



County of Macon Macon County Board

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The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
West Building – 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to express Macon County's support for the City of Decatur's 2022 RAISE grant application for construction of a grade separation and interchange at Brush College Road and Faries Parkway in Decatur. The County and the City have been working together for six years focusing on the top three transportation infrastructure projects for the region. The upgrades to Brush College Road, one segment of which is the subject of the RAISE application, is one of those priorities.

Brush College Road is a critical conduit for freight, light vehicles and public transportation in Decatur and the Central Illinois region. Everyday thousands of people travel to work and school on Brush College Road and encounter significant and frequent bottlenecks at the Norfolk Southern grade crossing at Faries Parkway. In fact, the crossing averages 17.2 hours of blockages per week, which is expected to increase to 24 hours of blockages per week by 2035 based on a recent study done by the City.

Brush College Road connects with Interstate 72 to the north serving as the corridor between the Midwest Inland Port intermodal ramp and the Interstate, making this investment crucial to the continued development of the Port along with the viability and growth of existing businesses in the area. In addition, major regional employers are located on or near Brush College Road and rely heavily on the corridor for the transportation of goods and services as well as employees.

This project was fully funded based on the engineer's estimate and went to bid this past January (2022). Unfortunately, inflated costs of materials and labor resulted in the project being bid \$16 million over the engineer's estimate bringing the total project cost to \$76 million. This transformative project is literally ready to go once the additional funds can be obtained.

Macon County in concert with Decatur have been strongly committed to upgrading the region's infrastructure to increase economic opportunity and create jobs in Central Illinois. To that end, significant local public investments have been made to upgrade the sewer system, revitalize downtown Decatur and dredge Lake Decatur. In addition, the City has recently enacted a motor fuel tax to invest in local roads and streets. Because of these investments and the bids received on this project, the City is seeking this grant to cover the bid gap of \$16 million.

Given the many public benefits associated with this project, I strongly urge you to support this grant. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin Greenfield, Chairman
Macon County Board