

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 25, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We are writing to you regarding implementation of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* and its impact on housing affordability and neighborhood accessibility.

As you know, the IIJA is one of the most significant investments in infrastructure in our nation's history. It will expand access to clean water, renewable energy, broadband, and improve transportation options for American families and individuals.

For investments in transportation to have their biggest impact, however, we must also be sure that these investments align with the critical housing needs that affect countless cities and towns across the country. Housing and transportation cannot be viewed separately. Accessible communities require that there be sufficient housing for residents at all income levels, with access to different modes of transportation able to access jobs, health care, education, and food. For years, the United States has suffered from a chronic shortage of housing, driving up rents for everyday families and putting homeownership out of reach for too many Americans.¹ This puts accessible transportation options out of reach for many, locking them out of economic opportunity.

To help address these issues, Congress included in the *IIJA* a new process by which Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) may engage in a "Housing Coordination Plan" with local stakeholders. These plans' goals include aligning transportation investments with housing needs, expanding housing supply near transportation, and increasing the share of households with affordable access to transportation networks.²

In addition, Congress has also included a number of other provisions that encourage localities to adopt transit-oriented development (TOD), which can help create more affordable options near high quality transportation services, and active transportation policies. For example, the IIJA requires MPOs and States to use 2.5% of their highway planning funding to increase accessible

¹ Housing Supply: A Growing Deficit. Freddie Mac.

http://www.freddiemac.com/research/insight/20210507_housing_supply.page

² Sections 11201 and 30002.

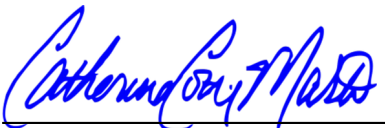
transportation options, including through transit-oriented development,³ and expands TOD options under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program⁴ and the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program.⁵ The law also continues and funds the competitive Transit Oriented Development Planning Program.⁶

With these new tools, Congress has given the Department additional means to help address our nation's acute housing supply shortages and improve transportation accessibility for our constituents. To that end, we are asking that the Department do the following:

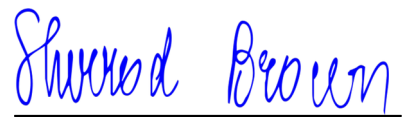
- Expediently release any necessary guidance or other information to MPOs regarding the new Housing Coordination Planning provision in a manner that establishes a framework for implementation while maintaining flexibility.
- Work to align the new Housing Coordination Process with other Departmental efforts, such as the TOD Planning Program and the set-aside for accessible transportation planning, to streamline planning and focus on project delivery.
- Implement policies and undertake actions to encourage recipients of formula funding to select projects that align with housing supply needs.
- Use the Department's discretionary grant authority to prioritize projects that increase housing and transportation accessibility and affordability, in line with the goals of Housing Coordination Plans.
- Leverage investments and planning with other agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

We appreciate your consideration of these important matters and look forward to continuing to work with as you work to implement the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

³ Section 11206

⁴ Section 12001

⁵ Section 21301

⁶ Section 30009



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



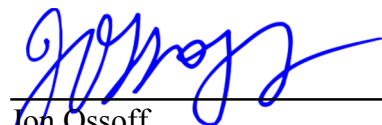
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



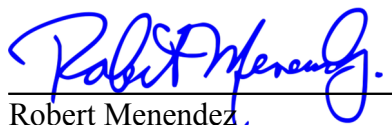
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator