



*City of Bessemer*  
**Economic & Community Development Department**

February 8, 2024

Dave Paige and Company  
3958 Parkwood Road  
Suite 109, #163  
Bessemer, AL 35022

Dear Mr. Paige,

I am writing this letter to express support for the development of the EDTECH Innovation District in Downtown Bessemer. As Economic and Community Development Director for the City, I am keenly aware of the potential impact that innovation initiatives can have on Bessemer's growth, prosperity, and the overall quality of life for all of our City's residents.

The EDTECH Innovation District represents a potential transformative opportunity for the heart of Bessemer, one that aligns with our vision for economic development, innovation, and community empowerment. I would like to highlight some key reasons why this initiative has such potential for our City:

**Economic Growth:** The innovation district can catalyze economic growth and job creation in Bessemer. By attracting technology-driven businesses, startups, and investors, we can create a vibrant ecosystem that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and creates economic diversity.

**Educational Excellence:** The EDTECH Innovation District will provide unique opportunities for collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, and community organizations. This collaboration can lead to the development of innovative educational programs, workforce training initiatives, and research partnerships that benefit our Bessemer students and prepare them for the jobs of the future.

**Community Empowerment:** By promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and community engagement, the innovation district can empower residents to participate in and benefit from the opportunities it creates. It can serve as a platform for entrepreneurship, skills development, and civic innovation, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among our residents.

**Technological Advancement:** The development of an innovation district will position Bessemer as a hub for technological advancement and excellence. It will attract talent, investment, and resources that drive innovation and contribute to our city's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

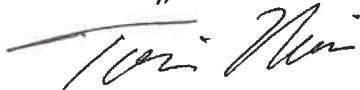
**Quality of Life:** A thriving innovation district can enhance the overall quality of life for our residents by creating job opportunities, supporting small businesses, and fostering a culture of creativity and innovation. It can also contribute to the revitalization of Downtown Bessemer, including the Downtown Bessemer National Historic District, making it a more vibrant and attractive place to live, work, and visit.

In conclusion, I believe that the development of the EDTECH Innovation District can be beneficial for Bessemer's growth and prosperity. It represents an opportunity to leverage our city's strengths, assets, and potential to create a brighter future for all residents.

I am committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure its success.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toraine Norris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Toraine Norris, MPA

Director of Economic and Community Development

City of Bessemer