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

May 9, 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Young Planners’ Society (YPS) at UC San Diego, we collectively express our utmost support towards the funding opportunity stemming from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program for the UC San Diego Voigt Electric Mobility Hub (VEMH) project. As a pre-professional student organization registered under the American Planning Association California Chapter, YPS recognizes firsthand the significance of projects ranging from transportation improvements to infrastructure related developments in and near communities. It is evident that the funding opportunity for UC San Diego’s VEMH will be a crucial next step towards creating equitable advancements in employment opportunities, transportation justice for the community, sustainability through electrification, and overall improved quality of life.

Planning for a community, no matter the scale, is an intricate process due to internal and external factors ranging from community inclusion, engagement, environmental impact, and equity. These factors are relatively “new” considerations in the planning process as well. In the day and age of 2022, we as young planners are collectively planning for the future while ensuring we reverse racist and exclusive planning policies dating back to the mid 1800s to early 1900s. UC San Diego has not only made an effort in including the community for this collective effort, but the brilliant team leading this proposal has conducted hours of due diligence - notioning the fact that this grant will be utilized efficiently.

The Voigt Electric Mobility Hub aims to solve a plethora of rider-based problems as well as environmental issues. For instance, the last-mile issue will be solved through the VEMH’s strategic location sited on UC San Diego’s Blue Line Trolley light rail extension, providing further connections to the central location of UC San Diego with a one-seat ride between mid and south county. Additionally, Triton Transit operates fare-free and is open to all bus-riders, regardless of student status. Benefiting the community further, the surrounding environment will see the positive effects of electrification and electric infrastructure in this Hub. Notably, the VEMH aims to implement the Transit Operations Center that will possess a 40-vehicle bus yard with high capacity for secure charging. With multiple travel options available, infrastructure for EVs, electric scooters, and bikes will be supported through charging stations and improved active transportation infrastructure such as Class IV cycle-tracks.

Lastly, the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub will produce and provide hundreds of job opportunities that will not only allow the Hub to be a well-maintained development, but will bring forth prosperity and driver-safety training programs for the multitude of student and transportation workers employed.

As a leading public university with a diverse and global community, it is not only the university’s top priority to provide a world-class education for our future leaders, thinkers, and innovators, but improving the elements of sustainability, mobility, and economic opportunity are factors that will create a place San Diegans can equitably live and work in for years to come, and RAISE is the next step to reach just that.

With utmost gratitude and respect,

Derek Meksavanh and Sarah Rieble
Co-Presidents of Young Planners’ Society at UC San Diego