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ERASE RACISM PRAISES PRESIDENT BIDEN FOR ADDRESSING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, SCHOOL NEEDS, EXCLUSIONARY ZONING, AND RACIAL INEQUITIES IN HIS INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Syosset, NY – April 1, 2021 – ERASE Racism President Elaine Gross today issued the following statement on the infrastructure plan released yesterday by President Biden:

President Biden deserves great praise for the comprehensive approach that his administration has taken with the national infrastructure plan issued yesterday. The plan not only addresses traditional infrastructure, green infrastructure, and broadband; it does so, while recognizing historic racial inequities and including such pressing needs as affordable housing, school facilities, and the elimination of exclusionary zoning. It is an impressive approach that puts these needs in the forefront of national discussion.

The plan includes \$20 billion for a new program that will reconnect neighborhoods cut off by historic transportation investments. It recognizes that people of color and low-income people are more likely to live in areas most vulnerable to flooding and other climate change-related weather events, and it targets investments to support infrastructure there. It invests \$100 billion to upgrade and build new public schools, noting that “we can’t close the opportunity gap if low-income kids go to school in buildings that undermine health and safety.” It highlights the severe shortage of affordable housing in America and invests \$213 billion to produce, preserve, and retrofit more than two million affordable and sustainable places to live. It pairs this investment with an innovative new approach to eliminate state and local exclusionary zoning laws.

“For decades,” the plan states, “exclusionary zoning laws – like minimum lot sizes, mandatory parking requirements, and prohibitions on multifamily housing – have inflated housing and construction costs and locked families out of areas with more opportunities. President Biden is calling on Congress to enact an innovative, new competitive grant program that awards flexible and attractive funding to jurisdictions that take concrete steps to eliminate such needless barriers to producing affordable housing.”

ERASE Racism has long focused on racial disparities in housing and education and understands well the vital role of exclusionary zoning in creating and maintaining racial segregation in housing and education. We applaud President Biden for addressing these issues in his infrastructure plan and look forward to the role that his initiatives will play in tackling racial disparities in America.