



July 7, 2021

The Honorable Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to express my support for the City of Bloomington, Illinois' application for Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant funding. If approved the funding will support the city's Hamilton Road East-West Gap project, a major infrastructure development to complete a 7.2-mile east-west corridor connecting neighborhoods on the city's southwest side to jobs and other quality of life opportunities. It is important to note that many of the neighborhoods impacted could be considered underserved.

This project will reduce congestion along the Interstate 55 business route (Veterans Parkway), enhance safety and reduce transportation system maintenance. It will close two at-grade crossings and an unsafe 5% accident location (Rhodes Lane/Morrissey Drive), support improved mass transit connections and complete Constitution Trail, a multiuse path connecting residents and tourists to workplaces, retail and dining opportunities. Finally, this development will improve access to existing employers and spark new development along the completed Hamilton Road corridor.

Located in the heart of Central Illinois, Bloomington is home to several nationally recognized companies including State Farm Insurance, ranked 39th on the 2021 Fortune 500 list, Country Financial, Beer Nuts, Illinois Wesleyan University and Ferrero North America which will be home to the company's first North American chocolate production plant. The city is located at the crossroads of 3 major interstate corridors, connecting with Indianapolis and the Quad Cities on Interstate 74, Chicago to St. Louis on Interstate 55, and Interstate 39 to Madison Wisconsin and serves as an economic center to communities across the region.

Bloomington would stand ready to move forward with this project with federal assistance and we request that you award grant funds to help this community improve local transportation safety and grow American jobs. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

S. Georgia Nugent, President
Illinois Wesleyan University