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

RE: Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods Program – Route 291 Safety Improvements in Chester, PA

September 21, 2023

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my support for Delaware County's application to the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program (RCN) in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The partnership is seeking funds to design safety improvements along Route 291 in the City of Chester.

Route 291 is a major crosstown thoroughfare that currently divides Chester residents from the waterfront but is also the location for a planned multi-state, multi-purpose trail known as the East Coast Greenway. With RCN funds, the partnership will work with local government and community members to craft a final design that improves safety, reconnects Chester with its waterfront and key employment centers, and — with the inclusion of the East Coast Greenway — provides an important recreational and multi-modal transportation resource.

Chester is a majority Black city that has suffered from decades of disinvestment. It is designated as both an Area of Persistent Poverty and a Historically Disadvantaged Community, in addition to being burdened with old transportation infrastructure that slices the city into strips. Besides Route 291, Interstate 95 and the rail lines of CSX, Amtrak, and SEPTA act as significant physical barriers. Adding to the challenges faced by Chester residents, nearly 40% of households within a block of Route 291 don't have a vehicle and 45% of those families are living below the poverty line.

State Route 291 is the focus of this application because it is the subject of a current study sponsored by DVRPC and PennDOT, the "Route 291 Road Diet Study," which is set to conclude at the end of 2023 and will determine feasible safety improvements that can be implemented along the roadway while still meeting PennDOT's transportation goals. The RCN grant will produce a final design built on community engagement that furthers the current work being done in the Road Diet Study.

I appreciate your review of this application and respectfully ask that you give Delaware County's proposal full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress