
The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building – 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 30, 2019

Dear Madam Secretary:

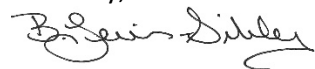
On behalf of University of Illinois Extension in McLean County, I am writing to express support for the City of Bloomington's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant to complete the City's priority East-West corridor – Hamilton Road. The application requests \$5.325 million to complete the Hamilton Road corridor, safely connecting rural communities and the City's residents on the southwest side to jobs, retail and dining opportunities, and recreational assets throughout Bloomington.

This project will mitigate congestion, enhance safety and reduce maintenance needs on the transportation system while improving quality of life and enhancing the area's economic opportunities. As a result of the project, the City will close three at-grade crossings in the City and close an unsafe intersection that is a 5% accident location (Rhodes Lane / Morrisey Drive). The project will also result in the completion of Constitution Trail, a multiuse facility, filling an existing gap in the trail and connecting residents and tourists alike to jobs, retail and dining opportunities, and recreational assets.

The project will allow better access to our facility for our staff and customers. Our county has the largest number of 4-Hers in the state of Illinois. The completion of this corridor will provide them not only better access but safer access as they visit our office for 4-H programming. Additionally, the completion of the Constitution Trail is equally needed. According to the 2019 McLean County Community Health Needs Assessment, 86% of McLean County residents are not meeting exercise guidelines, which led to Healthy Eating/Active Living being one of the top issues identified as a priority focus area for the county.

Given the local commitment and the many public benefits associated with this project, I strongly urge you to award a BUILD grant to help Bloomington improve safety and grow American jobs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bobbie Lewis-Sibley, MBA, SHRM-CP
County Director