



October 6, 2022

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Northwest Hills Council of Governments  
Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program: CFDA number 20.940  
CONSERVE8: Connecting Neighborhoods to Stimulate Economic Revitalization, Vitality, and Equity  
across Connecticut Route 8

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please accept this as a letter of support for the application submitted by the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NHCOG), Connecticut, for funding from the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. Funds from this grant would be utilized by the NVCOG to conduct a comprehensive planning study to assess the impacts that the construction of the Route 8 Expressway has had and continues to have on the communities and neighborhoods through which it passes.

The Route 8 Expressway was built in the early 1950s and was intended to improve traffic to and from the towns of Bridgeport in the Naugatuck Valley and ending in Torrington in the Northwest Hills region. The proposed project will document how the highway divided vibrant communities and determine the deleterious effects it had on these areas, especially related to their economic development, land use and social fabric. This planning effort will identify feasible and strategic actions to reconnect these neighborhoods and communities. Mitigation project will focus on and address psychological barriers of the highway by enhancing micro-mobility (pedestrian, bicycle, e-assisted devices and transit) opportunities and connections between the areas separated by Route 8. These actions will help transform neighborhoods that have been burdened for many years by the decision to build the expressway; many of these areas have been traditionally underserved by transportation actions, historically disadvantaged and are areas of persistent poverty.

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) has established strong working partnerships necessary for general project development, which include collaboration with the state's Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. The NHCOG serves as the Council of Governments for twenty-one towns within the Litchfield region. The project team represents three of the nine state-created regional planning organizations that carry out a variety of planning activities for the municipalities within each respective region. This multi-regional approach will result in an integrated and comprehensive plan of action that will transform the Route 8 corridor from one where neighborhoods are divided and disconnected to one that has been reknit together and become a more cohesive whole.

This proposed project will have beneficial impact for all the municipalities along this corridor especially for the Town of Winchester and the City of Torrington which are located in the Northwest Hills region.

Projects such as *CONSERVE8* are vital to restoring accessibility and livability while expanding access to intermodal transportation networks within the affected communities and for the region. RCPP funding would provide considerable support for these needs. Therefore, we fully support this application and ask for your consideration of this very worthy proposal.

Sincerely,



Robert Phillips  
Executive Director