



## MCLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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June 28, 2021

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

Re: RAISE Grant Application - Hamilton Road East-West Gap Project (City of Bloomington, IL)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to express 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. Among the neighborhoods impacted by this project, many are underserved and lack access to transportation options.

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 extend Constitution Trail, a multi-use path connecting residents and tourists to workplaces, retail and dining opportunities. Finally, when completed, this development will improve access to existing employers and spark new development along the entire Hamilton Road corridor, which would also become a major transportation artery for the community.

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 (their first North American chocolate production plant). The city is located at the crossroads of three 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 in central Illinois.

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

Sincerely,

Raymond Lai, AICP  
Executive Director

*MCRPC is the leader for planning tomorrow's McLean County*

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