



December 18, 2024

Charleston County Council
4045 Bridge View Dr.
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Charleston County Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of Trident United Way to express support for the Better North Bridge planning grant application.

According to the South Carolina Department of Public Safety, Charleston County ranks number one in the state for bicycle- and pedestrian-related fatalities, with South Carolina ranking within the top five most dangerous for pedestrians in the nation. Since 2015, four community members have tragically lost their lives crossing the North Bridge and many others have been seriously injured.

The Better North Bridge project will provide access to safe, reliable and affordable transportation for pedestrians, cyclists and other Charleston County citizens who do not have access to vehicular transportation, particularly residents from the historically disadvantaged communities at the base of the crossing. The project will promote regional connectivity by completing a vital link in the region's multi-modal transportation network, including the Lowcountry Rapid Transit, South Carolina's first mass transit system. Additionally, it will address public health by delivering a climate-friendly transportation option that provides citizens with the freedom of mobility choice.

In the Tri-County area, 39% of households struggle to afford basic necessities. You may be familiar with the acronym ALICE®, which stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. ALICE® individuals and families are employed, often with more than one job, yet still struggle to make ends meet. Charleston's booming tourism industry, and the workforce that supports it, is a notable portion of our ALICE® population. These workers often cannot afford to live near many of our restaurants and hotels, and unfortunately public transportation is scarce and infrequent in our area. Without a car it is nearly impossible to get to work in a timely fashion, and pedestrian options are often incredibly unsafe, as noted above. Ensuring our local workforce can get to their shifts safely and on time is both urgent and critical. We must make the livability of our community equitable for everyone, not just those with the means to afford a reliable vehicle.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. If you have questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

DJ. Hampton II
President & CEO
Trident United Way