



April 15, 2022

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
503 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sen. Brown,

I wish to express my enthusiastic support for the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments appropriation request for the Youngstown Equitable and Sustainable (YES!) Streets Initiative Connectivity Study, a detailed transportation infrastructure study for Youngstown's East Side. As the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, Eastgate embraces its role in seeking to help achieve prosperity, health, and quality of life for residents within their communities.

The Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber, the third largest chamber of commerce in Ohio with nearly 2,800 members that employ more than 150,000 workers, sees this study as a necessary step toward shrinking appalling disparities in educational attainment, income, and health outcomes that our community endures. We have as much as a 20-year disparity in life expectancy between zip codes. Eastgate's initiative aligns with our commitment to reduce these disparities through equity-based economic development.

At one time, this part of the city was home to numerous businesses and industries, all accessible by foot or mass transit, for workers living in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. However, over the past several years, Youngstown's East Side has seen numerous business and industry closures, resulting in unemployment, followed by the resultant blight and disrepair.

Today, some 2,000 acres of vacant land or abandoned sites make up the bulk of this once prosperous and stable neighborhood. The requested funds for a comprehensive transportation infrastructure analysis will provide the critical backbone information to help secure neighborhood stability through economic development, and to design the infrastructure base which 21st Century manufacturers and businesses require.

Restoration and redevelopment of Youngstown's East Side aligns closely with the Justice40 initiative being championed by President Biden.

We encourage your support for this appropriation request for the Youngstown Equitable and Sustainable (YES!) Streets Initiative Connectivity Study and commit our full support of the resulting analysis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Guy Covello". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

GUY COVIELLO, *President & CEO*

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