

July 6, 2021

Attn: Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Franklin Boulevard RAISE Application

Secretary Buttigieg:

We write to you as representatives of organizations that advocate for the communities of color who call the Eugene-Springfield area home. We strongly urge you to award Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant funds to the application submitted jointly by the Cities of Eugene and Springfield for the Franklin Boulevard project. Together, our organizations share the common mission of creating a community where all people are welcome and valued. The Franklin Boulevard project is critical to being able to achieve this mission.

Access to safe and reliable transportation choices is integral when connecting communities to daily needs and opportunities so people can be their best selves—physically, mentally, and economically. When physical mobility is limited, so too is social and economic mobility. In its current state, Franklin Boulevard is a relic of the past that prioritizes moving cars at the sacrifice of the safety of people. It lacks safe crossings, continuous and connected sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and the infrastructure needed to increase transit capacity. Communities of color already suffer higher fatality rates when traveling compared with White, non-Hispanic Americans. Not funding the project will contribute to this status-quo, business-as-usual model that perpetuates the marginalization of people of color. Instead, funding the project will catalyze Franklin Boulevard to focus on people and place, constructing the improvements needed to alleviate the burdens inflicted when transportation options are restricted and unsafe.

Our society has declared racism to be a public health crisis, hurting the health of our nation by preventing some people the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Lack of access to safe active transportation choices, like walking or riding a bike in an adequately lit neighborhood, adds to the crisis by denying our bodies the benefits associated with these modes and instead confining them to our cars. This has a compounding effect, increasing air pollution in our neighborhoods, further affecting our health. Investments in the corridor will facilitate fair, inclusive, and equitable access to jobs, educational opportunities, and services while preventing and reducing many of the negative impacts automobile-centric transportation design inflicts on our physical, mental, financial, environmental health and well-being.

Together, we continue to emphasize our strong support for this much-needed infrastructure investment. We believe this project is integral to our shared vision of a prosperous and connected community. Please consider this important and collaborative transportation project and award RAISE grant funding to our community.

Sincerely,



Eric Richardson, President
Eugene/Springfield NAACP Branch #1119



David Sáez, Executive Director
Centro Latino Americano

