

Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study

Application to the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program
City of Waterloo, Iowa



INRCOG
Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 1. Type of Submission:**

- ☐ Preapplication
☒ Application
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

*** 2. Type of Application:**

- ☒ New
☐ Continuation
☐ Revision

*** If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):**

*** Other (Specify):**

*** 3. Date Received:**

09/28/2023

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

*** a. Legal Name:**

City of Waterloo

*** b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):**

42-6005327

*** c. UEI:**

Z6C5NLT82JH3

d. Address:

*** Street1:**

715 Mulberry St

Street2:

*** City:**

Waterloo

County/Parish:

*** State:**

IA: Iowa

Province:

*** Country:**

USA: UNITED STATES

*** Zip / Postal Code:**

50703-5714

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Engineering

Division Name:

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

Mr.

*** First Name:**

Jamie

Middle Name:

*** Last Name:**

Knutson

Suffix:

Title:

City Engineer

Organizational Affiliation:

*** Telephone Number:**

319-291-4312

Fax Number:

319-291-4262

*** Email:**

JAMIE.KNUTSON@WATERLOO-IA.ORG

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

C: City or Township Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Q: For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business)

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

U.S. Department of Transportation

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

20.940

CFDA Title:

Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program

* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

DOT-RCP-FY23-01

* Title:

Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

* a. Applicant

01

* b. Program/Project

01

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date:

07/01/2024

* b. End Date:

01/01/2027

18. Estimated Funding (\$):

* a. Federal

750,000.00

* b. Applicant

0.00

* c. State

0.00

* d. Local

0.00

* e. Other

0.00

* f. Program Income

0.00

* g. TOTAL

750,000.00

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on☒ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)**

☒ ** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix:

Mr.

* First Name:

Quentin

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Hart

Suffix:

* Title:

Mayor

* Telephone Number:

319-291-4301

Fax Number:

319-291-4286

* Email:

mayor@waterloo-ia.org

* Signature of Authorized Representative:

* Date Signed:

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study	20.940	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$	\$ 750,000.00
2.						
3.						
4.						
5. Totals		\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$	\$ 750,000.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
	Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study				
a. Personnel	\$ 0.00	\$	\$	\$	0.00
b. Fringe Benefits	0.00				0.00
c. Travel	0.00				0.00
d. Equipment	0.00				0.00
e. Supplies	0.00				0.00
f. Contractual	750,000.00				750,000.00
g. Construction	0.00				0.00
h. Other	0.00				0.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	750,000.00			\$	750,000.00
j. Indirect Charges	0.00			\$	0.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 750,000.00	\$	\$	\$	750,000.00
7. Program Income	\$ 0.00	\$	\$	\$	0.00

Authorized for Local Reproduction

SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES						
(a) Grant Program		(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS	
8.	Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	0.00
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.	TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	0.00

SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS					
	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00
14. Non-Federal	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00	\$ 187,500.00

SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT				
(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (YEARS)			
	(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study	\$	\$	\$	\$
17.				
18.				
19.				
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	\$	\$	\$	\$

SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION	
21. Direct Charges:	22. Indirect Charges:
23. Remarks:	

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.


PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

NOTE: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.
2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.
3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.
4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.
5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).
6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C. §§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee- 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.
7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.
8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.
10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is \$10,000 or more.
11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).
12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.
13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).
14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.
15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.
16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.
17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."
18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.
19. Will comply with the requirements of Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104) which prohibits grant award recipients or a sub-recipient from (1) Engaging in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect (2) Procuring a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect or (3) Using forced labor in the performance of the award or subawards under the award.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL 	TITLE Mayor
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION City of Waterloo	DATE SUBMITTED 09/28/2023

Downtown Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study		Budget	Budget %
RCN (NAE) Grant Program Federal Allocation	\$750,000.00		100%
Non-Federal Match	\$0.00		0%
TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET	\$750,000.00		100%

Overview: Waterloo's Railroad Legacy and Ongoing Challenges

Waterloo, Iowa, has a profound historical connection with the railroad industry. Many people, especially those rooted in the Midwest, recognize it as the "Factory City". However, over time, this city, now known as "A Community of Opportunity," has gained a reputation as one of the most challenging places for Black Americans to call home.

