



September 14, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Transportation Riders United and thousands of Detroit area transit riders and supporters, I am writing to **express our enthusiastic support for the Advancing Corridors for Transit (ACT) project**, a co-application **from the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan** (RTA), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for the Regional Partnerships Challenge category of the Reconnecting Neighborhoods and Communities (RCN) grant program.

The Detroit region has long suffered from inadequate public transportation which has worsened disinvestment in communities like Detroit and Pontiac, while dragging down the vitality of the entire region. Sprawling development and overly wide roads that are inhospitable to people walking, biking, or using wheelchairs or transit have limited the mobility and economic opportunities millions of people who can't physically, legally, or financially drive a car. In the past, regional divisions also limited concerted efforts to improve transit.

With those past struggles in mind, we are **extremely excited about the potential of this project both to improve transit access** to jobs, education, and recreation opportunities **and to improve the safety and walkability** of some of the region's largest roadways. And the regional cooperation in this program demonstrates major progress across four counties and many levels of government.

The investments proposed align very closely with the improvements that transit riders and other stakeholders have wanted for decades. Numerous studies and plans align well with significant on-the-ground experience that these corridors have enormous potential to substantially enhance our regional transit network, to remove significant

barriers to employment and opportunity, and to address persistent issues with pedestrian safety.

I write on behalf of Transportation Riders United (TRU), a Detroit-based community nonprofit organization that believes **everyone should be able to get where they need to go**, regardless of whether they drive. We have over two decades of experience educating, advocating, and mobilizing across the Detroit region for more and better public transportation and other affordable sustainable mobility options.

TRU has been involved in just about every Detroit area mobility study in the past twenty years and are proud to have mobilized the involvement of thousands of riders and other stakeholders in those efforts. We speak out (indirectly) on behalf of dozens of allied community organizations, our hundreds of paid members, thousands of riders who depend on our local public transit, and the millions of people throughout our region who depend on those transit riders.

We strongly agree with the project co-appliants that a more functional, reliable, and frequent transit system will advance equitable economic development, improve access to opportunities for underserved communities, build community wealth, support climate resiliency, and support the State of Michigan's goal to retain and attract talented workers.

We urge you to **please support our region** as we strive to take these historic steps to reconnect our communities and improve people's lives. Please support **the Advancing Corridors for Transit (ACT) project**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Megan Owens', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Megan Owens
Executive Director