

July 8, 2010

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to strongly support the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Alternatives Analysis proposal for the Kansas City Regional Rapid Rail project. MARC has applied for competitive funding in the FY2010 Discretionary Livability Funding Opportunity Alternatives Analysis Program.

The proposal submitted by MARC is the beginning stage of a bold rapid rail plan for the Kansas City region and the nation. It is the first step towards establishing a modern and viable transportation network in the region that would address future growth and spur economic development.

The Kansas City area is a part of America's heartland and is a major freight rail and commerce corridor for the nation. The region confronts many challenges associated with the efficient movement of goods and people, including congestion, carbon emissions, economic development and the preservation of neighborhoods. The MARC proposal is the extension of comprehensive regional efforts underway that promote sustainability in various industry and public sectors. The local planning agency and others have identified the provision of rapid rail as an important missing link.

The funding sought for an Alternatives Analysis will support the successful implementation of a regional vision that will provide more transportation choices, reduce congestion, while preserving communities. The project would also fulfill the livability goals that have been outlined by your department and others agencies related to sustainable communities.

Over time, potential favorable outcomes include:

- Providing another transit option to commuters, including inner-city residents who have no means to seek or maintain employment in surrounding communities;
- Providing multi-modal connectivity, accommodating pedestrian access, commuter parking, bus access, and connections to the airport, Amtrak, bike trails, and potentially the high-speed rail network;
- Encouraging mix-use development around stations in already developed and depressed areas;

- Utilization of “green” transit technologies and approaches; and
- Elimination of approximately 20,000 vehicles from the roads, thus reducing carbon emissions.

Please accept this letter in support of the MARC Alternatives Analysis application. I ask that it receive every favorable consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator