

June 26, 2021

Attn: Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Franklin Boulevard RAISE Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please consider our highest support for an important, collaborative effort and award a portion of this year's available Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant funds to Eugene's, Springfield's, and the Lane Transit District's partnership to invest in Franklin Boulevard.

As multi-sector champions for decent, livable housing conditions for households with all types of ages and incomes in our community, we focus on providing solutions to our housing crisis. The time is now, more than ever, to serve those who are in the greatest need of a full system that functions well—from places people can depend on and be proud of, to transportation options that get them there. Franklin Boulevard reconstructed through RAISE funding would do just that.

Our commitment to making sure our community can live its best life is offered through education that inspires and instills confidence, policy guidance, and by delivering on design concepts with on-the-ground development. The opportunities we focus on include providing places to call home for our some of our most vulnerable populations within the Eugene-Springfield metro area and are testament to what quality alternatives to low density housing development look like. Our strong roots and commitment to those overburdened with housing costs bring over 30 years of work in the Eugene-Springfield area, with some of us going on a century of improving lives in fundamental ways and counting. We also bring a fresh perspective to issues that are emerging due to longstanding policies in need of a critical look.

What we also have in common is our shared commitment to bring the vision for the Franklin corridor to life. The envisioned transformation of Franklin Boulevard is a truly innovative, multi-modal arterial that embodies equitable and energy efficient priorities and invites all to enjoy and choose how they get around. We have worked with Springfield to advance the community's vision for Glenwood, with Eugene for the portion of Franklin Boulevard in their jurisdiction west of I-5, and with many interested property owners and developers. Recurring values expressed with Franklin Boulevard's design are opportunities for less dependence on automobiles and fossil fuels as supported by the project's ability to improve safety, efficiency, and access. This framework can set the stage for better health given Franklin's location along Lane Transit District's most highly utilized bus rapid transit system and the Willamette River. Achieving these outcomes means Franklin Boulevard is still in need of funds that eliminate obstacles, unsafe exposure to high-speed vehicles, and blight—all of which contribute to a high-stress environment.

Continued reconstruction is also an essential ingredient to the recipe for revitalization. The ability for this project to minimize frontage improvement costs is paramount to the success of our largest assembled, shovel-ready and shovel-worthy riverfront development sites. The ability to reconstruct Franklin, as made possible by RAISE Grant funding, will also increase the speed and predictability

of permit timelines to drive the already-growing redevelopment energy along the corridor. Offsetting frontage improvement costs will help development interests offer prices and rents that households can actually afford. Equally important is the project's ability to alleviate the burdens of keeping up with housing costs by minimizing the burdens of commuting costs.

While wages and incomes have continued to rise, they have not kept pace with the cost of housing in Eugene and Springfield. Though median household income increased by 15%, the median home price in the metro area climbed 130% from 2010-2019. Median rental rates rose by about 53%. Approximately 30% of our region's residents are housing cost burdened in this extremely tight housing market. In 2019, 2,165 people in Lane County experienced homelessness—a 32% increase from 2018 and 49% increase from 2016. These statistics do not even begin to tell the story of households and individuals affected by COVID and the unprecedented national fire emergency in September 2020. A RAISE award could not be timelier as we work to recover.

On the brighter horizon ahead is an effort that Homes for Good has tirelessly worked to bring to fruition, right on Franklin Boulevard's completed Phase 1 within Springfield's Glenwood area. This effort is Glenwood's first major, mixed-use development anchored by and affordable housing apartment community that will welcome up to 147 lower-income and workforce households to the neighborhood, which is located between Areas of Persistent Poverty to the east and west. This means real opportunities for making investments to better serve marginalized communities. The project is ripe for putting our plans into action with shovels in the ground and cranes in the skyline.

We hope you will find our organizations' longstanding, positive experiences working in the Eugene-Springfield area proves testament to the far-reaching, mutual benefits this project will bring for many for years to come. Thank you for considering this joint agency request for RAISE funding.

Sincerely,

Darcy Phillips, Executive Director
Cornerstone Community Housing



Kaarin Knudson, Founding Director
Better Housing Together



Jacob Fox, Executive Director
Homes for Good Housing Agency



Emily Reiman, CEO
DevNW

