

TIM Kaine
VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607
(202) 224-4024

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
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AND PENSIONS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

September 13, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

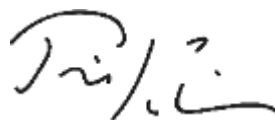
I write to express support for the City of Newport News, an applicant for grant funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program (RCP) to assist in the designing and planning of the Southeast Community Greenway Reconnector in the City of Newport News.

The City's proposal will improve the existing 28th Street Bridge, which passes over Interstate 664 (I-664) in the City of Newport News, to enhance the structure and transform it into a multimodal bridge with a publicly accessible park and recreation space, and see it become a community asset that literally bridges the majority-minority Southeast Community of Newport News with the Downtown districts. This will improve accessibility to economic opportunities, businesses, grocery stores, retail, and healthcare facilities greatly deficient in the City's Southeast Community. Further, the full implementation of this project will improve the wellbeing of the five thousand sailors who live adjacent to the shipyard while their ships are being serviced in Newport News. The creation of new, human-centered, infrastructure will improve the quality of life for individuals, increase access to housing and entertainment, and reduce the burdens already faced by servicemembers in the area.

Historically, the Southeast Community of Newport News has faced substantial hurdles in the equitable distribution of resources and economic opportunity. Most significantly, the Southeast Community was almost completely divided from the Downtown districts due to the construction of the I-664 highway, which was largely constructed along the previous formal redlining boundary that separated the low-income neighborhoods of Newport News with the rest of the City. While the practice of redlining was outlawed in April 1968, the planning and construction of I-664 created a physical barrier separating the previously redlined communities from the rest of Newport News. The proposed improvements will also improve the transit infrastructure available to those in the region, improving access to housing and amenities for those living in the Southeast Community and working downtown.

Please give full and fair evaluation to this project, which will benefit Newport News and the region as a whole by creating a new, meaningful way of reconnecting Newport News while still allowing for the economic benefits associated with the presence of I-664. Should you have any questions regarding this project, contact my Office's Grants Coordinator, Elda_Stanco@kaine.senate.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine