsdale Drive Extension is an excellent example of the type of sustainable transportation improvement that would provide both short- and long-term benefits to the City and surrounding community, reducing congestion on a major highway by improving the local road network and providing useful and more environmentally friendly alternatives to the automobile. SELC enthusiastically supports the project and the City's efforts to obtain funding for it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morgan Butler". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Morgan Butler
Director, Charlottesville-Albemarle Project

cc: Maurice Jones, Acting City Manager
Angela Tucker, Development Services Manager
Jeanette Janiczek, Urban Construction Initiative Program Manager