

10/10/2022

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 Pilot Discretionary Grant Program 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Westside Coalition, we are writing to support Salt Lake City's initiative to address west-east connections across the I-15 and north-south rail corridors, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

Salt Lake City's westside communities are particularly impacted by these physical divides making access to jobs, education, services, etc. more difficult and inequitable. With a growing region and the impending development of the Utah Inland Port, our westside communities' mobility challenges will only be exacerbated by more rail and freight traffic. Our community is disproportionately impacted by unhealthy air quality from increased traffic, development, and nearby oil refineries. This study will allow for more transit routes and safe multi modal options to reduce automobile emissions. Our communities are home to ethnic minorities which have been historically and well-substantiated in the literature as being disproportionately affected negatively by toxic environments This is also a safety challenge for our community. It is not uncommon to see pedestrians trying to negotiate a way through trains when they've been stalled. Finally, this project would lead to a more resilient transportation system allowing for safer routes out of the neighborhood and city in the case of emergencies.

The Westside Coalition enthusiastically supports Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make improvements to multiple west-east crossings between 600 North and 2100 South. This work will have a positive impact on our communities for the future while addressing inequities of the past.

Sincerely,

Westside Coalition

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