

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4273

To establish a program to award grants to entities that provide transportation connectors from critically underserved urban communities and rural communities to green spaces.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

Mr. GOMEZ (for himself and Mr. STIVERS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To establish a program to award grants to entities that provide transportation connectors from critically underserved urban communities and rural communities to green spaces.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Transit to Trails Act
5 of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. TRANSIT TO TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) CRITICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—

2 The term “critically underserved community”
3 means—

4 (A) a community that can demonstrate to
5 the Secretary that the community has inad-
6 equate, insufficient, or no park space or recre-
7 ation facilities, including by demonstrating—

8 (i) quality concerns relating to the
9 available park space or recreation facilities;

10 (ii) the presence of recreational facili-
11 ties that do not serve the needs of the com-
12 munity; or

13 (iii) the inequitable distribution of
14 park space for high-need populations,
15 based on income, age, or other measures of
16 vulnerability and need;

17 (B) a community in which at least 50 per-
18 cent of the population is not located within $\frac{1}{2}$
19 mile of park space;

20 (C) a community that is designated as a
21 qualified opportunity zone under section
22 1400Z–1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
23 or

24 (D) any other community that the Sec-
25 retary determines to be appropriate.

1 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
2 ty” means—

3 (A) a State;

4 (B) a political subdivision of a State (in-
5 cluding a city or a county) that represents or
6 otherwise serves an urban area or a rural area;

7 (C) a special purpose district (including a
8 park district);

9 (D) an Indian tribe (as defined in section
10 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
11 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)) that
12 represents or otherwise serves an urban area or
13 a rural area; or

14 (E) a metropolitan planning organization
15 (as defined in section 134(b) of title 23, United
16 States Code).

17 (3) PROGRAM.—The term “program” means
18 the Transit to Trails Grant Program established
19 under subsection (b)(1).

20 (4) RURAL AREA.—The term “rural area”
21 means a community that is not an urban area.

22 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of Transportation.

24 (6) TRANSPORTATION CONNECTOR.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “transportation connector” means a system that—

3 (i) connects 2 zip codes or communities within a 175-mile radius of a designated service area; and

6 (ii) offers rides available to the public.

7 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “transportation connector” includes microtransits, bus lines, bus rails, light rail, rapid transits, or personal rapid transits.

11 (7) URBAN AREA.—The term “urban area” means a community that—

13 (A) is densely developed;

14 (B) has residential, commercial, and other nonresidential areas; and

16 (C)(i) is an urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more; or

18 (ii) is an urban cluster with a population of—

20 (I) not less than 2,500; and

21 (II) not more than 50,000.

22 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

23 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a grant program, to be known as the “Tran-

1 sit to Trails Grant Program”, under which the Sec-
2 retary shall award grants to eligible entities for—

3 (A) projects that develop transportation
4 connectors or routes in or serving, and related
5 education materials for, critically underserved
6 communities to increase access and mobility to
7 Federal or non-Federal public land, waters,
8 parkland, or monuments; or

9 (B) projects that facilitate transportation
10 improvements to enhance access to Federal or
11 non-Federal public land and recreational oppor-
12 tunities in critically underserved communities.

13 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ad-
15 minister the program to assist eligible entities
16 in the development of transportation connectors
17 or routes in or serving, and related education
18 materials for, critically underserved commu-
19 nities and Federal or non-Federal public land,
20 waters, parkland, and monuments.

21 (B) JOINT PARTNERSHIPS.—The Secretary
22 shall encourage joint partnership projects under
23 the program, if available, among multiple agen-
24 cies, including school districts, nonprofit organi-
25 zations, metropolitan planning organizations,

1 regional transportation authorities, transit
2 agencies, and State and local governmental
3 agencies (including park and recreation agen-
4 cies and authorities) to enhance investment of
5 public sources.

6 (C) ANNUAL GRANT PROJECT PROPOSAL
7 SOLICITATION, REVIEW, AND APPROVAL.—

8 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
9 shall—

10 (I) annually solicit the submis-
11 sion of project proposals for grants
12 from eligible entities under the pro-
13 gram; and

14 (II) review each project proposal
15 submitted under subclause (I) on a
16 timeline established by the Secretary.

17 (ii) REQUIRED ELEMENTS FOR
18 PROJECT PROPOSAL.—A project proposal
19 submitted under clause (i)(I) shall in-
20 clude—

21 (I) a statement of the purposes
22 of the project;

23 (II) the name of the entity or in-
24 dividual with overall responsibility for
25 the project;

(III) a description of the qualifications of the entity or individuals identified under subclause (II);

(IV) a description of—

(aa) staffing and stakeholder engagement for the project;

(bb) the logistics of the project; and

(cc) anticipated outcomes of the project;

(V) a proposed budget for the funds and time required to complete the project;

(VI) information regarding the source and amount of matching funding available for the project;

(VII) information that demonstrates the clear potential of the project to contribute to increased access to parkland for critically underserved communities; and

(VIII) any other information that the Secretary considers to be necessary for evaluating the eligibility of

1 the project for funding under the pro-
2 gram.

3 (iii) CONSULTATION; APPROVAL OR
4 DISAPPROVAL.—The Secretary shall, with
5 respect to each project proposal submitted
6 under this subparagraph, as appropriate—

7 (I) consult with the government
8 of each State in which the proposed
9 project is to be conducted;

10 (II) after taking into consider-
11 ation any comments resulting from
12 the consultation under subclause (I),
13 approve or disapprove the proposal;
14 and

15 (III) provide written notification
16 of the approval or disapproval to—

17 (aa) the individual or entity
18 that submitted the proposal; and

19 (bb) each State consulted
20 under subclause (I).

21 (D) PRIORITY.—To the extent practicable,
22 in determining whether to approve project pro-
23 posals under the program, the Secretary shall
24 prioritize projects that are designed to increase
25 access and mobility to local or neighborhood

1 Federal or non-Federal public land, waters,
2 parkland, monuments, or recreational opportu-
3 nities.

4 (3) TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCE-
5 DURES.—

6 (A) PROCEDURES.—In consultation with
7 the head of each appropriate Federal land man-
8 agement agency, the Secretary shall develop, by
9 rule, transportation planning procedures for
10 projects conducted under the program that are
11 consistent with metropolitan and statewide
12 planning processes.

13 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—All projects carried
14 out under the program shall be developed in co-
15 operation with States and metropolitan plan-
16 ning organizations.

17 (4) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—As a condition of re-
19 ceiving a grant under the program, an eligible
20 entity shall provide funds in the form of cash
21 or an in-kind contribution in an amount equal
22 to not less than 100 percent of the amount of
23 the grant.

24 (B) SOURCES.—The non-Federal contribu-
25 tion required under subparagraph (A) may in-

1 clude amounts made available from State, local,
2 nongovernmental, or private sources.

3 (5) ELIGIBLE USES.—Grant funds provided
4 under the program may be used—

5 (A) to develop transportation connectors or
6 routes in or serving, and related education ma-
7 terials for, critically underserved communities
8 to increase access and mobility to Federal and
9 non-Federal public land, waters, parkland, and
10 monuments; and

11 (B) to create or significantly enhance ac-
12 cess to Federal or non-Federal public land and
13 recreational opportunities in an urban area or
14 a rural area.

15 (6) GRANT AMOUNT.—A grant provided under
16 the program shall be—

17 (A) not less than \$25,000; and

18 (B) not more than \$500,000.

19 (7) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—It is the intent
20 of Congress that grants provided under the program
21 deliver project funds to areas of greatest need while
22 offering technical assistance to all applicants and po-
23 tential applicants for grant preparation to encourage
24 full participation in the program.

1 (8) PUBLIC INFORMATION.—The Secretary
2 shall ensure that current schedules and routes for
3 transportation systems developed after the receipt of
4 a grant under the program are available to the pub-
5 lic, including on a website maintained by the recipi-
6 ent of a grant.

7 (c) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

8 (1) REPORTS BY GRANT RECIPIENTS.—The
9 Secretary shall require a recipient of a grant under
10 the program to submit to the Secretary at least 1
11 performance and financial report that—

12 (A) includes—

13 (i) demographic data on communities
14 served by the project; and

15 (ii) a summary of project activities
16 conducted after receiving the grant; and

17 (B) describes the status of each project
18 funded by the grant as of the date of the re-
19 port.

20 (2) ADDITIONAL REPORTS.—In addition to the
21 report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary
22 may require additional reports from a recipient, as
23 the Secretary determines to be appropriate, includ-
24 ing a final report.

1 (3) DEADLINES.—The Secretary shall establish
2 deadlines for the submission of each report required
3 under paragraph (1) or (2).

4 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
5 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
6 \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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