In 2018, a study and subsequent article by 24/7 Wall Street ranked Waterloo, Iowa, as the worst city in the United States for Black Americans to reside. This conclusion was reached through a comprehensive methodology that assessed race-based disparities in socioeconomic outcomes across metropolitan areas. The data, drawn from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, The Sentencing Project, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, encompassed factors like median household income, poverty rates, educational attainment, home ownership, unemployment rates, incarceration rates, and mortality rates by race.

The findings were stark: "No U.S. metro area has larger social and economic disparities along racial lines than Waterloo-Cedar Falls, Iowa." Black residents in the metro area earned only 46.8 percent of what their white counterparts earned and faced significantly higher unemployment rates. The black unemployment rate stood at a staggering 23.9 percent, well above the national black unemployment rate (13.3 percent) and was the second highest among all U.S. metro areas. In contrast, the white unemployment rate in the area was 4.4 percent, below the national white unemployment rate of 5.9 percent and one of the lowest nationwide.

In the five years following this publication, the city has seen some falling in the rankings, but it remains in the top six worst cities for Black Americans.

Overview: History

By the turn of the 20th century, Waterloo had established itself as "The Factory City", abundant with job opportunities. The rail served a critical role in the supply and distribution chains, feeding the city's appetite for industrial expansion. On September 30th, 1911, the employees of the Illinois Central Railroad in Waterloo joined the Rail Workers Union in a strike that would set the stage for a century-long struggle of a community divided by the impact of racism, redlining, and segregation.

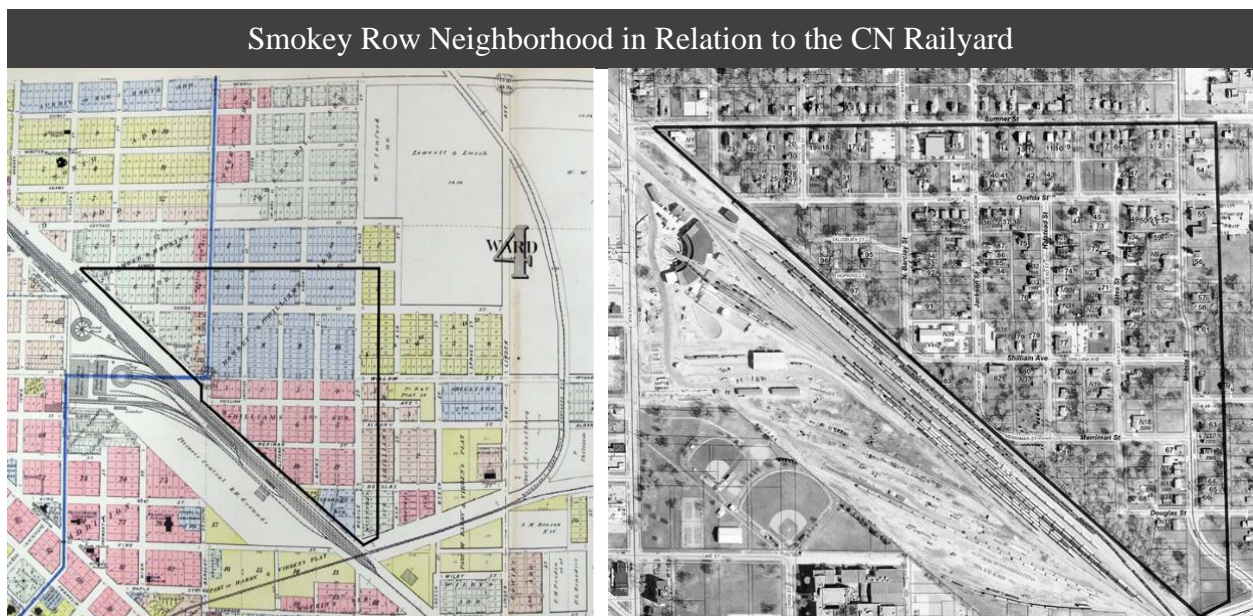
In desperate need of workers to meet the high demand for goods in the region, the Illinois Central Railroad faced a crisis due to a strike by union workers. With direct access to southern plantations and the recent abolition of slavery, the railroad offered a fresh start in the Midwest. Signs along the railway and in African American communities encouraged people to "Come to the Promised Land". The promise quickly spread across the Mississippi bayou and beyond.

