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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write today in support of the application from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT), and Allegheny County to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program for its Eastern Pittsburgh Multimodal Corridor Project. I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration.

Due to Pittsburgh's unique geography, I understand that there are two main corridors that help move people and goods from downtown to the city's eastern neighborhoods and suburbs: the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway and the I-376 Parkway East. To mitigate congestion and improve the resiliency of these two corridors, SPC leaders have informed me that they are seeking funding from the MPDG to make substantial improvements that will improve transportation access and quality of life in the Steel City.

First, SPC leaders have informed me that they intend to improve conditions along I-376 Parkway East by implementing technologies that reduce congestion and by addressing flooding issues along the corridor in the city. I understand that the parkway is the fifth most congested interstate section, which creates inefficiencies and leads to excess pollution and smog. To mitigate this, SPC officials tell me they will invest in Active Traffic Management (ATM) systems like dynamic messaging and variable speed limits to improve the flow of traffic and reduce congestion.

Additionally, I understand that a section of I-376 within downtown Pittsburgh is prone to flooding, earning it the nickname "the Bathtub." SPC and PennDOT officials have told me that this causes substantial problems for commuters and high cleanup costs for local governments. As a part of the I-376 portion of this project, SPC has told me that it will undertake serious flood mitigation efforts to ensure that this section of highway will no longer become "the Bathtub" during heavy rains.

Second, I understand that SPC will undertake major upgrades to the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway, a transit route that carries PRT buses from downtown Pittsburgh to neighborhoods like Polish Hill and municipalities like Swissvale and Wilkinsburg. To improve service along the

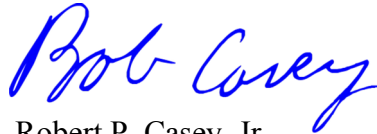
busway, SPC leaders have told me that they will facilitate hard shoulder running with a new ramp to the busway and replace the Wilksburg Penn Avenue Bridge.

SPC officials have added that, like the parkway, the East Busway also faces resiliency issues, especially given Pittsburgh's hilly terrain. To address this, I understand that SPC's vision for the busway includes improved stormwater drainage, new retaining walls, and slope stabilization and protection measures to counteract the possibility of landslides. SPC leaders have told me that these improvements will help keep the busway fully operational, even during severe weather events.

I have heard from organizations across Allegheny County that this project would result in major improvements for the 100,000 travelers that use these two corridors every day. However, SPC officials have stressed that without the \$127.9 million from the MPDG program, they will be unable to take on a project of this size.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6324.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator