

# United States Senate

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the City of Missoula's Brooks Street BRT/TOD 2021 RAISE Planning Grant application. The City, in partnership with the Missoula Urban Transportation District, seeks funding to complete a planning study that proposes bus-rapid transit (BRT) as a catalyst to transform Brooks Street from an auto-centric business strip into a multi-modal, transit-oriented development (TOD) corridor. The study area is Rural and located in an Area of Persistent Poverty, as defined in the RAISE Program criteria.

Brooks Street, the spine of Midtown Missoula and the single route between Downtown and the Bitterroot Valley, was developed in the mid-twentieth century as a highway-commercial strip with a sea of surface parking. Today the character of the highway and surrounding land uses remains largely unchanged. It is unsafe and uncomfortable for all users and acts as a dividing barrier through the center of Midtown – hampering economic opportunities for brownfields redevelopments and strategic urban planning.

Through previous planning efforts, the City and its partners have identified center-running BRT as a compelling strategy to mitigate existing Brooks Street challenges. Center-running BRT could improve safety and flow for all users, while also facilitating smart growth. Investing in a BRT system and a complete, multi-modal street would signal to developers that the City encourages robust infill development with a vibrant mix of residential, business, commercial, and recreational uses accessible to all demographics.

Thank you for your attention to this application. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would also appreciate you informing my office of the eventual decision on this application.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester  
United States Senator