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Honorable Pete Buttigieg:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) application for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. Division Street BRT is an integral part of our community's plans for our future.

Like many cities, we have suffered from a major erosion of housing affordability in recent years. We have done significant, innovative work to address this crisis, including a groundbreaking rezone to allow multi-family housing in all residential areas of our city. We have also adopted major planning changes around the City Line, our existing BRT line, to leverage this investment for transit-oriented growth in some of our most important neighborhoods.

Division Street BRT is a centerpiece of our community's vision for growth that focuses on transit investments as a way to improve our housing affordability. We know that affordability is not only about rents and property values; it includes the cost of accessing jobs, goods, and services. For this reason, Division Street BRT is an important part of our multi-faceted approach to improve housing affordability for our residents.

The Division Street corridor has historically divided our community. In our work to date, the community sees an opportunity for the Division Street BRT to reconnect neighborhoods, expand access to major regional employment centers, and connect our most vulnerable residents to educational opportunities and services.

We are a community that takes bold steps. Our housing reforms gained national praise for their swift, decisive approach to expanding housing choice and access. Spokane City Council recently endorsed a new plan to build twenty-seven miles of high-comfort, interconnected bike routes by 2027—an ambitious goal that will dramatically expand access for short-range trips. Our bike route proposal inherently recognizes the importance of a complementary public transportation system for longer-range trips and for meeting needs not easily addressed via bicycle.

We work closely with our partners at STA to further our goals as a city and their vision to connect everyone to opportunity. We look forward to continuing to work with them on developing the Division BRT and hope that we can leverage the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to advance this critical project.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Spencer Gardner".

Spencer Gardner  
Director of Planning and Economic Development  
City of Spokane