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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write today in support of the joint application submitted by the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), City of Philadelphia (City), and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program for the “Reconnecting Our Chinatown: Reclaiming Philadelphia’s Vine Street Expressway” project. I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration.

The Vine Street Expressway (“the Expressway”) is a six-lane below-grade interstate flanked by service roads cutting through several Philadelphia neighborhoods, including Philadelphia’s Chinatown neighborhood, which is the primary focus of this project. As a result, Chinatown has experienced disparities in health, safety, connectivity and environmental justice. I am told that Chinatown community members have been actively engaged in transportation advocacy since 1966 when plans for the Expressway were first unveiled. The Save Chinatown Movement emerged in response to the threat posed to the community by the pending Vine Street Expressway construction. This movement was formally incorporated as the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) in 1969. I understand that PCDC’s founding purpose endures to this day as the organization continues to advocate for residents, local schools, merchants and businesses. I have been informed that PCDC is a capable partner with a track record of community-led projects that mitigate the harmful impacts of the Expressway and other large-scale development projects such as the Pennsylvania Convention Center and Gallery at Market East mall.

It is my understanding that the proposed grant funding will be used to advance a comprehensive planning and community visioning effort to reconnect Chinatown and other communities harmed by the Expressway. More specifically, the funding will assess the feasibility of capping the Expressway along with conceptual design and preliminary engineering activities that support an environmental review for construction and an equitable outcome plan. PCDC, the City, and PennDOT have stressed to me that the proposed project, which is fully located within economically disadvantaged communities designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation, seeks to achieve RCP program goals by redressing the legacy of harm caused by transportation infrastructure, restoring community connectivity, and improving community quality of life.

I am proud to advocate for funding for projects that address the structural inequities caused by previous investments in Pennsylvania and across the Nation. I was happy to see the Reconnecting Communities Pilot included in the infrastructure law and I am hopeful that significant funding from this program will come to disadvantaged communities in Pennsylvania.

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) 224-6851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Casey Jr." in a cursive style.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator