

September 1, 2021

Office of the Clerk
City of Norfolk
1006 City Hall Building
810 Union Street
Norfolk, VA 23510

Dear Mayor Alexander and Members of Norfolk City Council,

As you consider the decision to accept funds for the development of bike lanes on Granby Street between Willow Wood Drive and Admiral Taussig Boulevard (<https://www.norfolk.gov/granbybike>), please know that members of Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC), the DNC Board of Directors, and the DNC Complete Streets Committee stand in favor of the project, and give our strong endorsement for it to proceed.

DNC's support and advocacy for bike lanes on Granby Street goes back to 2015, during the adoption of the City of Norfolk's Strategic Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, although the organization has advocated for bicycle safety and infrastructure since 1999 through a variety of initiatives. In 2015, we focused on the connection between neighborhoods just north of downtown, including Ghent and the NEON District. The bike lanes put in place at that time have demonstrated the value of connecting those areas to downtown, not only for bicycles but for the wave of new micro-mobility transit options in Norfolk with scooters and shared e-bikes.

For all the advances in bicycle infrastructure we still lack citywide connectivity. Our downtown residents have no easy way to travel by bicycle farther north than Riverview, and the dense neighborhoods between Wards Corner and Riverview lack easy and safe access by bicycle to downtown and our existing bicycle infrastructure.

Aside from moving Norfolk closer to realizing the vision of an accessible, equitable, safe, and connected transit network, there are several other key benefits we see in the proposed bike lanes on Granby:

- **Funding:** The project offers Norfolk over \$800,000 in funding that will be lost to us and go to benefit other cities in Virginia if we decline this opportunity. Advancing and modernizing our transit system with outside financial support is an opportunity not to be missed, especially when municipal funding here and elsewhere is stretched thin.
- **Corridor improvements:** The City project team have highlighted benefits for both bicycle and vehicular traffic by way of this project, including turn-lane updates and signal timing for drivers that would otherwise not be funded until 2026. The win-win aspect of creating bike lanes while also improving the roadway for drivers is a unique aspect of this project.
- **Safety:** This section of Granby Street receives regular civic league complaints around speeding and unsafe driving and has sadly been the source of pedestrian fatalities in recent years. Protected bicycle lanes provide vulnerable road users a safe space and have been shown to lower the amount and the severity of crashes. Another benefit to public health and safety is that City staff are working with first responders to ensure bicycle lanes can be repurposed by emergency vehicles, allowing them to travel even more swiftly and efficiently through this area than they do now.

- **Data-driven:** The City project team and associated traffic studies have made a compelling and data-driven case for this project. Aside from the improvements mentioned earlier they have shown that adding a bicycle lane will have minimal impact on vehicle travel times, even with greater-than-anticipated traffic volume in this corridor in years to come.

Aside from the highlighted benefits of this specific project, adding bicycle infrastructure closes the gap between Norfolk and world-class cities that are fostering cycling and other forms of transit as a way of attracting and retaining residents, along with high-value businesses that employ them and serve them. We continue to believe in the importance of Granby Street as a critical North-South connection for transit in Norfolk and this project represents a unique opportunity to improve conditions for cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicular traffic in a progressive and fiscally responsible manner.

Very truly yours,



Mary Miller

President and CEO



Jim Wofford

Chair, DNC Board of Directors



Matt Paddock

Chair, DNC Complete Streets Committee

Cc: Larry "Chip" Filer, PhD, City Manager
Amy Inman, Director, Department of Transit
Melissa Seek, Chair, Norfolk Bicycling and Pedestrian Trails Commission