

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: Missouri Department of Transportation: I-44 Freight and Highway Improvement Project
Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant Proposal**

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the City of Springfield, Missouri, I am writing to express our strong support for the Interstate 44 (I-44) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant proposal. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is requesting federal funding to help offset the cost of widening I-44 through Springfield, Missouri (Greene County) to improve safety and economic vitality. We encourage you to give the application favorable consideration.

This project is important to me personally because transportation infrastructure is crucial to the economic vitality to all cities, and Springfield is no exception. INFRA funding will make significant safety and capacity improvements on the I-44 as it travels through Springfield (population 168,122). And, as evidence of the City of Springfield's support, we are committing \$2 million to help complete the project.

The I-44 is a major east-west corridor that begins in Texas, traverses through Oklahoma, and terminates on the eastern border of Missouri at St. Louis. Globally, Springfield is known as the "stainless steel capital of the world" with almost all stainless-steel tanks used in the food production and processing industry manufactured in the Springfield region. Nationally, over 50 percent of freight traffic moving on I-44 in Missouri is through-traffic. The average daily traffic count within the limits of the proposed segment is 51,000, with 24 percent (or 12,000 vehicles) being over-the-road freight haulers. Also, the Springfield-Branson National Airport (accessed directly from the I-44) is a major supply chain facility for companies including FedEx and Bass Pro Shops. Additionally, both Partnership Industrial Parks, East and West, are accessed directly from I-44. It is also vital for City tourism, bringing visitors to attractions such as Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World and the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum, as well as regional tourism via Branson and Silver Dollar City -- located 50 miles south and welcoming 9 million visitors annually. For comparison, Disneyland and the Statue of Liberty welcome 18 million and 4.5 million visitors annually, respectively.

While Springfield is the State's 3rd largest city, it is the economic hub for 27 **rural counties**, including portions of Arkansas. The I-44 plays a significant role in the farm to market network and the value this Interstate facility brings to the rural communities cannot be emphasized enough. More than 50 percent of the land in Greene County is agriculture with cropland and pastureland being the primary land commodities and cattle (68,000 head in 2017) being the largest livestock inventory. These agriculture products feed America and the heartland and the supply chain is a vital component to our more than 1,800 farms in Greene County alone. There are an additional 26 counties with similar farmland statistics that would benefit firsthand by the proposed I-44 improvements.

Safety and economic vitality -- these are two key reasons why the I-44 improvements are extremely important to the region. I hope you will agree with me that an FHWA investment in the Springfield, Missouri region will bring far-reaching benefits to rural residents, urbanites, manufacturing, freight movement through ground transportation and air, and tourism, to name a few. We appreciate your review of MoDOT's application and hope to hear good news soon!

Sincerely,



Ken McClure
Mayor
Springfield, Missouri

Office of the Mayor
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Springfield, Missouri 65801 • 417-864-1651 • springfieldmo.gov



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P. Hrngs.
Pgs. 4
Filed: 02-18-20

Sponsored by: Hosmer

COUNCIL BILL 2020- 036 RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION

1 DECLARING the official intent of the City of Springfield to support the Southwest
2 District of the Missouri Department of Transportation in its application
3 for a 2020 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant to widen
4 Interstate 44 to six lanes through the City; and pledging \$2,000,000 in
5 matching funds upon award of said grant.
6 _____

7
8 WHEREAS, Interstate 44 ("I-44") is a major east-west corridor that begins in
9 Texas, traverses through Oklahoma, and terminates on the eastern border of Missouri;
10 and
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12 WHEREAS, Infrastructure for Rebuilding America ("INFRA") grant funding will
13 make significant safety and traffic capacity improvements on I-44 as it travels through
14 the City; and
15

16 WHEREAS, I-44 is important to the economic vitality of the City and region; and
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18 WHEREAS, the Springfield-Branson National Airport is accessed directly from I-
19 44 and is a major supply chain facility for industry and retail within the City; and
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21 WHEREAS, I-44 is vital for City tourism, bringing visitors to attractions and
22 events within the City as well as hotels, motels, and dining venues; and
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24 WHEREAS, in addition to the safety, traffic capacity and economic vitality
25 improvements, this project would create an opportunity for the construction of an
26 underpass trail connection between Doling Park and Fulbright Spring Park.
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28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
29 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI, as follows, that:
30

31 Section 1 – City Council hereby declares its support the Southwest District of the
32 Missouri Department of Transportation ("MODOT") in its application for a 2020 INFRA
33 grant to widen I-44 to six lanes through the City of Springfield and pledges \$2,000,000
34 in matching funds if said grant is awarded.
35

36 Section 2 – This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

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38 Passed at meeting: _____

39
40 _____
41 Mayor

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43 Attest: _____, City Clerk

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45 Filed as Resolution _____

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48 Approved as to form: Rhonda Lewsader, City Attorney

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51 Approved for Council action: Jason A. Hays, City Manager

EXPLANATION TO COUNCIL BILL 2020-036

FILED: 02-18-20

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PURPOSE: Declaring the official intent of the City of Springfield to support the Southwest District of the Missouri Department of Transportation in its application for a 2020 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America grant to widen Interstate 44 to six lanes through the City, and to pledge \$2,000,000 in match support upon award of said grant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: I-44 is a major east-west corridor that begins in Texas, traverses through Oklahoma, and terminates on the eastern border of Missouri at St. Louis. Infrastructure for Rebuilding America ("INFRA") grant funding will make significant safety and capacity improvements on I-44 as it travels through the City. I-44 is important to the economic vitality of the City and region. The Springfield-Branson National Airport is accessed directly from I-44 and is a major supply chain facility for companies such as FedEx and Bass Pro Shops. Additionally, both Partnership Industrial Parks, East and West, are accessed directly from I-44. It is also vital for City tourism, bringing visitors to attractions such as Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World and the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum.

In addition to the safety, capacity and economic vitality improvements this project would bring, it would also create an opportunity for the construction of an underpass trail connection between Doling Park and Fulbright Spring Park. A box culvert under I-44 is estimated to cost \$1 million which our match would fund.

If the Southwest District of the Missouri Department of Transportation ("MODOT") is awarded the INFRA Grant, the City's \$2 million match would come from Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant ("STBG") funds (\$1.6 million) which would be budgeted in a future Council bill and the 1/8-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Cost Share Program (\$400,000), which is already budgeted.

Supports the following City Council Priorities:

- Public Safety
- Quality of Place
- Fiscal Sustainability

REMARKS: Public Works recommends approval of this Council bill.

Submitted by:



Martin Gugel, Assistant Director of Public Works

Recommended by:



Dan Smith, Director of Public Works

Approved by:



Jason Gage, City Manager