

KATHY CASTOR
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND COMMERCE

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, DATA
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PARTY



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0914

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

2052 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3376

TAMPA DISTRICT OFFICE:

4144 NORTH ARMENIA AVENUE
SUITE 300
TAMPA, FL 33607
(813) 871-2817

ST. PETERSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE:

136 FOURTH STREET NORTH
SUITE 201
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701
(727) 369-0201

www.castor.house.gov

September 20, 2023

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

RE: The City of St Petersburg - UEI #: LARH MJNJAKS4

Dear Secretary Buttigieg

I am writing in support for the City of St. Petersburg's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) application submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for a Community Planning Grant to improve access and reconnect South St. Petersburg, including the Gas Plant District, a historic African American community.

The City of St. Petersburg's proposed project aims to be a community-informed planning study for the two-way conversion and lane reallocation of 8th/MLK Streets to include improved pedestrian and bike facilities as well as opportunities for creative place-making and green infrastructure for mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis.

Nearly fifty years ago, the construction of the interstate in the City of St. Petersburg displaced residents of the Gas Plant District, the second African American neighborhood formed in St. Petersburg in the late 1890s. The transportation facilities have physically and economically separated several historically disadvantaged communities in South St. Petersburg from downtown and other areas of the city. Today, South St. Petersburg, home to over 30,000 residents – of which the majority are African American – continues to experience a cycle of various inequities and transportation, environment, and economic disadvantages.

For the reasons above, I hope that the City of St. Petersburg and its application will be given every consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida, District 14