

September 28, 2023

Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way

Appendix C: Letters of Support



Bryan Williams
City of Cincinnati
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, O.H. 45202
(513) 352-4506
Bryan.Williams@cincinnati-oh.gov



Letters of Support Provided By:

Representative Landsman

Ohio Dept. of Transportation

Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments

Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority

Cincinnati Parks Foundation

Great Parks of Hamilton County

Cincinnati Bengals

FC Cincinnati

Green Umbrella

ULI - the Urban Land Institute

Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation

Triversity

The Mayerson Company

Western and Southern Financial Group

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

September 22, 2023

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

RE: Support for City of Cincinnati's Application for 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program Funding

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to convey my strong support for the City of Cincinnati's application for 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program funding for the City's Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Cincinnati was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as it boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

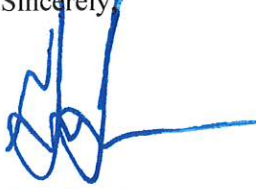
With this in mind, I strongly support the City of Cincinnati's reconnection efforts that are reflected in its application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction that will ultimately cap over the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation. All of this was made possible by the City's commitment and execution in 2002 to narrow Fort Washington Way – opening up 45 acres of land for redevelopment and reconnecting the historic street grid over the highway. At this same time, Cincinnati laid the foundation for a future capping of Fort Washington Way in order to later reclaim the area above the highway for a marquee public space in Downtown Cincinnati.

The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City – along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway.

The outcome of these efforts will put the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. I am excited by the City's application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project, and respectfully request support for the application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Landsman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Mike DeWine, Governor Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D., Director

1980 W. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43223
614-466-7170
transportation.ohio.gov

September 27, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Subject: City of Cincinnati's Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

In the early 2000s, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) was an active partner with local government leaders in Cincinnati to rebuild Fort Washington Way, investing state resources alongside local and private funds to rebuild the interstate and invest in foundations that would one day support decks that could reconnect Cincinnati and its riverfront.

This is a complicated project, but one that has long been contemplated in the Cincinnati region. ODOT has a primary focus on safety of our roadway network, and we remain engaged with the local partners on issues related to signage, structural design, and tunnel life safety engineering in the proposed tunnel that this project could create. Because of the strong partnership between our agency and the applicants, we are confident that technical issues will be addressed in the design phase of the project that this grant supports.

Additionally, the local partners and ODOT remain in discussions about the ongoing operations and maintenance of the proposed tunnel. The local partners have committed to ODOT that they expect those responsibilities be shared by the local government partners but to date, the details of those plans have not yet been finalized. These outstanding items are important to ODOT, and we believe it is critical that they be addressed in advance of construction, should the applicants be successful.

We recognize the tremendous value for local citizens and those of the region that lies in connecting the Queen City's central business district to the vibrant cultural, business and entertainment assets that occupy its riverfront. As we have demonstrated in our ongoing collaboration on the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project with Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval, the Hamilton County, Ohio Commissioners, and the local business community, ODOT has a results-oriented and respectful relationship with the local leaders who are applying for this grant funding. Thus, ODOT offers its provisional support for their application for design and construction funding from the Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods program.

Respectfully,

Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D.
Director

September 25, 2023



The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the city boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

On behalf of Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation.

The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all.

I offer my full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark R. Policinski".

Mark R. Policinski
CEO

Judge Gary Moore
President

Mark R. Policinski
CEO

720 E. Pete Rose Way, Suite 420 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 | Phone: 513.621.6300 | Fax: 513.621.9325 | www.oki.org
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September 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

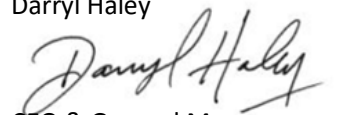
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The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. SORTA gives our full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

Darryl Haley



CEO & General Manager



September 25, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Cincinnati Parks Foundation, we write today to support the City of Cincinnati's request for funding through the Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way Project, which will add more greenspace to the City of Cincinnati.

