



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES, HAMMONS SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

January 10, 2024

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Center for Community Studies Letter of Support – Highway MM: Corridor of Opportunity

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Center for Community Studies supports the efforts by the Ozarks Transportation Organization to secure federal discretionary funding under the 2023 Rebuilding Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the Highway MM: Corridor of Opportunity project. If awarded, the project will realign and expand Missouri Highway MM from two-lanes to five lanes.

This project will improve community connectivity by closing two at-grade railroad crossings, building a new road alignment with an overpass over BNSF, including accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and turning a two-lane arterial into a five-lane facility. The improvement will help manage the truck and commuter traffic along this corridor and help reduce exposure between vehicles and trains.

The project will further bolster regional economic development by improving transportation efficiency and reducing barriers to industrial development on land located near Interstate 44, James River Freeway, and Highway 60. The development of living wage jobs along MM will provide opportunities for citizens living in Historically Disadvantaged Census Tracts 48.02, 201.02 and 43.02. This will increase the quality of life of those living in Republic, Clever, Battlefield, western Springfield, Bois D'Arc, and Willard.

The continued development of multi-family housing and apartments in the area will ensure affordable and accessible housing for a workforce looking to access the Republic School District for their children. Funds for Hwy MM will also improve an area where a new intermediate school, park, and sports complex is planned. Your support will ensure the future prosperity of the next generation of area youth.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jay G. Garrott
Professor Emeritus and
Founding Director
Hammons School of Architecture and
Center for Community Studies
Drury University