

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

November 20, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write in support of the application submitted by the City of New York and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) for funding from the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This funding will be used for the design and construction of the Forest Park Pass (Section II), of the QueensWay.

The QueensWay is a project that would convert a former rail line into a 47-acre linear park that would provide vital green space for residents in Central Queens. Since 1962, the 3.5 stretch of the former Long Island Rail Road Rockaway Beach Branch has been desolate and an eyesore to the surrounding community. Many of the 2.3 million people who live in Queens have limited access to public parks and open spaces that can also be difficult and dangerous to bike or walk to. The QueensWay is a project that will promote equity, safety, and reconnect communities across Queens.

The requested funding will be used to support the second phase of the project, which includes a 0.35-mile section of the Queensway known as the Metropolitan Hub to Forest Park. The Forest Park Pass will include repairs to existing bridges over Union Turnpike, connections to the existing greenway networks and trails in Forest Park, and new ADA-accessible spaces for recreation and gatherings. By connecting hundreds of thousands of residents in Central Queens, the QueensWay project will create a cultural greenway that repurposes abandoned spaces and creates a safe and environmentally friendly means of travel for Queens's residents.

I ask that you please give this application your full consideration. If you have any questions or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Abi Jimenez, at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator