

INSTITUTE FOR RATIONAL URBAN MOBILITY, INC.

George Haikalis
President

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Pete Buttigieg, Secretary - Copy to: Polly Trottenberg, Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE, Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

My very best wishes to you, and to Polly, as you begin the challenging task of guiding sensible infrastructure investment and operating strategies for our nation's extensive transportation system.

I'm writing as a civil engineer and urban planner who leads a NYC-based nonprofit – the Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc (IRUM) concerned with advancing sustainable and cost effective transportation systems in dense urban areas. My interest in transportation research goes back many years when I first began my career at the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) then under the direction of J. Douglas Carroll, Harvard's first PhD in urban planning. He encouraged me to write a paper on economic evaluation of urban roadway networks which I presented at the Annual Meeting of what was then called the Highway Research Board (HRB) in 1960 in Washington DC. The paper was one of two chosen for the best paper award that year. My annual visit to what is now known as TRB continued for over fifty years, a truly inspiring activity, until health issues made it difficult for me to continue. I helped to found TRB's Committee on Intercity Passenger Rail Systems and chaired that committee for six years. I got to know Polly while there and I was delighted when she was chosen to lead the NYCDOT - my sincere congratulations to you for choosing such a capable deputy at USDOT. I came to NYC in 1963 to assist Doug Carroll when the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission was established leading its research activities until that agency was dissolved in 1982, in the Reagan years, when urban planning was thought to be too "socialistic". That's when I established IRUM, which continues to be active in research and advocacy for better transportation both at the metropolitan and the national level.

I would like to call your attention to two IRUM initiatives which would benefit greatly from USDOT's encouragement and support. Both complement a Manhattan CBD Congestion Pricing Cordon toll, which IRUM strongly supports:

1. a grid of light rail/pedestrian streets in Manhattan, beginning with a crosstown, river-to- river auto-free light rail boulevard on 42nd St.

http://www.irum.org/20190319_Statement_MBP_Brewer_Hearing_on_Manhattan_Congestion.pdf

2. remaking the three commuter rail lines serving the NY-NJ-CT metropolitan area, the nation's largest, into a **coordinated regional rail system** with frequent service, integrated fares and through-running first at Penn Station and then continuing on to Grand Central Terminal.

http://www.irum.org/20190115_Why_PA_Should_Support_Regional_Rail.pdf

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss these initiatives with you and your staff at your earliest convenience

Sincerely, George Haikalis