



APPENDIX E

Letters of Support

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1304

September 26, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing regarding the City of Chicago's application for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) grant for the completion of the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks, and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities across the City. Independence Boulevard once linked the East Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities to each other and the greater boulevard system. However, the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) in the 1950s severed this connection, creating a significant connectivity gap. This project will create a land cap over I-290, restoring the greenspace along Independence Boulevard.

East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities, and the construction of I-290 contributed to this disinvestment. More than 13,000 people and over 400 businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. While the impact of those displacements cannot be undone, the City of Chicago is committed to enhancing connectivity and restoring community safety, cohesion, and quality of life through this project.

The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is a critical part of Chicago's ongoing efforts to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, particularly in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

Please give full and fair consideration to the City of Chicago's application. If you require additional information, please contact my State Director, Clarisol Duque, at (312) 353-4952.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

United States Senate

September 24, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to express my support for the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) application to U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* (RCP) grant program. Funding from this program will advance the Reconnecting I-290 Land Cap Project, adding a highway cap to land that has been historically disadvantaged.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities throughout the city. Constructed in 1955, Interstate 290 (I-290) was created to enhance Chicago infrastructure and reduce traffic for commuters traveling to the city. Construction of the added highway sliced through two low income, high minority populated neighborhoods of Garfield Park and Lawndale, disconnecting them from the Greater Boulevard System. The highway also impacted the neighborhoods access to economic opportunity's that Chicago offered, negatively impacting the areas local economy. CDOT recognizes the mistakes that were made and seeks to restore the connection, creating a highway cap that will increase the mobility of residents between both communities and connect the green areas on both sides.

As a U.S. Senator and member of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, I have made it a priority to modernize Illinois' transportation and infrastructure systems. CDOT's application falls within the traditional bounds of the *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* program to provide adequate access to disadvantaged areas that link people, jobs and communities throughout the Chicagoland area.

Please accept this letter of support for the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) application to U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* (RCP) grant program. In keeping with your existing rules and regulations, I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact my Chicago Director, Stacey Berdejo, at (312) 886-2525.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

DANNY DAVIS
7TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS



WASHINGTON OFFICE:

2159 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5006
(202) 225-5641 (FAX)



CHICAGO OFFICE:

2813-15 W 5TH AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60612
(773) 533-7520
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September 25, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

This letter is written to express support for the City of Chicago's application for Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks, and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities throughout the city. Independence Boulevard connected the East Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities to each other and to the greater Boulevard System. The Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), built in the 1950s, sliced through Independence Boulevard, creating a connectivity gap. This project will create a land cap over I-290 to restore a connected greenspace along Independence Boulevard.

East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities. This disinvestment stems in large part from the creation of the I-290 in the 1950s, during which over 13,000 people and over 400 Chicago businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. While recognizing that wrongs committed to those impacted almost a century ago cannot be righted, the City of Chicago is setting a new course by enhancing connectivity over I-290 to restore community safety, cohesion, and quality of life.

The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

We thank you for careful review of this application and ask that you provide Reconnecting Communities Pilot funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress
7th District, IL

DKD/cgo



COOK COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
Transportation
and Highways

Jennifer 'Sis' Killen, P.E., PTOE
 Superintendent
 (312) 603-1601
 Jennifer.Killen@cookcountyil.gov

69 West Washington
 Suite 2400
 Chicago, Illinois 60602

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September 12, 2024

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

RE: City of Chicago's Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) application for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks, and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities throughout the City. Independence Boulevard connected the East Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities to each other and to the greater Boulevard System. The Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), built in the 1950s, sliced through Independence Boulevard, creating a connectivity gap. This project will create a land cap over I-290 to restore a connected greenspace along Independence Boulevard.

