



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

September 25, 2024

**SUBJECT: Support for Trails Master Plan - Reimagining the City's Trail Network**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the City of San Diego's submission for the Fiscal Year 2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) grant, for the Trails Master Plan - Reimagining the City's Trail Network Project. This initiative seeks to transform how San Diegans connect with one another and access vital coastal and community resources, both in the short and long term.

The proposed initiative is a first-of-its-kind San Diego Trails Master Plan to set forward goals, policies, and design guidelines aimed at enhancing and expanding the City's trail network. This initiative has been eagerly anticipated by the San Diego community and is crucial for realizing the full potential of trails as vital connections between neighborhoods. Historically, transportation infrastructure, particularly freeways, has divided communities, severing access to essential resources such as natural, cultural, and recreational spaces. The proposed trail system offers an opportunity to reconnect these divided neighborhoods, promote active transportation, contribute to greenhouse gas reduction goals, protect our native habitat and sensitive species, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

If awarded, this grant will support the City's efforts to establish goals and policies for the Trails Master Plan, as well as fund the development of a conceptual design to create safe, engaging, and accessible community connections through an enhanced network of trails and pedestrian walkways. Currently, neighborhoods like Old Town San Diego, and the Midway District, once connected by the San Diego River estuary, have been isolated by the channelization of the river

and the construction of the I-8 and I-5 freeways. This conceptual trail design aims to bridge these divides in a manner that protects our rich and diverse natural habitat, reconnect disadvantaged communities, and expand access to vital regional resources such as beaches, parks, commercial centers, cultural heritage sites, and transit hubs.

The City of San Diego is committed to fostering opportunities for walking, biking, and using public transit to ensure that commuting and travel are safe and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities. This plan is part of a broader strategy to address the harmful legacy of car-centric infrastructure and promote equitable access to transportation. By prioritizing investments in underserved communities, the Trails master plan will begin the critical process of rectifying past injustices, helping San Diego become a city of opportunity for all its community members.

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