



September 25, 2024

USDOT Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program Review Committee
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Review Committee Members,

As President of the University of West Florida (UWF), I am writing to express our support for Bluffline, Inc.'s Ferry Pass Extension Project, submitted for funding consideration under the USDOT Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. This project aligns closely with UWF's strategic goals of enhancing regional connectivity, environmental stewardship, and expanding access to educational and recreational opportunities.

The project's planned water taxi terminal on our campus near the Escambia River Bluff Overlook complements UWF's 2021-2031 Campus Master Plan, which emphasizes improving access to our campus's natural resources for educational, cultural, and recreational use. This terminal and the associated multi-use path would reconnect the university and surrounding communities to the waterfront, providing new transportation options while integrating seamlessly with our conservation holdings and expansive network of nature trails. The project supports UWF's vision of leveraging our natural environment for academic and personal enrichment while fostering greater community engagement.

Restoring access to the waterfront for nearby communities, many of which have been cut off by highway and rail infrastructure, would allow for improved access to UWF's campus and create new opportunities for research, education, and recreation. This multimodal corridor would directly link students, faculty, and residents to both our main campus and our holdings in downtown Pensacola, helping to reduce transportation barriers and support disadvantaged communities.

UWF is committed to collaborating with Bluffline, Inc. and other stakeholders throughout the planning process to ensure the success of this project. We believe it will deliver lasting benefits

by improving access, promoting sustainability, and enhancing the overall connectivity of our region.

Thank you for considering this project for funding under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha D. Saunders". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Martha D. Saunders, Ph.D.
President