As a partner to Cincinnati Parks, we support any effort to add more greenspace to the city. Cincinnati Parks is a 200-year-old urban park system that represents 10% of the city's landmass, more than 5,000 acres, which constitutes 150 parks and greenspace spread across the 52 neighborhoods of Cincinnati. It's often rated as one of the top ten urban park systems by the Trust for Public Land. Their comprehensive, technical evaluation compares park lands in cities on 5 factors: access, acreage, investment, amenities, and equity in access to public greenspace by race and income. The study found that 88% of Cincinnati residents live within a half mile of a park.

For more than 28 years, the Cincinnati Parks Foundation (CPF) has been the official philanthropic partner of Cincinnati Parks. Our work supports neighborhoods, community members, park visitors, nature lovers, and conservationists and we are motivated by the health benefits associated with access to greenspace. We know that properly managed and maintained parks can create a significant economic impact to any municipality. We are proud to have been part of the efforts to develop and sustain The John G. & Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park which generates more than \$1.2B for our region annually. It's that type of project within downtown Cincinnati that impacts the entire city. While the Cincinnati Parks system has more than \$74MM of deferred maintenance needs, it is our hope that transformational projects like the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way will add more greenspace to Cincinnati, and that its economic impact will reach back out to the 52 neighborhoods and its residents.

We remain grateful for leaders like Mayor Aftab, the City of Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber for working collaboratively with Hamilton County officials for opportunities that have the potential to make a great impact in our environment.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Hafner Spieser, Executive Director



September 14, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Re: Great Parks of Hamilton County Letter of Support: City of Cincinnati – Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio, was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati’s Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of Great Parks of Hamilton County, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati’s 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and ensure that the streets surrounding the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City – along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that

Board of Park Commissioners

Douglas Abrams • William Burwinkel • Caren Lavery • Marcus Thompson • Melissa Wegman • Todd Palmetter, CEO
10245 Winton Road • Cincinnati, OH 45231 • greatparks.org



were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway.

The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaim Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. Great Parks of Hamilton County fully supports this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Palmeter".

Todd Palmeter
Chief Executive Officer



September 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of Cincinnati Bengals, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation. All of this was made possible by the City's commitment and execution in 2002 to narrow Fort Washington Way, opening up 45 acres of land for redevelopment and reconnecting the historic street grid over the highway. At this same time, Cincinnati laid the foundation – quite literally – for a future capping of Fort Washington Way, in order to later reclaim the area above the highway for a marquee public space in Downtown Cincinnati.

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The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. The Cincinnati Bengals give our full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

Katherine Blackburn
Executive Vice President



September 25, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the owners, staff, and fans of FC Cincinnati, I am writing today in full support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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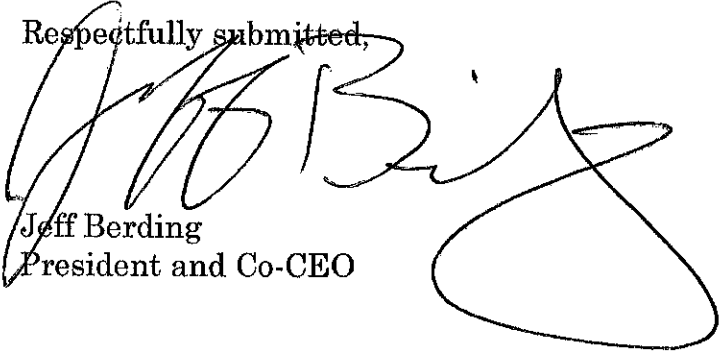
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The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City - along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway.

A large component of our soccer club's ability to attract a Major League Soccer franchise to Cincinnati in only three short years of existence was the economic vitality and growth potential for our region. Having a vibrant and efficient transportation infrastructure is a critical element to any region's ability to grow. The Fort Washington Way capping project is a tremendous opportunity to accelerate this growth.

Thank you very much for your continued investment in critical infrastructure projects and for your consideration of the City's request.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Berding
President and Co-CEO



Green Umbrella

REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE

PO Box 14270
Cincinnati, OH 45250
513.541.1538
www.GreenUmbrella.org

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American Sustainable Business Network

Robert D. Temple

Carla Walker
think BIG Strategies, LLC

Julie Zimmerman
Baker Tilly

Executive Director

Ryan Mooney-Bullock
ryan@greenumbrella.org

September 25, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

On behalf of Green Umbrella, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. Green Umbrella gives its full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Ryan Mooney-Bullock
Executive Director, Green Umbrella

The Mission of Green Umbrella

We lead collaboration, incubate ideas and catalyze solutions that create a resilient, sustainable region for all.