East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities. This disinvestment stems in large part from the creation of the I-290 in the 1950s, during which over 13,000 people and over 400 Chicago businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods. It is also in line with Cook County's focus on increasing racial equity and using transportation projects to help advance equal access to opportunities across communities differing by race and income.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide Reconnecting Communities Pilot funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

Jennifer "Sis" Killen, P.E., PTOE



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

433 West Van Buren Street
Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607

312-454-0400
cmap.illinois.gov

September 25, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is pleased to support the City of Chicago's grant application for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap project to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program. This project would enhance connectivity over I-290 to restore community safety, cohesion, and quality of life.

As the comprehensive regional planning organization of northeastern Illinois, CMAP is committed to supporting initiatives that will advance equity, support walkable and bikeable communities, and improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. [ON TO 2050](#), the region's comprehensive plan, emphasizes the importance of leveraging the transportation network to promote inclusive growth. This project will create a land cap over I-290 by connecting the two Independence Boulevard bridges and providing a greenspace with pedestrian and bikeways over I-290. The Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), built in the 1950s, sliced through Independence Boulevard, creating a connectivity gap between the East Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities. East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities, and this project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway.

The project will also be incorporated and built as part of the [I-290 Blue Line Corridor Program](#) which is a joint effort between IDOT, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), and CMAP to create a unified approach and advance progress on the I-290 multi-modal corridor with a commitment to improving mobility, accessibility and quality of life for motorists, transit riders, residents and corridor communities.

Once again, CMAP is supportive of the City of Chicago's grant application for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap project to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) program. This project would help to reconnect historically disinvested communities and provide equitable transportation along the I-290 corridor.

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Executive Director

Erin Aleman

The Hon. Pete Buttigieg
September 25, 2024
Page 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Aleman', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erin Aleman
Executive Director

RG:EA

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September 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), a regional, non-profit organization that works to increase equity in the built environment, is in full support of the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks, and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities throughout the City. Independence Boulevard connected the Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities to each other and to the greater Boulevard System. The Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), built in the 1950s, sliced through Independence Boulevard, creating a connectivity gap. This project will create a land cap over I-290 to restore a connected greenspace along Independence Boulevard.

East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities. This disinvestment stems in large part from the creation of the I-290 in the 1950s, during which over 13,000 people and over 400 Chicago businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. While recognizing that wrongs committed to those impacted almost a century ago cannot be righted, the City of Chicago is setting a new course by enhancing connectivity over I-290 to restore community safety, cohesion, and quality of life.

This project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

MPC is an independent planning and policy organization working to address regional built environment issues through a racial and economic justice lens. In 2023, we released our report - [Reconnecting Communities: Mitigating Community Harms of Transportation Infrastructure](#), an effort that compiles over a year of research and engagement with communities to identify priority projects for this grant opportunity. We are glad to see that the Independence Boulevard Cap is being considered for this application.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,



Audrey Wennink
Senior Director



September 19, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

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East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities. This disinvestment stems in large part from the creation of the I-290 in the 1950s, during which over 13,000 people and over 400 Chicago businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. While recognizing that wrongs committed to those impacted almost a century ago cannot be righted, the City of Chicago is setting a new course by enhancing connectivity over I-290 to restore community safety, cohesion, and quality of life.

The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods. Across the country, Trust for Public Land is working on similar projects that add essential green space to neighborhoods that need them most.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline O'Boyle".

Caroline O'Boyle
AVP, Illinois State Director



September 26, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

The North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council (NLCCC) supports the work of this project to reconnect the communities and create walkable green space and a safe route to schools, churches and parks that both communities' use.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

Rochelle R. Jackson
Chair, Transportation/Infrastructure Committee
North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council (NLCCC)



