

Month XX, Year

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: [Project, e.g. Villa Rica Railroad Crossing Safety Enhancement Program] Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

[Paragraph 1 – Clearly state up top who signed the letter, what project they support, and why they support it.]

I write to express GoRail’s strong support for the City of Villa Rica’s application for grant funding for the Villa Rica Railroad Crossing Safety Enhancement project under the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program. The project not only supports the improvement of multi-modal connectivity, a key goal of the city’s Comprehensive Plan, it will also address a critical public safety issue for pedestrians, vehicles, and trains in a busy downtown area bifurcated by active railroad infrastructure.

[Paragraph 2 – Provide some context for why they care about this project and this issue in particular.]

The Villa Rica Pedestrian Crossing Safety Enhancement Program will limit access points across the downtown rail corridor and install new pedestrian infrastructure for increased safety. Every day, more than 8,400 vehicles cross the project area, which experiences a high level of rail volume—with trains passing roughly every 15-20 minutes during peak times. Rail is vital to Villa Rica, connecting regional businesses and encouraging local development while cutting down on emissions, congestion, taxpayer roadway costs.

[Paragraph 3 – Hit the key benefits of the project focusing on admin/grant priorities – list the priorities (primary and secondary grant considerations – these can be found on GoRail grant hub) the project addresses and try to include specific numbers or examples.]

This project addresses several of the primary evaluation considerations outlined for the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program:

- 1) *Improve safety at highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossings.* This is the core goal of the project. An improved pedestrian zone will be demarcated using concrete pavers, sidewalks, and the installation of pedestrian landings. New sidewalks will be installed where none currently exist and both sides of the tracks will be lined with decorative metal fencing to restrict pedestrian access to designated crossing zones.
- 2) *Improve the mobility of people and goods.* The reconfiguration proposed by this project improves connectivity, safety, and economic development potential. It would also benefit the movement of goods by ensuring fewer incidents at crossings.
- 3) *Reduce emissions, protect the environment, and provide community benefits, including noise reduction.* In addition to the everyday stated benefits of the project—such as reducing unwanted emissions—an important community space next to the project area would benefit

greatly. The Mill is the city's primary entertainment venue, a medium-sized public amphitheater that receives over 40,00 visitors each year. This project would improve public safety around events at this venue and facilitate increased mobility, an economic boon to the community.

- 4) *Provide economic benefits.* Per Villa Rica's Comprehensive Plan, this project will help continue the development of the Downtown Master plan by mitigating issues regarding traffic, pedestrian safety, public parks and plazas as well as helping to implement a corridor connection between the Villa Rica downtown and Mirror Lake area. This will strengthen local economic growth.
- 5) *Improve access to communities separated by rail crossings.* Downtown Villa Rica is bifurcated by an active rail line, with trains passing every 15-20 minutes at peak times. A Fall 2021 Livable Centers Initiative Study produced by Villa Rica demonstrated that the street network in the study area lacked connectivity, pushing vehicular and heavy truck traffic to just a few roadways, largely due to the active rail line and lack of appropriate crossing infrastructure.

[Paragraph 4 - Highlight what will happen if the project is not funded.]

Without this grant, public safety near the downtown, heavily trafficked and traversed rail line will continue to be a problem in this community. Additionally, without these reconfigurations, it will be challenging for Villa Rica to continue the growth of its business district and further community connectivity. Less efficient roadways and more traffic will also continue to exacerbate unwanted idling and emissions in a growing community.

[Paragraph 6 – summarize why this is a good use of taxpayer funds and will help both transportation needs and the community as a whole.]

In closing, the **Villa Rica Railroad Crossing Safety Enhancement Program** would address critical public safety needs in its community as well as improve connectivity for pedestrians, vehicles and trains in a key rail corridor. It is an ideal candidate for the Railroad Crossing Grant, addressing several core programmatic goals. We trust the application will receive all due consideration.