

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 24, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003-3660

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to support the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT)'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) application to advance Baltimore City's ongoing RCP-funded planning efforts to reimagine the 1.4-mile Route 40 corridor between the West Baltimore MARC station and North Greene Street, commonly referred to as the "Highway to Nowhere." As the Highway to Nowhere was the inspiration for the provisions creating the RCP in the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, the program was designed specifically with this site in mind.

Built in the early 1970s, the Highway to Nowhere is a reminder of racially divisive and culturally destructive 20th century transportation choices. This segment of Route 40, formerly known as Interstate 170, was built as part of a larger effort to connect Interstate 70 in western Baltimore County with Downtown Baltimore. Community activism stopped the construction of additional segments in other city communities, preventing the project from further damaging the City's urban fabric; but not before the West Baltimore section of the defunct I-170 had been constructed, slicing through predominantly Black neighborhoods without adding value to the region's transportation system.

Construction of the Highway to Nowhere displaced approximately 1,500 Black residents, destroyed 971 homes and 62 businesses, and divided multiple West Baltimore neighborhoods and communities in the process. Fifty years later, the Highway remains a physical and symbolic barrier to progress in these long-disinvested areas. BCDOT is working to repair the harm done by this bygone era of urban freeway construction, and the RCP grant program will play a critical role in Baltimore City's efforts to dismantle this barrier and revitalize these neighborhoods.

We fully support Baltimore City Department of Transportation's efforts to reconnect divided communities on each side of the Highway to Nowhere in West Baltimore. Its proposal closely aligns with the goals and objectives of the RCP grant program. Removing the Highway to Nowhere and replacing it with infrastructure for Complete Streets and community-oriented development will directly help to accomplish USDOT's goal of reconnecting communities that have been divided for over half a century. We urge you to give its application full and favorable consideration.

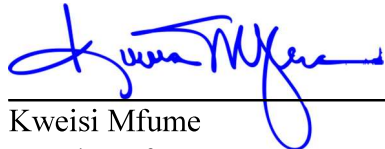
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



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Member of Congress