



September 18, 2023

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

**SUBJECT:** Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program Application FY-23  
| C/O Andrew Emanuele, Grantor

**Dear Secretary Buttigieg,**

We thank you for your commitment to investing in our country's infrastructure. This letter conveys the strong support of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Reconnecting Communities Neighborhoods Grant Program Application FY-23 from the City of Eugene, Eugene School District 4J (4J), Eugene Bethel Public Schools (Bethel) and Better Eugene Springfield Transportation (BEST). This grant application addresses the barrier that Beltline Highway poses by proposing a new bicycle-pedestrian bridge over Beltline Highway and development of a plan to address other locations where Beltline creates divisions between communities and key destinations.

The River Road-Santa Clara Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge will connect the River Road-Santa Clara communities, allowing students and other community members on either side of the Beltline Highway to shop, work, and recreate within the catchment area.

The bridge will remove the primary barrier to walking and biking to school for students at 4J's highest-need high school, North Eugene High School. For approximately half of North Eugene High School students, the Beltline Highway presents an obstacle that can only be breached by traveling on a dangerous, high-speed, high-volume road past highway entrances and multiple high-crash intersections. This bridge is the highest-ranked infrastructure need on the 4J Safe Routes to School list of infrastructure needs – a list prioritized by safety, equity, and other key factors crucial to active transportation.

Most North Eugene High School students encounter streets with neither sidewalks nor bike lanes on their route to school. The City of Eugene, Lane County, and Eugene School District 4J have partnered over the years to create a network of safe streets for the school commute. But recent and pending improvements to neighborhood streets only matter if

students can access them. A bridge over Beltline is a keystone project that will increase access to school and safety for our students and their families and has the potential to improve attendance.

Meanwhile, in the neighboring Eugene Bethel School District, the Beltline and Highway 99 similarly separate many students from their neighborhood school and parts of the community from key destinations and people in their lives. School administrators and community members view the on and off-ramps of Beltline and associated sections of Hwy 99 as significant barriers to walking or rolling to school and other key destinations.

Reviewing the existing conditions, engaging the public on the impact of the entire Beltline facility, and building the Santa Clara bicycle and pedestrian bridge to enhance safety and connectivity lie at the crux of this partnership.

In conclusion, we are confident that this grant will help eliminate the obstacles to safe mobility, access, and economic development — while *Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods* in Eugene.

We thank you for your consideration and strongly urge you to support this vital project.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Steve Moe  
Metropolitan Policy Committee, Chair  
Springfield City Councilor