



February 3, 2023

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

**RE:** Mahoning Valley Leveraging Infrastructure for Transportation (LIFT) Project  
United States Department of Transportation  
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to support the Western Reserve Transit Authority's (WRTA) 2023 RAISE grant application for the Mahoning Valley Leveraging Infrastructure for Transportation (LIFT) Project.

Team NEO is the regional economic development organization focused on accelerating economic growth, job creation, and economic prosperity throughout 18 counties of Northeast Ohio. Place matters for job creation and job access. As such, we have a data-based approach to designating job hubs across the region and have job hub development at the core of our regional site strategy. A job hub is a community's economic nerve center, defined by a solid saturation of assets, businesses, and workers. Job hubs are characterized by a high concentration of traded-sector jobs and employers. Job hubs also align with local development patterns, civic priorities, and economic development opportunities. Aligning strategies around job hubs is key to improving Northeast Ohio's trajectory.

The Youngstown Market Street Corridor is a priority job hub in the northeast Ohio region. This Project will aid in existing revitalization efforts that seek to transform the City of Youngstown's Market Street Corridor into a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use community and aligns investments in transit with the region's vision for growth and economic development.

Many residents of the Market Street corridor have lower incomes, are older and/or are members of minority groups. Furthermore, these neighborhoods have experienced decades of disinvestment and depopulation.

This Project, rooted in Transit-Oriented Development principles (TOD) and the goal of this Project is to enhance the already good bus service that WRTA provides along Market Street with infrastructure investments at their primary transit hub, Federal Station.



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This Project inherently contributes to equity by improving transit, pedestrian, and bike facilities used primarily by lower-income and minority citizens at WRTA's Federal Station. It takes advantage of public investment in transit to attract private investment that benefits neighborhoods and drives smart and sustainable growth. An emphasis of this TOD Project is to ultimately empower communities to become dynamic places where people live, work, and play.

I wholeheartedly support WRTA and their efforts to obtain a RAISE grant. I strongly encourage the Department of Transportation to invest in Youngstown, the Mahoning Valley, the Northeast Ohio region and the state of Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Koehler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Koehler  
CEO