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September 26, 2022

Faith Hall, Grant Lead
Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2022 RCP Program: Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study, (Milwaukee, WI)

Dear Ms. Hall,

I am writing in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application for funding through the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program. The RCP funding would facilitate the Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study to evaluate options for reconnection of communities in the City of Milwaukee that are currently divided by the 1.5-mile stretch of WIS 175 from Wisconsin Avenue to Lisbon Avenue. The highway has a substantial impact on the 19 surrounding neighborhoods and the nearly 51,000 residents located within one mile of the project corridor.

The project aligns to the Biden-Harris Administration's policies and priorities as well as to USDOT's strategic goals for the RCP program by reconnecting communities harmed by transportation infrastructure. The study will focus on safety, economic strength, equity, climate and sustainability, transformation, and organizational excellence and is seeking funds to conduct community-supported planning activities. The project will support and engage economically disadvantaged and traditionally underserved communities to increase affordable, accessible, and multimodal access to daily destinations.

WIS 175 is a remnant of a larger freeway plan that never fully materialized and poses safety and operational issues through high crash rates and peak hour delays; mobility issues for local traffic, bicycles, pedestrians; and creates a barrier to business connectivity and other everyday destinations. The study is a partnership between various agencies and advocacy groups to further evaluate, incorporate comprehensive engagement input, and create innovative alternatives that blend the needs of all parties and modes of transportation, and to develop a land use strategy that spurs economic development of the region.

We commend USDOT for recognizing the need to reconnect communities by reimagining transportation facilities. The needs are immense, and there are multiple governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations working together towards a better-connected Milwaukee. WisDOT, the Menomonee Valley Partners, and the Housing Authority of Milwaukee are aware and supportive of one another's applications. Indeed, funding these proposals would make an even greater impact towards removing physical and socioeconomic barriers within the City of Milwaukee, which is one of the most racially segregated cities in the country.

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I support WisDOT's application for the funding of Reconnecting Milwaukee – Reimagining WIS 175 Feasibility Study and look forward to the infrastructure investment in our region through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Please give this 2022 RCP funding proposal your full consideration and if I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at Chytania.brown@employmilwaukee.org or 414.270.1700.

Sincerely,



Chytania Brown
President and CEO
Employ Milwaukee, Inc.

