

Oct. 6, 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 Grant 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the street safety advocacy group Sweet Streets - Salt Lake City, 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.

Like communities across the U.S., Utah's capital city wasn't immune from the racist placement of state and federal highway infrastructure in neighborhoods with higher percentages of people of color. The neighborhoods of Glendale, Poplar Grove, Fairpark, Rose Park and Westpointe, Salt Lake City's west side constitute some of the most racially diverse in the city. These neighborhoods are bifurcated by Interstate 15, which serves as a physical divide disconnecting residents from the same access to frequent, reliable public transportation. There are fewer bus lines servicing these neighborhoods and the majority of the city's light rail service lay east of this divide, forcing residents to be more reliant on passenger vehicles to connect to other parts of the city. Car-centric design dominates the west side and often places bike lanes and pedestrian spaces in shared, higher speed arterials alongside multiple lanes of cars.

Many Salt Lake City residents choose to live in west side communities for the diversity of class, color and backgrounds of their neighbors, as well as the close proximity to Downtown Salt Lake City. Many prefer to travel by bicycle, where they can take note of the characteristics and charm that make this area unique. Eastbound routes are planned with the idea in mind to enjoy the commute, but also those that make people feel safe and seen as a cyclist.

It would be a great benefit to the residents of Salt Lake City's west side neighborhoods to have our city evaluate better ways to connect our community with the opportunities offered on the east side. Our communities would benefit greatly from additional options to cycle, walk, or take public transit.

We support Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal Reconnecting Communities program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make improvements to multiple east-west crossings between 600 North and 2100 South. This work will improve our community.

Sincerely,

Sweet Streets Salt Lake City