

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue,
SE Washington D.C. 20590

RE: Southeast Pennsylvania Multimodal Freight Optimization Plan

Dear Secretary Duffy,

As conveners of the Lower South Infrastructure Resilience Collaborative (LSIRC) on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and City of Philadelphia, we write to express our strong support for a grant application submitted by the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority (PhilaPort) through the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY26 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant fund program.

The requested BUILD award of \$3.456 million will facilitate the planning and design of critical freight connections between major regional freight and logistics sites including the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, the Navy Yard, and The Bellwether District, a 1300-acre redevelopment site that will become a regional hub for logistics, manufacturing, and innovation in Southeast Pennsylvania. In 2025, PhilaPort acquired the 152-acre Mustin Yard parcel from Norfolk Southern Corporation – a once-in-a-generation opportunity to expand Port productivity that requires careful planning and coordination.

The LSIRC is a group of public and private property owners and infrastructure operators engaged in large-scale economic development projects in South Philadelphia. It was convened to coordinate and plan investments in infrastructure modernization and improvement to meet future demand and build long-term resilience. The Pennsylvania Office of Transformation and Opportunity, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and the Philadelphia Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS) are partners in this collaborative effort, which also includes the Navy Yard, the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Transit Authority (SEPTA), the Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA), the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), FDR Park, the Philadelphia Phillies, the Philadelphia 76ers, the Philadelphia Flyers, the Philadelphia Eagles, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Southern, PECO, Comcast Spectacor, the Sports Complex Authority, and Live! Casino, in addition to PhilaPort and The Bellwether District.

The LSIRC will serve as an important vehicle for community and stakeholder engagement throughout the proposed BUILD planning project timeline.

The Lower South corridor in Philadelphia, which includes the Philadelphia Sports Complex, the 348-acre FDR Park, and the newly-acquired Hanwha Philly Shipyard in addition to the aforementioned facilities, is experiencing historic levels of development that require innovative solutions to challenges related to aging infrastructure, freight connectivity and traffic bottlenecks, and community access to economic opportunity.

With the development of The Bellwether District and the expansion of PhilaPort, surface freight traffic in the area is expected to increase significantly, making it essential to plan freight networks that will safely and efficiently accommodate the added traffic. This proposed BUILD project represents a critical opportunity to proactively plan safe and reliable connections that protect and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors.

Critically, this project aims to balance the benefits of expanded freight activity with enhanced economic competitiveness and opportunity. Through optimized multimodal infrastructure, the project will improve vehicular roadway capacity, promote local economic growth through job creation, and improve resilience to extreme weather events by upgrading infrastructure and incorporating stormwater infrastructure as appropriate. These coordinated transportation infrastructure improvements will protect local communities' mobility, safety, and quality of life.

As representatives of the LSIRC, we are proud to support this BUILD planning project application to drive economic growth in the Southeast Pennsylvania region.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Ben Kirshner
Chief Transformation Officer
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Michael A. Carroll
Deputy Managing Director
Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems
City of Philadelphia