

STATE OF ILLINOIS



ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION TRANSPORTATION BUREAU / RAIL SAFETY SECTION

Brian Vercautse

Rail Safety Program Administrator

March 30, 2022

Hon. Julie Moore Wolfe, Mayor
City of Decatur
1 Gary K. Anderson Plaza
Decatur, IL 62523
Attn: Matthew Newell – Public Works Director

Dear Mayor Moore Wolfe:

This is in response to a funding status request and offer for a letter of support for the City of Decatur regarding the proposed Brush College Road grade separation project to replace the existing grade crossing of Brush College Road with the Norfolk Southern (NS) Railway Company (**Crossing AAR/DOT #328516E, milepost IT-43.60**) in Decatur, Macon County.

The Illinois Commerce Commission (Commission) has already issued Orders for assistance from the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund (GCPF) and the Illinois Multi-Modal Transportation Bond Fund (Rebuild Illinois) **in the combined amount of \$20,950,000 for eligible Preliminary Engineering, Land Acquisition Activities, and Project Construction**. It is my understanding that Decatur plans to submit a grant application(s) to the USDOT for infrastructure funding needed to assist with higher than expected bids received for the project. While this office is active with many representatives from the USDOT, I recognize that individual grant reviewers may not be familiar with the Illinois Commerce Commission and the GCPF. To provide background:

In 1955, the State of Illinois passed legislation creating the GCPF to assist public agencies in paying for safety improvements at highway-rail crossings on local roads and streets. Funding levels have increased since 1955, and today \$39 million is provided annually towards crossing safety improvements at public highway-rail crossings. The array of projects completed include warning device upgrades, bridges, traffic signal interconnects, highway approaches, crossing closures, surface renewals, and the development of newer technologies at public highway-rail crossings. Since 1955, the Commission has authorized over \$1.1 billion towards these types of safety projects. Detailed information on the GCPF may be found in the Resource guide [here](#).

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This project would ultimately grade separate the Brush College Road grade crossing of the NS, which historically has shown the highest frequency of collisions involving trains and vehicles in Illinois outside of the Chicago metro area. This crossing is also frequently blocked for extended periods during railcar switching for ADM facilities located along Faries Parkway in Decatur. This grade separation would improve emergency response times and improve mobility within the local and regional transportation network even in the event of stopped or slow-moving trains. Community safety concerns over blocked grade crossings are a gaining additional attention at the local, state, and federal levels, and a grade separation structure is the engineering solution to eliminate not only the train-vehicle collisions, but also the long blockages by trains at this crossing.

Staff of the Commission's [Rail Safety Section](#) (Staff) supports the City's efforts to apply for federal infrastructure grant program(s) in furtherance of the Brush College Road grade crossing elimination and other railroad safety enhancements associated with the project. Staff will continue to offer our support in whatever way we can to help bring this important and "shovel ready" project to construction and eventual completion.

I trust this information will be helpful. Thank you in advance for updates on the status of the City's grant application(s). If you have questions, or need additional information, please contact me at (312) 636-7760 or Brian.Vercruysse@illinois.gov.

Very truly yours,



Brian Vercruysse
Rail Safety Program Administrator

cc: