

May 8, 2020

Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Franklin Boulevard Opportunity Zone Corridor BUILD Application

Dear Ms. Secretary:

The Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce know that the wellbeing of a community depends largely upon its economic health. As such, we want to express our strong support for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant funding request submitted jointly by the Cities of Eugene and Springfield for the *Franklin Boulevard Opportunity Zone Corridor* Project.

Improvements to the Franklin Boulevard corridor are vital to supporting redevelopment of the blighted urban renewal districts along the corridor, both in the two Opportunity Zones directly fronting Franklin Boulevard. The east and west ends of Franklin Boulevard's route are also anchored by an additional Opportunity Zone on each side. Though the roadway is an unattractive, outdated former State highway, redevelopment of private commercial property is emerging along the corridor led by property owners and developers who are investing in our collective vision for the future of the corridor.

Franklin Boulevard presents a key economic opportunity for the Lane County region as it is centrally located between downtown Eugene and downtown Springfield. The Cities of Eugene and Springfield have laid the groundwork to give businesses a lead on preliminary site planning with completed design and construction for greater certainty in timing their investments, identifying compatible employment sites, and reducing development timelines. This regional project will leverage both public and private investment to increase economic competitiveness, generate jobs, and contribute to the tangible aspects of a much better quality of life for our communities by addressing neglected areas and investing in transportation infrastructure that allows people to commute efficiently and safely.

In total, our region has already invested \$15.5 million and has identified over \$9.4 million in match funds. BUILD funding would enable the construction of the next phase of this project. We urge you to give this regional partnership and jointly-prepared application your full support.

Sincerely,



Brittany Quick-Warner, CEO
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce



Vonnie Mikkelson, President and CEO
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

