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October 2, 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:

This letter is to express the strong support of the City of Whiteville for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina. The project will improve the Madison Street (US 701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements will help the roadway to better handle heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders, and travelers.

Flooding is a recurring issue along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during heavy rainfall events. Improving the bridge crossing would reduce flooding in the area and allow rainwater to recede more quickly after heavy rainfall events. As a result, the project would help reduce road closures, improve access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more reliable travel for all roadway users during and after heavy rainfall events.

Specifically for the City of Whiteville, the importance of the Madison Street Bridge Expansion project can be summarized by the following:

- 701 Business is the main connector of the City's downtown business district to other major business developments. Frequent flooding of the area causes the closure of this road, limiting access to our business community.



- The flooding of this major thoroughfare limits access to not only the business community but also causes the use of more indirect routes for the City's emergency services, causing delays in critical response times. This becomes a hardship not only for the citizens in our southern City limits, but also the citizens from the southern end of the entire County.
- During flooding events, once 701 Business is forced to close, it shifts traffic to 701 By-Pass, the only other north-south outlet in and out of the City. This causes additional congestion and extreme traffic delays. This excessive congestion also contributes to major delays in response times for the City's emergency services.
- The project would help alleviate frequent flooding of commercial properties in proximity to the Soules Swamp area. These businesses have experienced reoccurring damage due to the water backup.
- Closure of 701 Business affects 60% to 70% of the City's business community, causing lost revenue because of business closures, as well as employees missing work.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County as a region. I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow North Carolina DOT to advance and complete this important project, providing lasting benefits to the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, and southeastern North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of this meritorious grant and your commitment to our nation's critical transportation system.

Sincerely,



Terry Mann, Mayor
City of Whiteville

