

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 22, 2024

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to write in support of the application submitted by Queenslink to the Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant program.

The Rockaway Beach Branch corridor lies between two congested roads in Queens, Woodhaven Blvd. and the Van Wyck Expressway. This right of way is well positioned to reconnect southern neighborhoods such as Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and the Rockaways—with northern neighborhoods like Rego Park, Forest Hills, and midtown Manhattan. This would provide better access to transit opportunities for residents with limited mass transit options while reducing congestion and carbon emissions, providing cleaner air for the surrounding area.

In 1962, New York City severed service on Queens's only north-south rail corridor, making it more difficult for many communities to access jobs, education, and recreation. More research is needed to understand the full impact of this change as well as the potential benefits of reintroducing rail along this corridor for the surrounding communities.

With funding, Queenslink will conduct a community equity analysis of reintroducing rail to the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor. A community equity analysis will provide an understanding of how north-south rail in Queens could benefit local residents and adjacent communities and promote economic development. Data generated by this study would help inform policymakers in New York City as they make capital project decisions in Queens and beyond.

We hope the application meets with your approval. Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my Grants Coordinator, Jeff Dickson, in my Washington, DC office at 202-224-6542.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress