

October 7, 2022

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

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Central City Neighborhood Council, we support Salt Lake City's initiative to evaluate and redesign east-west connections across the I-15 and north-south rail corridors, with a focus on improving the streets for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

Our council district is located just east of downtown. The district is mixed use, with varied housing types from single family to large multi-family; institutions such as schools and government offices; and numerous businesses. Our major streets are also critical connectors to downtown, the University of Utah, the state capitol, and other destinations.

The region also suffers from some of the worst air quality in the nation, the largest source of which is tailpipe emissions. Salt Lake City remains heavily car-dependent, with wide streets and high design speeds undermining safe, comfortable routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people using wheelchairs. Transit is often inefficient, with buses stuck in traffic and no signal prioritization. The I-15 and the rail corridors create additional barriers and safety challenges.

We support Salt Lake City's goals of improving transit efficiency and accessibility, walkability, and bicycle infrastructure to provide both residents and visitors a range of viable, safe, efficient alternatives for day-to-day local travel. Car-dependent street design is a social equity issue. Many residents, including children and people with disabilities, cannot drive and need safe alternatives. Private vehicle ownership is expensive and heavily cost-burdens lower income households. Until safe, accessible, fully networked transportation alternatives exist, most people still rely on cars, even for short trips. Improving east-west connectivity is an important step in redesigning safe streets for all people, whatever mode of travel they use.

On behalf of our community council, we support Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant program, to make improvements to multiple east-west streets between 600 North and 2100 South.

Sincerely,

Bekka Carlson, Chair  
Central City Neighborhood Council, Salt Lake City, UT