



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**PUBLIC  
WORKS**

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To: Ande Banks, City Manager  
From: Thomas Hartman, PE, PMP, LEED AP, Director of Public Works  
Date: September 10, 2024  
Re: Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant – Resolution of Support

**Summary:**

City Council will consider a Resolution of Support for a Railroad Crossing Elimination planning grant.

**Background:**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) allocated funds through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration for the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) program. This program aims to fund the planning, design, and construction of projects that eliminate or improve highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossings.

In 2005/2006, the City developed a project to eliminate ten at-grade highway-rail crossings by relocating a segment of the railroad to Rockingham County, just northeast of the City limits, and to then convert the abandoned railroad bed to a shared use path. This shared use path would connect downtown Harrisonburg to James Madison University, City Schools, and Smithland Fields. This project stalled at the feasibility study phase. The Public Works Department now believes this project is a candidate for an RCE grant to update the planning for these crossing eliminations, railroad relocation, and shared use path conversion.

The RCE grant application would focus on the planning phase, including:

- Development of conceptual engineering designs
- Analysis of project alternatives
- Creation of a communication plan with public engagement activities
- Preparation of planning-level cost estimates
- Full project development schedules
- Drafting of a project management plan

After completing the planning phase, the City will seek additional RCE grants for final design and construction.

City staff have engaged James Madison University (JMU) and Rockingham County, both of which have agreed to support the grant application. Their participation includes commitments to

contribute to the required matching funds and actively engage in the planning study development.

**Key Issues:**

N/A

**Environmental Impact:**

To be considered during planning study development.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Based on initial planning estimates the City would contribute 1/3 of the required matching funds, which is approximately \$20,000.

**Prior Actions:**

N/A

**Alternatives:**

- (a) Support the Resolution
- (b) Deny the Resolution.

**Community Engagement:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the City Council support this Resolution.

**Attachments:**

- 1. Presentation
- 2. Resolution of Support

**Review:**