

September 27, 2024

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: **City Link – Reconnecting North Hartford**  
Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2026 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP)  
Discretionary Grant Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) to express my strong support for the application submitted by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) under the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2026 Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program for the **City Link – Reconnecting North Hartford** project. This funding would allow CTDOT to conduct a planning study that will continue the progress of the Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS) Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL).

CTDOT seeks \$2 million to complete collaborative visioning, use analysis, and preliminary engineering for the realignment, lowering, and capping of Interstate 84 (I-84) and the Hartford Line rail corridor in the City of Hartford. Through this effort, CTDOT will work with stakeholders to better define the extent of capping, identify potential uses for capped sections, establish engineering feasibility and constraints, and create a structure for long-term engagement and project continuity.

The GHMS PEL study identified multimodal transportation improvements with the potential to positively transform hundreds of thousands of residents, visitors, and travelers throughout the Hartford region. Advancing recommendations of the GHMS is a goal in several of CRCOG's core plans, including the 2023-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

The ***City Link – Reconnecting North Hartford*** project represents CTDOT’s effort to correct the wrongs of the past. When I-84 was initially constructed, planners and engineers relied on slum clearing and redlining neighborhoods to justify the highway’s alignment. Communities and neighborhoods which previously thrived were suddenly separated from downtown Hartford by viaducts and trenches. This project is an opportunity to reconnect these communities, starting with engaging residents and stakeholders to create the vision for reestablishing connections to downtown.

The ***City Link – Reconnecting North Hartford*** project serves the top priority of the RCP grant program by reconnecting communities that have been divided and negatively impacted by transportation infrastructure. Residents of the Clay Arsenal and Upper Albany neighborhoods, and the surrounding disadvantaged communities, will have their voices heard throughout the process that will determine how their communities can once again become connected to the city’s downtown. Reestablishing these connections will provide vital access to jobs, schools, and healthcare, as well as opportunities to contribute to the local economy.

If awarded, CRCOG would work with CTDOT to place this project in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

CRCOG strongly encourages your favorable consideration of the ***City Link – Reconnecting North Hartford*** project in Hartford, Connecticut for funding through the RCP grant program. Your agency’s time and consideration of this proposal is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart  
Executive Director

CC: CRCOG Policy Board and Transportation Committee  
Ms. Jennifer Arienti, CTDOT  
Ms. Pamela Sucato, CTDOT  
The Honorable Arunan Arulampalam, Mayor, City of Hartford