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May 21, 2020

Attn: Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey
Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590

RE: Franklin Boulevard Opportunity Zone Corridor BUILD Application

Secretary Chao:

I am writing to support the Cities of Eugene's and Springfield's Franklin Boulevard Opportunity Zone Corridor project and urge you to award a \$25 million Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant to this important collaborative effort.

American Campus Communities is invested in the transformation of Franklin Blvd already. We have recently built two student housing developments on Franklin within 1.2 miles of each other and own another one on East Broadway, which connects to Franklin. In total, we provide housing for almost 2,000 residents, most of which are University of Oregon (UO) students. When two of the complexes were constructed, we worked with the City of Eugene to install pedestrian-activated signals in front of our buildings. As the largest owner, developer, and manager of high-quality student housing communities in the nation, putting students' first in all aspects is our highest value. Simply put: we need Franklin Boulevard to be safe for our residents.

Based on the most recent 2019 UO commute survey, 51% of University of Oregon students commute to campus by foot; 16% commute to campus by bike; and 7% commute to campus by the EmX bus rapid transit. Currently, Franklin Boulevard lacks accessible and continuous sidewalks and bikeways are practically non-existent. It is an unpleasant, outdated former State highway that is not keeping up with urban development, including the number of people who want to safely walk, bike and/or take transit in a campus environment.

The innovative multi-modal street design of the Franklin Boulevard Opportunity Zone Corridor project supports greater safety, efficiency, and access for students and all in the region who rely on Franklin Boulevard to get where they need to go. Achieving these outcomes means eliminating obstacles along paths of travel, unsafe exposure to high vehicle speeds, and urban blight.

BUILD funding will implement the next phase of this project and put its fruition within closer reach. We urge you to give this collaborative joint agency request your full support, as the lives of our residents depend on it.

Sincerely,

Jim Hopke, President
American Campus Communities
12700 Hill Country Blvd T-200
Austin, TX 78738

ACC Eugene Student Communities
515 E Broadway
959 Franklin Blvd
2125 Franklin Blvd