



October 17, 2011

To whom it may concern:

We are writing a letter of support for the Tiger Grant for the East Belgrade Interchange located in Belgrade, Montana at the entrance of Gallatin Field.

Gallatin Field is the 2nd busiest airport in Montana and by the end of the year will be the number one airport in the state. The location of interchange was chosen in order to solve a number of safety issues. The East Belgrade Interchange would allow for an easier and safer access to and from the airport and the eastern portion of the city. The proposed interchange would go under MT RailLink's track, and provide emergency vehicles with the only off grade crossing in the city. This is extremely important as a significant portion of the populace live and work in the southern part of Belgrade.

Belgrade is the 11th largest city in Montana, and has only one access to the Interstate 90. Many of citizens of Belgrade and the surrounding area travel to Bozeman and other areas outside the city every day. The existing interchange has over 19,000 vehicles a day, which cause major travel snarls, especially in the winter months causing backups on the East exit ramp two miles down Interstate 90. Belgrade traffic was recently at a standstill when there was a train/pedestrian accident and the main arterial was closed for five hours. With a major incident, residents here have only one major arterial out or in. Belgrade is the only city of its size that has only one interchange.

This interchange would open up properties for economic development. Belgrade has only one way to grow and that is to the south. We have the airport to the North and the railroad and Highway 10 to the west. This access would allow for companies to have a circular travel pattern with an easier access to Gallatin Field and Interstate 90. This interchange would also allow us to close two rail crossings and take major large truck traffic off of Main Street in Belgrade.

The East Belgrade Interchange is extremely important to the City of Belgrade and the businesses community and we urge you to award Gallatin County a Tiger Grant to finish this project.

Sincerely,

Debra K. Youngberg

Debra K. Youngberg, Executive Director