Cincinnati

151 West 4th Street, Suite 222
Cincinnati, OH 45202

937-424-3310
cincinnati@uli.org
cincinnati.uli.org
www.uli.org

ULI – the Urban Land Institute
2001 L Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

September 13, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of ULI Cincinnati, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. ULI Cincinnati gives our full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kimberly A. Fantaci' in a cursive script.

Kimberly A. Fantaci
Director

Carol Ann and
Ralph V. Haile, Jr.

F O U N D A T I O N

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnati from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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*The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
September 21, 2023*

reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation gives our full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bernard L. McKay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bernard" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McKay".

Bernard L. McKay
President & CEO

September 13, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of Triversity Construction I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

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Sincerely,



President
Triversity Construction

September 25, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation. All of this was made possible by the City's commitment and execution in 2002 to narrow Fort Washington Way, opening up 45 acres of land for redevelopment and reconnecting the historic street grid over the highway. At this same time, Cincinnati laid the foundation – quite literally – for a future capping of Fort Washington Way, in order to later reclaim the area above the highway for a marquee public space in Downtown Cincinnati.

The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City - along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway.

The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. I give my full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl P. Lindner III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "C" and "L" at the beginning and a stylized "III" at the end.

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Cincinnati, Ohio was founded in 1819 along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of The Mayerson Company, I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation. All of this was made possible by the City's commitment and execution in 2002 to narrow Fort Washington Way, opening up 45 acres of land for redevelopment and reconnecting the historic street grid over the highway. At this same time, Cincinnati laid the foundation – quite literally – for a future capping of Fort Washington Way, in order to later reclaim the area above the highway for a marquee public space in Downtown Cincinnati.

The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City - along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway.

The outcome of these efforts will lead the City one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. The Mayerson Company gives our full support to this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,





Western & Southern Financial Group

400 Broadway • Cincinnati, OH 45202-3341

John F. Barrett
Chairman of the Board
President and Chief Executive Officer

Direct line: 513-629-1105
Fax: 513-629-1233
john.barrett@westernsouthern.com

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Fort Washington Way

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Cincinnati, Ohio was originally settled in the 1780's along the banks of the Ohio River, which served Cincinnati well as the City boomed into a vital port city, connecting the east to the west. However, a decision was made in the mid-20th century to route Fort Washington Way – a multi-lane highway – between Cincinnati's Central Business District and the riverfront, creating a broad physical barrier that separates Cincinnatians from their riverfront.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of Western & Southern Financial Group I write in support of the City of Cincinnati's 2023 application for a Capital Construction grant from the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program to advance the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project into detailed design and construction, a project to cap over the interstate and build a public park.

Over the last 25 years, Cincinnati's long-term vision to reconnect the city to this vital public resource has led to an incredible revitalization of the riverfront into a regional destination for entertainment and recreation. All of this was made possible by the City's and Hamilton County's commitment and execution in 2002 to narrow Fort Washington Way, opening up 45 acres of land for redevelopment and reconnecting the historic street grid over the highway. At this same time, Cincinnati laid the foundation – quite literally – for a future capping of Fort Washington Way, in order to later reclaim the area above the highway for a marquee public space in Downtown Cincinnati.

The City of Cincinnati – in close partnership with Hamilton County and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber – will use these funds to advance the design and construct the physical capping structure and to ensure that the streets that surround the future public space are designed to promote safe access for all. This will build upon the \$10 million in investment that the City – along with its public and private partners – put into the foundations that were built into the reconstructed Fort Washington Way to support this future use of the space above the highway. I am close to this as I raised that money in anticipation of one day approaching the Federal Government for this additional money.

The outcome of these efforts will lead the City of Cincinnati one step closer to achieving this long-planned physical reconnection of the city to the riverfront, creating a space for Cincinnatians to gather and reclaiming Fort Washington Way for a higher and greater purpose. Western & Southern Financial Group fully supports this application for 2023 RCN capital construction funding for the Bridging the Gap: Capping Fort Washington Way project.

Sincerely,

JFB/dj