The Honorable Pete Buttigieg

Secretary of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE

Washington, DC 20590

**Re: Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Community Planning Grant for Lidding I-5 in North Seattle**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

[ORGANIZATION/NAME] is pleased to offer our strong support for the U District Partnership’s Reconnecting Communities Planning Grant request to advance efforts to lid the Interstate 5 in North Seattle. The project creates a unique and necessary opportunity to stitch together north Seattle’s diverse urban neighborhoods and bring quality open space, housing, jobs, mobility connections and economic vitality to an area that has been divided for decades. The U District Partnership is well-positioned to guide this work as a leading placed-based organization in the University District and north Seattle.

Connectivity between north Seattle neighborhoods like the University District, Wallingford, Roosevelt, and others was severely reduced by the construction of Interstate 5 decades ago, which focused primarily on automobile mobility and rejected early community ideas for lids and transit right-of-way. Today, northeast Seattle is one of the fastest growing urban centers outside of downtown Seattle, and we face challenges such as lack of land for affordable housing and green, open space. The interstate separates the neighborhoods of the University District, Wallingford, and Roosevelt and acts as a barrier to safe pedestrian and bicycle activity between our neighborhoods, and our vital commercial centers are cut off from one another.

Highway lid progress in areas such as Downtown Seattle and cities across the country demonstrate the benefits of lids for communities like the University District and surrounding neighborhoods in North Seattle. As a major stakeholder in North Seattle, [ORGANIZATION/ NAME] hopes to see progress toward repairing the divide I-5 has created in North Seattle as well. A study of the benefits and possibilities for such a huge urban development project is an important first step in this work. We look forward to collaborating with the U District Partnership and other community members in these efforts, and encourage your favorable consideration of this project for Community Project Funding.

Sincerely,

[NAME AND SIGNATURE]