



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 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.

This development is expected to reduce congestion along the Interstate 55 business route (Veterans Parkway), enhance safety and provide improved access to area employers for the thousands of workers who work along this corridor today. As an insurance company, COUNTRY Financial is interested and supports infrastructure projects incorporating safety.

It will also connect the region's rural communities with important goods and services found in one of the city's primary business and retail centers. COUNTRY Financial employees and individuals from the rural communities in central Illinois and throughout Bloomington-Normal, will be directly impacted relative to their quality of life, in moving this expansion forward.

The City of Bloomington stands ready to move forward on this project with federal assistance and COUNTRY Financial request you award grant funds to help the community improve local transportation safety while supporting the local economy and jobs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara G. Taft". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barbara G. Taft
COUNTRY Financial
Director Employee Relations, Payroll and CSR
June 29, 2021