April 14, 2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing on behalf of UC San Diego Health to strongly express support for the Voight Electric Mobility Hub as a candidate for the 2022 DOT RAISE Grant program.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has spawned significant and profound changes in how health care operates, including how we receive patients and visitors. Often, these changes have affected our ability to take all appropriate measures to care of our staff in the way we would like and prefer. Operational costs have exceeded projected budgets as we deal with the many unintended financial impacts to keeping the public safe during these difficult times.

As the health campus within the larger University of California San Diego system, we have actively supported – and assisted in the design of – the new Voight Electric Mobility Hub project, an innovative approach that will carry both campuses into the future by providing new and diverse transportation options to students, health care staff and economically disadvantaged (and extremely valuable) support staff for the hospital system.

We feel strongly that this project would solve many issues facing our staff every day, including:

1. With the increase in property values and rent, many of our economically disadvantaged service support team members (food servers, custodial staff, facilities operators, security agents, etc.) use less expensive public transportation to get to work. Many choose to live many miles away to avoid the high cost of living in much of metro San Diego. But few bus routes actually pass through our campus, requiring many employees to still walk long distances from the closest stops, at all hours of the day and night. The Voight Electric Mobility Hub will directly link the new San Diego Blue Line light trolley to an ELECTRIC bus hub that will service the internal areas of campus in a clean, quiet and sustainable way, measurably reducing noise and pollution impacts upon our patients, staff, visitors and surrounding
community. The increased linkage to the light trolley will take hours each week off our employees’ commute, enabling an efficient and clean way to serve our underrepresented and disadvantaged community members who are the backbone of service to our patients and patient-facing health care team.

2. The Hub would provide a safe place to park for health staff. With census numbers skyrocketing in our hospitals, we seek real solutions that can create shorter, safer walks between parking areas and the hospital. Public transit is a key part of the remedy, but it cannot address all of the needs of a medical center that operates around the clock, and a workforce whose shifts vary radically dependent upon patient needs. We have struggled with long walks for our staff, and have grappled with numerous security issues in the past. These issues have occasionally resulted in valued staff choosing to work elsewhere due to the lack of available, safe parking. We are a large academic medical center. It is difficult to compete on quality of life issues, such as parking, compared to privately owned hospitals in the local area. The Hub parking concept would provide a tremendous boost in confidence and tangible improvements to safety and access between our hospitals, clinics and secure parking.

3. Community leadership in sustainability. Combining a parking structure with electric vehicle stations and a fully electric bus and transportation hub would be a recurring point of community pride and a tremendous display of sustainability leadership. The balance between main campus and Health System use would further highlight the collaborative nature between our two campuses. Our intention is always to spotlight successful sustainability measures (electric vehicle systems, decarbonizing our central utility plants, using sustainable food sources, composting waste, reprocessing medical equipment to avoid one-time usage, etc.). This project, erected over the next two years, would set a new standard for health systems and communities just beginning to emerge and expand post-pandemic. We believe the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub will positively influence architects, engineers and civic planners to pursue like-minded ideas and innovations that will advance our region into a brighter, cleaner future.

I hope that you find this letter helpful and that it assists you in making the decision to say YES to support the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub with the 2022 RAISE Grant program. If you have any questions or if I may support in any way, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact me.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Maysen
Chief Executive Officer
UC San Diego Health