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**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**ALBANY
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14TH SENATE DISTRICT**

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ON MINORITY AND
WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
NEW YORK STATE BLACK, PUERTO RICAN,
HISPANIC AND ASIAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

October 23, 2024

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

Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of \$500,000 to the Rockaway Beach Branch Community Equity Analysis from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program monies. The study intends to measure the environmental, economic, and quality-of-life impacts of restoring this transit link with a comprehensive rails and trails project like QueensLink on the existing north-south rail corridor.

In 1962 New York City severed service on Queens' only north-south rail corridor thereby disconnecting many communities from access to jobs, education, and recreation. Today, Queens exists as a divided borough. From analyses of average household income to data on racial stratification, a clear and perhaps predictable pattern emerges: south Queens is has considerably less connectivity and inter-modality than north Queens, and is economically less well to do.

The Rockaway Beach Branch corridor lies between two of the most congested roads in the City: Woodhaven Blvd. and the Van Wyck Expressway. This City-owned right of way is uniquely positioned to reconnect southern neighborhoods such as Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and the Rockaways with northern neighborhoods like Rego Park, Forest Hills and even midtown Manhattan. It has the potential to provide better access and opportunity for disadvantaged residents while significantly reducing congestion and carbon emissions. It will result in cleaner air for the borough, fulfill our Climate Leadership and Community Projection Act goals in New York, and satisfy those more broadly of the Biden-Harris Administration.

I am confident that future generations of south Queens residents will have additional economic and quality of life benefits through this grant. Thank you.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Comrie".

Leroy Comrie
New York State Senator
District 14 | Queens