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

March 28, 2022

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. The 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 residential activity that will drive development. "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 by creating a uniform sense of identity for East Moline's "Greater Downtown" area with lighting, landscaping, gateway signs, wayfinding signs, parks, and green stormwater infrastructure. The project result of improved connectivity, safety, and enhanced quality of life will spur 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,

Denise Bulat, Executive Director
Bi-State Regional Commission

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