North Lawndale Employment Network

Creating a Community That Works

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Chicago, IL 60624

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nlen.org | beelovebuzz.com

September 19, 2024

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

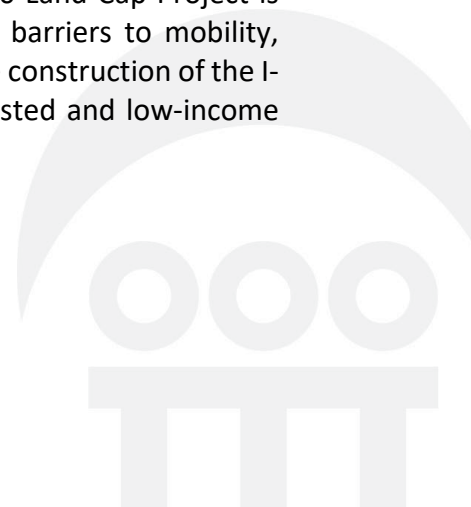
Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

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East Garfield Park and North Lawndale are historically disinvested communities. This disinvestment stems in large part from the creation of the I-290 in the 1950s, during which over 13,000 people and over 400 Chicago businesses were displaced along the I-290 corridor. While recognizing that wrongs committed to those impacted almost a century ago cannot be righted, the City of Chicago is setting a new course by enhancing connectivity over I-290 to restore community safety, cohesion, and quality of life.

The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.





North Lawndale Employment Network
Creating a Community That Works

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Palms".

Brenda Palms
Chief Executive Officer
North Lawndale Employment Network

EQUITICITY

POWER + EQUITY >

September 27, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

The Chicago Park Boulevard System is a 26-mile stretch of boulevards, parks, and squares that form a continuous green space connecting communities throughout the City. Independence Boulevard connected the Garfield Park and North Lawndale communities to each other and to the greater Boulevard System. The Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), built in the 1950s, sliced through Independence Boulevard, creating a connectivity gap. This project will create a land cap over I-290 to restore a connected greenspace along Independence Boulevard.

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The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

Equiticity is a racial equity movement, operationalizing racial equity by harnessing our collective power through research, advocacy, programs, Community Mobility Rituals, and social enterprises, to improve the lives of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in our society. We are headquartered in the North Lawndale neighborhood on the Westside of Chicago, working to increase mobility, reduce violence, create economic opportunities, and improve health in our community. Independence Boulevard is an important historical and cultural corridor in North Lawndale and East Garfield Park, and we are eager to transform this corridor and land cap I-290 in a way which also helps transform North Lawndale and East Garfield Park.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olatunji Oboi Reed', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Olatunji Oboi Reed
President & CEO, The Equitcity Racial Equity Movement
773-916-6264 | Oboi@equitcity.org



Breakthrough partners with people to build connections, develop skills, and open doors of opportunity.

September 26, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

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The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yolanda Fields". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yolanda Fields
Executive Director

Stone Temple Baptist Church

Bishop Derrick M. Fitzpatrick

Pastor Reshorna M. Fitzpatrick

Rev. James M. Stone, Founding Pastor

3622 West Douglas Blvd. Chicago, IL 60623 (312) 762-0015



September 26, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my full support for the City of Chicago's application for *Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)* funding to complete the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

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The Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project is part of Chicago's ongoing effort to address the barriers to mobility, access, and economic development caused by

the construction of the I-290 expressway, especially in historically disinvested and low-income neighborhoods.

The Historic Stone Temple Church has been located in North Lawndale at 3622 West Douglas Boulevard for seven decades and our quest has been and continues to be securing equity, justice, prosperity and peace through community connectivity and engagement. The Independence Boulevard Project will help us further enhance our mission of connecting communities by allowing residents to enjoy safe, peaceful and well designed green spaces as they travel the boulevards to enjoy our Sundays on the Boulevard, Sukkah Design Festival, Back To School Event, Soup For The Soul Distribution and other community events that we host. The Independence Project will further drive the social cohesion and engagement that already exist and create more collaboration between different groups in the various neighborhoods.

We thank you for your careful review of this application and urge you to provide *Reconnecting Communities Pilot* funding for the Reconnecting Independence Boulevard: I-290 Land Cap Project.

Sincerely,

Reshorna Fitzpatrick

Reshorna Fitzpatrick
Executive Pastor
The Historic Stone Temple Church