

August 23, 2011

Sara Hudson, Economic Development Specialist  
Big Sky Economic Development Authority  
222 North 32<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Billings, MT 59101

RE: City of Billings Commitment of Match to the Community Challenge Planning Grant

Dear Sara,

On August 22, at its regular business meeting, the Billings City Council voted to approve committing \$100,000 annually for 3 years of East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD) tax increment funds as a match for the U.S. HUD Community Challenge Planning grant.

It is our belief that the grant funding and the City's contribution will be invaluable at furthering the goals of the EBURD Master Plan and creating a sustainable neighborhood for the businesses and residents in the EBURD. The creation of a Sustainable Communities Fund, as proposed in the grant application, will provide a vehicle to overcome a number of artificial and bureaucratic barriers to sustainable development in the EBURD. We also believe it will further collapse local silos among housing, transportation, land use, economic development and workforce development agencies; ensure that equitable affordable housing opportunities are provided in the EBURD; increase participation and decision-making by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes, including underserved populations; and will dramatically increase economic development in the EBURD.

We are very encouraged by all the efforts focused on the EBURD by members of the East Billings Urban Renewal District HUD-DOT-EPA Sustainable Communities Partnership. We wish you the best of luck with your application.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Hanel  
Mayor