



September 30, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project – Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Southeastern Community College, I am pleased to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

We understand and are excited about these improvements to Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp, which include extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements will help the roadway better withstand heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders, students, employees, and visitors.

For Southeastern Community College, reliable access to transportation is essential to our ability to serve students and the communities of Columbus County and throughout Southeastern North Carolina. The Madison Street corridor provides an important connection to downtown Whiteville and the surrounding community. Recurring flooding and potential roadway closures can create challenges for students, employees, and visitors traveling to and from the College and can affect access to businesses and services throughout the area.

Specifically, the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project would:

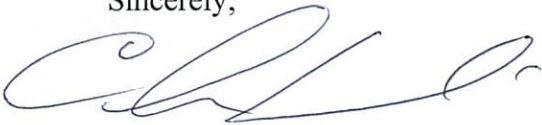
- Improve reliable access to downtown Whiteville and the surrounding areas for SCC students, employees, visitors, and community partners.
- Help reduce the transportation disruptions associated with heavy rainfall and flooding.
- Improve access for emergency responders and provide a more resilient transportation connection for the community.
- Support continued economic activity and connectivity in downtown Whiteville and throughout Columbus County.
- Strengthen the community's ability to maintain essential transportation access during and following severe weather events.

Southeastern Community College is committed to supporting the educational, workforce, and economic development needs of Columbus County and the surrounding region. A resilient transportation network is an important part of that mission, allowing our students and employees to travel safely and reliably while supporting the businesses, industries, and communities we serve.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and the long-term vitality of Whiteville and Columbus County. I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow the North Carolina Department of Transportation to advance and complete this important project.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant application and for your commitment to strengthening our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. English', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Chris English
President
Southeastern Community College