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July 9, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of East Moline's application for the RAISE Transportation Discretionary Grants program for the City of East Moline Greater Downtown Revitalization Project. The proposed project addresses numerous issues within a blighted downtown district, and the two manufacturer brownfield redevelopment sites (The Quarter and The Bend). The City of East Moline has drastically suffered since the early 80's due to the major decline in manufacturing. Much of this was a result of manufacturers going overseas and factories closing across the rust belt region in the United States. Recently, the proposed Bend and Rust Belt developments have begun to bring life back to this area. This project will help build on this momentum and revive the greater downtown area as a vibrant business and entertainment district.

The Greater Downtown Revitalization Project will create a regional, multi-modal oriented destination for business, entertainment, and living that will drive economic and community activity. "Complete streets" implemented through the greater downtown area will provide safe, accessible connections for vehicles, pedestrians, buses, trains, boats, and bicyclists to the established commercial cores, nearby residential neighborhoods, the Mississippi River Trail, and the Mississippi River. It will also dramatically enhance the area and create a uniform sense of identity to East Moline's "Greater Downtown" area with lighting, landscaping, gateway signs, wayfinding signs, parks, and green stormwater infrastructure. This project aims at increasing accessibility by improving motorist, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian safety, and connecting regions in the community to help create development, business, and job growth. It is expected that this project will result in improved connectivity and safety throughout the corridor, and also enhance the quality of life for the adjacent neighborhoods by affording a greater level of accessibility to employment, education, and recreation.

The project is aligned with underlying objectives of the Connect QC 2050: Quad Cities Long Range Transportation Plan (March 2021), specifically to increase accessibility and mobility options, support economic vitality, and enhance the connectivity and integration among modes. East Moline's Greater Downtown area is also shown as a prospective network of Complete Streets in Chapter 4, an indicator of its multi-modal demand. The project is also consistent with the Bi-State Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2021, which states as a goal: "Invest in and support infrastructure improvements, such as roads, bridges, sewers, water facilities, and broadband, multi-modal transportation systems, and energy utilities that will strengthen the Bi-State Regional economy." Among the strategies is to "Implement the newly-adopted Connect QC 2050: Quad Cities Long Range Transportation Plan...to invest in the maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure in the Bi-State Region" (p. 61).

We look forward to hearing a positive response to this request and implementation of the project if awarded.

Sincerely,

Gena McCullough (handwritten signature)

Gena McCullough, AICP
Assistant Executive Director/Planning Director

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