

March 30, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**RE: City of East Moline "Greater Downtown Revitalization Project" RAISE Grant Application**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK) is writing in support of the City of East Moline's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant application for the proposed Greater Downtown Revitalization Project. This project would improve community connectivity, enhance quality of life and active transportation options, and ensure that all East Moline's citizens see the benefit of renewed economic growth and opportunity.

The proposed project would help revitalize and safely connect the City's downtown district and two nearby brownfield redevelopment sites (The Rust Belt 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 investment and development at the Bend and Rust Belt sites have begun to bring back life to this formerly industrial area. Railroad tracks and the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue currently serve as a barrier between these new developments, the City's Greater Downtown, and nearby homes. This project will help connect these areas to build on this momentum and facilitate a vibrant business and entertainment district.

This East Moline project will also create a regional, multi-modal oriented destination that will drive economic and community activity. Walkable, complete streets throughout the Greater Downtown area will provide safe, accessible connections for vehicles, pedestrians, buses, ferries, and cyclists to the established commercial cores, nearby residential neighborhoods, Mississippi River Trail, and the riverfront. MetroLINK, as the mass transit district for the Greater Illinois Quad Cities, is currently coordinating with the City of East Moline on a number of investments that will complement this project and promote multi-modal connectivity within and around the development. These projects include construction of a passenger ferryboat terminal on the Mississippi River that will be served by MetroLINK's Channel Cat passenger ferry service, the joint construction of additional sidewalk infrastructure to promote transit accessibility, and the extension of MetroLINK's fixed-route and/or on-demand services to provide closer transit access as the area continues to develop as a regional destination.

MetroLINK applauds the City's collaborative efforts aimed at increasing accessibility and safety for motorists and active transportation users, while enhancing economic opportunities. We fully endorse their RAISE Grant application and respectfully request that you give the City of East Moline's application fair and full consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff Nelson, CEO  
MetroLINK