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

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express support for the City of Bloomington, Illinois' application for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund improvements to the Hamilton Road East-West Gap project. The Hamilton Gap will connect the final portion of a 7.2-mile east-west corridor that has been developed over the course of three decades, safely and efficiently connecting rural communities and the City's residents on the southwest side to jobs and various other businesses and services.

The project will provide safer, easier roadway travel, especially at the U.S. 150, Rhodes Lane, and Norfolk Southern Railroad confluence with reduced traffic load on the Interstate 55 Business route (Veterans Parkway).

In addition, the project will facilitate multi-modal travel by connecting the Constitution Trail multi-use path along the route, and create the potential for more safe and efficient mass transit connections.

Finally, the project will boost economic development opportunities in the project area, enhancing access to existing employers and sparking new development along the completed Hamilton Road corridor.

Bloomington is 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. The City is home to State Farm Insurance, ranked 36th on the Fortune 500, Country Financial, Illinois Wesleyan University, and a diverse group of businesses and residents.

Please give full and fair consideration to the City of Bloomington's application.

Sincerely,

Randall W. Hunt