



June 11, 2020

Hunter Marks, President  
Friends of Ecusta Trail  
542 North Oak Street  
Hendersonville, NC 28739

Dear Hunter,

On behalf of the Blue Zones Project Brevard, I am writing to express support for the Ecusta Trail.

I am the Senior Community Program Manager for Blue Zones Project (BZP) Brevard and responsible for ensuring that specific policy measures and strategies adopted by the BZP Brevard Steering Committee are successfully accomplished. Prior to this job, I was the Planning, Community and Economic Development Director for Transylvania County for nearly 30 years. I am very familiar with the Friends of Ecusta Trail and the tremendous work that you, your board and hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers have devoted to help make the Ecusta Trail become a reality.

Championed by the Pisgah Health Foundation, the City of Brevard was identified in August 2019 as the 50<sup>th</sup> Blue Zones Project in North America and the first in the Carolinas. At that time, it was clear that Brevard's elected officials, non-profits, local businesses, and individual citizens were focused on the long-term health of the community and its citizens. To this end, BZP Brevard is committed to help improve the well-being of the greater Brevard community by lowering healthcare costs, increasing worker productivity, and improving the economy and quality of life for all residents. Our work is evidenced-based and metric driven with a focus on working with people and places (worksites, schools, restaurants, and grocery stores). We also help shape policy related to the built environment, food and nutrition, and tobacco use reduction. Our goal is to help make healthier choices the easier choices.

Making Brevard's physical environment safer for walkers, cyclists, and motorists is a priority. Working with BZP Brevard partners and national planning experts that assist communities across the country, the BZP Brevard steering committee, following an extensive discovery process, identified twelve specific strategies to enhance the community's physical infrastructure. Supporting the existing Rails-to-Trails effort to advance the Ecusta Trail was one of those strategies!

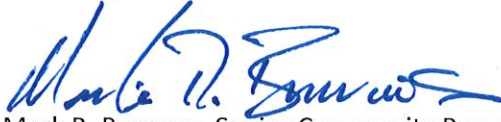
Successfully completing the Ecusta Trail will allow the City of Brevard and the community to accelerate the economic health of this small, rural community – particularly as the City looks to rebuild following COVID-19 by focusing on sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation. The Ecusta Trail will also provide

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our citizens with a safe, multi-use trail that will promote healthy exercise alternatives while reducing the number of bikes on our roads.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything that BZP Brevard can do to further your work.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Burrows, Senior Community Program Manager,  
Blue Zones Project Brevard

cc: Jim Fatland, City of Brevard Manager  
Lex Green, President of Pisgah Health Foundation