



Whiteville Fire Department

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Fire Chief*

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

Re: Support for Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project PROTECT Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Whiteville Fire Department, I am pleased to offer my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's application for funding through the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program for the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina.

This project will improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge structure and constructing a second bridge. These improvements will significantly enhance the corridor's ability to accommodate heavy rainfall and flooding events, ensuring that this critical transportation link remains accessible to residents, businesses, emergency responders, and travelers.

Flooding is a recurring challenge along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during severe weather events. The proposed bridge expansion will improve drainage capacity, reduce flood impacts, and allow stormwater to recede more quickly following heavy rainfall. These improvements will help minimize roadway closures, maintain access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more dependable transportation routes during and after adverse weather conditions.

From the perspective of the Whiteville Fire Department, this project is particularly important because:

- Recurring flooding frequently results in roadway closures, travel delays, and the need to reroute emergency vehicles via the US 701 Bypass. These conditions can increase response times and limit direct access to residents and businesses located beyond flooded roadway segments.
- The project will improve emergency response access and reliability while enhancing regional mobility, downtown connectivity, economic activity, freight movement, and overall community resilience.



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- Residents, visitors, and business owners will benefit from improved emergency services access, ensuring that fire, rescue, and emergency medical personnel can respond more quickly and efficiently during emergency situations.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, public safety, economic vitality, and the long-term sustainability of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County. By reducing flood-related disruptions and improving critical infrastructure, this project will provide lasting benefits to our community and the surrounding region.

I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this PROTECT Grant application and your support for funding this important project. Thank you for your commitment to strengthening our nation's transportation infrastructure and enhancing the safety and resilience of communities across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "David Yergeau".

David Yergeau

Fire Chief
Whiteville Fire Department