

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write in support of the application submitted by the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG) and the Steel Rivers Council of Governments (SRCOG) to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) grant. This funding would support a comprehensive plan and feasibility study of several corridors that bisect Braddock, North Braddock, East Pittsburgh, Turtle Creek, and Wilmerding.

The Pittsburgh region, particularly the Mon Valley, has long been affected by transportation barriers that limit economic opportunity and community cohesion. Decades of disinvestment and neglect, combined with deindustrialization and population loss, have led to a host of negative consequences for the communities along the corridor. Namely, poverty rates two to three times higher than that of Allegheny County and the number of zero-car households nearly double that of the county. This project will directly support planning and community engagement efforts to overcome these challenges and foster stronger, more inclusive connections within and between these communities.

This application will encompass a comprehensive plan and feasibility study of the Pennsylvania State Route 130 (PA-SR130) and Braddock Avenue corridor, and the joint Norfolk Southern (NS) and Union Railroad (URR) rail corridors. Studying these corridors will help the COGs enhance access to daily destinations and necessities and improve the safety of all road users in the region.

I'm confident that these funds will yield significant benefits in reconnecting these disinvested in communities. I urge you to give the application full and fair consideration. Feel free to contact my office at (202) 224-4254 if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature is highly stylized and cursive, featuring a large, prominent loop at the top left and several horizontal strokes extending to the right.

John Fetterman  
United States Senator