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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 11, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write today in support of the application from the City of Philadelphia for a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration.

The proposed project builds on USDOT's "Safe System Approach," which looks beyond individual crashes and behavior and addresses risks on a system-wide level through safe road design, safe vehicles and promoting safe and healthy modes of transportation.

I have learned that in 2020, 156 people died due to traffic crashes across the entire city. This is an 82 percent increase from the previous five years, highlighting the importance of completing this project. If awarded, I am told the funding will allow the City to implement critically needed transportation safety improvements along key corridors located in historically disadvantaged communities as well as areas of persistent poverty. The application focuses on corridors listed on the City's High Injury Network which identifies the most dangerous roads in Philadelphia and draws upon the City's Vision Zero action plan and goal to end fatal crashes by 2030.

Furthermore, it is my understanding that specific construction improvements will be located along two intersecting corridors: Old York Road from Erie to Wingohocking Avenues and along Hunting Park Avenue from Wissahickon Avenue to Old York Road. Additional construction improvements will occur along Tabor Avenue from Godfrey Avenue to Levick Street and along 54th Street from Baltimore Avenue to Arch Street. The construction improvements will focus on the systematic application of multiple proven safety countermeasures at intersections and other vulnerable areas. More specifically, it is my understanding that these improvements will include separated bicycle-pedestrian side paths, concrete bus islands, and ADA accessibility enhancements, and X box designations to deter parking in bus stops.

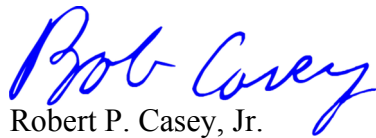
In addition, the application will fund a capital plan that will further the development of the City's High-Quality Bicycle Network (HQBN). The application will fund demonstration projects for approximately 10 miles of bike lanes in the HQBN, along with planning/design projects along two priority Vision Zero corridors. As importantly, the application will fund the development and implementation of a Bicycle Safety Education Campaign—the first of its kind in Philadelphia.

I am told that all project locations are in USDOT-designated “Transportation Disadvantaged” areas, where low-income residents and communities of color have borne the brunt of deficient infrastructure for too long. Each of the aforementioned areas have been disproportionately impacted by traffic crashes; therefore, these projects provide an opportunity to address racial inequities resulting from inadequate infrastructure investment.

By directing long-overdue infrastructure investments to historically disadvantaged communities, improving traffic safety, removing barriers to opportunity, combating climate change, and improving quality of life citywide, the SS4A project will address infrastructure disparities and advance transportation equity. SS4A represents an unprecedented funding opportunity to implement improvements that reduce traffic-related fatalities. Recognizing this, Philadelphia affirms they are ready to carry out Vision Zero projects and strategies that will deliver meaningful results.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of the City’s “Reducing Traffic-Related Injuries and Fatalities through Complete Streets Construction” SS4A grant application. 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