



February 14, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Ranch to Market Road (RM) 2243 People-to-Jobs Connector Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Williamson County writes to enthusiastically support USDOT RAISE funding for the Williamson County, Texas Ranch to Market Road (RM) 2243 People-to-Jobs Connector Project (Jobs Connector) and for the national economic growth and quality-job creation the Jobs Connector will sustain.

Williamson County is a significant technological hub for the United States, accounting for more than \$292 billion in domestic production of electronics annually from Apple, Dell, Samsung Semiconductor, and others. Companies are drawn to Williamson County by its high-caliber workforce, quality of life for workers and partnership opportunities with educational centers like the University of Texas. As a result, Williamson County has become the 9th-fastest growing county in America, extending a quarter-century record of growth. The Jobs Connector Project Sponsor will construct safety, efficiency and environmental improvements to modernize this major transportation corridor that is critical to connecting suburban and rural residents to nearby high-quality technology and light industrial jobs offering lifelong skill- and career-growth opportunities including those generated by the new Apple and Samsung campuses and the Tesla Gigafactory.

While providing Americans with high-quality jobs and housing, the growth over the past decade is straining the existing local and regional transportation network to the breaking point. According to the FHWA, almost 1.9 billion trips in 2020 originated/departed in this zone, making it one of the largest trip generators in the State of Texas. It's a number that will only continue growing - nearly 20,000 new residents call Williamson County home each year. Williamson County is committed to investing in the many multi-modal improvements needed to address increasing congestion, declining travel time reliability and deteriorating quality of life and to ensure high-quality jobs, housing, and transportation options. The project will modernize and replace dilapidated infrastructure by constructing a multimodal transportation corridor with safety and environmental resiliency features.

Williamson County has and continues to make needed investments in these areas as well as in promoting denser, more multimodal-friendly urban mixed-used development. Improvements in

the design and capacity of existing surface transportation facilities of Williamson County and the surrounding areas are needed to maintain and strengthen as a state and national economic hub.

With your help, this project will significantly advance our efforts to improve the region's transportation network by addressing aging infrastructure, safety issues, and investing in areas identified by local neighborhoods - while creating sustainable economic opportunities for local workers and the national economy - opportunities that may be throttled by an otherwise overloaded transportation network.

Williamson County is committed to partnering with federal programs that will improve safety for the traveling public while simultaneously improving quality of life for all residents. If federal funding is provided the County has the ability for the funding to be obligated within the time period set forth under federal-aid highway requirements. We appreciate your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Valerie Covey

Judge Bill Gravell, Jr.
Williamson County Judge
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