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September 12, 2024

Hon. Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), I write to express my full support for New York City Department of Transportation's (NYC DOT) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program for a capital construction grant.

NYC DOT is seeking funding for a transformative initiative designed to reduce environmental burdens and improve safety in the Inwood neighborhood of Manhattan. The project is in a section of the neighborhood that was historically designated for industrial use, including depots for the subway (207th Street Yard), bus (Kingsbridge Bus Depot) and sanitation (Manhattan North), with 80 percent of the project limits within a USDOT disadvantaged community. This project aims to foster equitable development and enhance community connectivity by implementing comprehensive streetscape improvements that create safe and accessible connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders along a key corridor.

The 10th Avenue Greenway project in Inwood will close one of the largest remaining gaps on the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, currently disrupted by a high-speed corridor whose design features hinder community connectivity. By constructing an off-street bike path, the project will connect the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway to the northern tip of Manhattan and the Bronx via the Broadway and University Heights bridges. This critical connection will improve safe access to schools, shopping, jobs, transit, and recreational opportunities across both Manhattan and the Bronx. Additionally, the project will enhance the pedestrian and transit rider experience by shortening crossing distances, adding raised crosswalks, and calming traffic. The project will make bus stops accessible by reconstructing 12 bus stops with bus bulbs under the elevated train structure, ensuring safer, grade-separated boarding for passengers, particularly those with disabilities, and improving bus speeds by simplifying bus boarding operations. This project will also revitalize public spaces through the creation of new plazas, expanded pedestrian areas, and adding additional specialty lighting under the elevated subway tracks that run over 10th and Nagle avenues.

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, supporting and advocating for parks, trails, and open spaces throughout the state of New York. As New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, PTNY has been dedicated since 1985 to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. PTNY continues to help and advocate for the development and implementation of greenway infrastructure and multimodal safety throughout the State of New York. By promoting sustainable transportation options, the project will facilitate low-emission transportation connections in an area experiencing rapid growth and help mitigate the environmental impacts of automotive traffic in both Inwood and neighboring Bronx communities.

This project directly aligns with the RCP Program's goals by prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities, improving access to daily necessities, and fostering equitable development, and represents a significant opportunity to expand New York City's Greenway network while advancing critical safety, resiliency, and economic development priorities. I strongly urge full and favorable support for this essential project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Steely White  
Executive Director