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Salt Lake City, UT 84103
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April 5, 2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support – Salt Lake City RAISE Planning Grant 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council, I write in support of Salt Lake City's initiative to address east-west connections across the I-15 and north-south rail corridors, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

There is a long, rich history of two Salt Lake City neighborhoods, our Capitol Hill Neighborhood (on the east side I-15) and the adjacent Fairpark Neighborhood (on the west side of I-15); they form the north and west boundaries of our city.

Over the decades that I have lived in downtown Salt Lake City, beginning in the mid-1950s, I've witnessed a slow, steady transformation of these neighborhoods. What were once two distinct but cohesive neighborhoods both fully integrated with Salt Lake City are now two neighborhoods that have not only become very culturally, economically, and demographically distinct but also, sadly, no longer share a sense of cohesiveness or community.

Moreover, residents on the west side of I-15 do not have convenient or safe access to a range of services that are located only on the east side. Driving, biking, walking, or using public transportation to get to the east side can be difficult, time consuming, and sometimes dangerous.

To be sure, different factors that have contributed to this divide between adjacent neighborhoods, but there is no doubt that I-15 and the rail corridors have played a significant role. They create not only a physical barrier between these neighborhoods but have come to be a psychological and convenience barrier. For example, there is a definite north/south/east orientation of residents of the Capitol Hill neighborhood, i.e., they are far less likely to travel west for services, even though some are much closer. I-15 and the rails have become the boundaries for schools, churches, clubs, planning and placement of public and private services, etc. This all perpetuates the sense of separation and disconnection and contributes to social inequities in the west side neighborhood and a sense of isolation experienced by many west side residents.

There are several I-15 crossing points, but they can be difficult to get to, require long waits for trains, are aesthetically uninviting, and are perceived as unsafe for pedestrians and bicycles. It's rare to see pedestrians or bicycles on any of the several crossings from 600 North to 2100 South. We work hard to create a sense of neighborhood in the Capitol Hill area, and we'd like to feel a similar a sense of community with our Fairpark neighbors; it's odd to feel such a disconnect from an adjacent neighborhood, only a couple hundred feet from ours.

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council Board supports Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal RAISE program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make improvements to multiple east-west crossings between 600 North and 2100 South.

We believe this will help create a greater sense of community with our fellow Salt Lakers just across I-15, improve convenience of access to services on both sides, and help create greater equity for the residents on the west side of I-15 many of whom feel disadvantaged and disengaged from the rest of the Salt Lake City.

Respectfully,
David Scheer, Chair
Th Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R. Scheer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.