

October 29, 2021

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Chair
Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Chair
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Chair Waters, and Chair Brown:

Thank you for your tireless efforts to advance the single largest and most comprehensive investment in affordable housing in our nation's history. Our coalition of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Main Street advocates, parks and public space organizations, affordable housing developers and stakeholders, and other mission-based entities is tremendously appreciative of your continued prioritization of the Community Restoration and Revitalization Fund (CRRF)¹. Your support for investments in "community-led redevelopment projects in distressed communities" as part of the Build Back Better Framework reflects a critically important recognition that neighborhoods need a holistic ecosystem of resources to thrive.² We thank you for your dedication to underserved communities and ask for your continued commitment to this small but potentially transformative element of the Build Back Better Agenda.

As proposed by the Biden-Harris Administration and advanced by the House Financial Services Committee, CRRF would create a new grant program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to invest in community-led civic infrastructure projects in distressed communities. As community partners who have worked with urban, suburban, and rural communities for decades, we are aligned behind a common belief that robust civic infrastructure is essential to creating neighborhoods where people want to live, work, and play. That's because civic infrastructure means the places that boost our economy, increase our economic and environmental resiliency, support our health and well-being, and strengthen our democracy: parks, trails, Main Streets, town squares, libraries, community and recreation centers, local ethnic media, early care and education programs, storefronts for local entrepreneurs, small business incubators, and more assets that together contribute to a community's social, economic, and civic fabric.

The specific projects may vary between neighborhoods, but across the country we see immense value in the community assets that serve as the connective tissue between people and places, particularly when they are located near housing that is affordable to households across the income scale. However, we have also

¹ Community Revitalization Fund support letters sent to congressional leadership on behalf of more than 200 organizations: <https://bit.ly/3G5s7aj>

² The White House, "President Biden Announces the Build Back Better Framework," October 28, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/28/president-biden-announces-the-build-back-better-framework/>

worked for decades with communities that have received neither adequate nor equitable investment in this critical infrastructure. In these neighborhoods, segregation and concentrated poverty continue to entrench cycles of disadvantage that are proven to disproportionately impact Black, Latino and other communities of color.³

To Build Back Better, we must do things differently. That includes identifying opportunities to fill the gaps where existing policies and programs have failed to meet local needs. CRRF is one such opportunity that truly meets this moment. Civic infrastructure investments can work hand in hand with investments in housing, transportation, climate resiliency initiatives, and other community infrastructure to stimulate new economic opportunities for local residents, improve education and health outcomes, and help ensure a neighborhood's long-time residents are not displaced from appreciating market factors, but rather are fully integrated in community life.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to ensure all families have access to the resources and services necessary to live healthy lives in communities of equity and opportunity. Please contact Olivia Barrow, Policy Manager, Low Income Investment Fund (obarrow@liifund.org) or Kelly Humrichouser, Director of Government Relations, Main Street America (khumrichouser@savingplaces.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs
Akron Civic Commons
Appalachian Community Capital
Capital Impact Partners
CDFI Coalition
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Cinnaire
City Parks Alliance
East Bay Housing Organizations
Enterprise Community Partners
Fairmount Park Conservancy
Genesis LA Economic Growth Corporation
Grounded Solutions Network
Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
Habitat for Humanity International
Housing Partnership Network
Housing Trust Silicon Valley
IFF
Invest Detroit
KABOOM!
Lexington Public Library
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Low Income Investment Fund
Main Street America
Memphis River Parks Partnership
Minneapolis Parks Foundation
Multicultural Media & Correspondents
Association
National Affordable Housing Trust
National Association of Affordable Housing
Lenders
National Community Stabilization Trust
National Housing Conference
National Recreation and Park Association
Nonprofit Finance Fund
Opportunity Finance Network
Piedmont Housing Alliance
Purpose Built Communities
Reinvestment Fund
Renaissance Community Loan Fund
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
The Trust for Public Land
West Atlanta Watershed Alliance

³ The Brookings Institution, "Tackling the legacy of persistent urban inequality and concentrated poverty," November 16, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/11/16/tackling-the-legacy-of-persistent-urban-inequality-and-concentrated-poverty/>