Communities along the Illinois Central Railroad were struggling economically, and the railroad actively recruited able-bodied men to work in the Midwest. This opportunity offered an escape from the violence and discrimination in the Jim Crow South and relief from the devastation caused by the boll weevil infestation in Southern cotton plantations. It represented the long-awaited change promised to African American slaves after the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation became a reality.

For many, the cost of transportation was a significant burden, often amounting to 10% or more of their yearly income, if they had any income at all. Investing twenty dollars for the journey was usually beyond the means of most Southern Black families. However, the prospect of earning ten times more in Chicago than in Mississippi made it seem worth the risk. Families had to sell cherished heirlooms, and husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons left their families behind with promises to send money once they arrived. They gathered at the train depots in groups, bidding their loved ones farewell, filled with a mix of emotions—excitement, uncertainty, hope, fear, and the longing for a reunion someday. Most had no idea where the rails would take them, and sadly, some would never see their loved ones again.

The welcome committees were unfriendly. African American strikebreakers who came to the City of Waterloo were met with hostility. Picketing rail workers and their families gathered at the train depot to throw spoiled produce and spit on them with greasy wads of Beechnut tobacco. With more workers arriving, there was a shortage of places to stay, and those with accommodations didn't want to support these African American strikebreakers who had taken jobs from their family and friends.

For many, the first weeks, months, and even years were spent living in makeshift quarters like old shipping containers and worn-out boxcars. African American camps were in a lawless vice district known as Smokey Row or the Black Triangle, next to the rail yard. While it was close to their jobs, living conditions were harsh, and city rules prevented people of different nationalities from living elsewhere.



Even after the 1917 Supreme Court ruling in *Buchanan v. Warley* that ended racial zoning practices, real estate agents, developers, and homeowners used race-restrictive covenants to keep segregation in place. These restrictions, like one filed by the Waterloo Highland Neighborhood Association in 1945, said, "No low-cost homes, no small lots, no businesses, and no owners or tenants of any race other than the Caucasian race." These policies contributed to the lasting racial disparities in Waterloo that continue to exist today.

As migrants settled and amassed resources, many brought their families as promised. The African American neighborhoods in Smokey Row, desiring the same opportunities as white citizens, took pride in their progress. They transformed places of ill repute into restaurants, stores, and community organizations. Churches became the heart of the African American community in Waterloo. These community-backed congregations paved the way for Civil Rights activism and the creation of organizations like the NAACP in 1921.

The local NAACP gained national attention and pushed other Waterloo industries to hire African Americans. In 1920, after almost a decade of not employing black laborers, Rath Packing and John Deere hired their first black workers, a position previously held only by the Illinois Central Railroad. Although many African Americans were qualified for skilled labor, they were often assigned to more strenuous and dangerous jobs like slaughtering animals or foundry work.

In the 1940s and 1950s, a growing social awareness emerged in the African American community, leading to significant social unrest and Civil Rights activism in the 1960s and 1970s. In September 1948, during a strike at the Rath Meat Packing plant, a black strikebreaker killed a white union representative. The National Guard was called in to end the strike, but race riots didn't erupt.

However, on September 10th, 1968, long-simmering tensions boiled over. Three days later, after disturbances at a football game at Waterloo West's Sloane Wallace stadium, the National Guard was deployed, martial law was imposed, curfews were strictly enforced, and armed units patrolled the Smokey Row neighborhoods, creating fear and intimidation among those demanding equal rights. Once again, the city fell into division and injustice.

Overview: A Chance to Transform a Century-Old Legacy of Inequality

With the potential enrichment that the RCN opportunity could bring to this partnership, the city and the rail industry are poised to change the course of a century-old legacy of inequality and hardship endured by the city's most vulnerable residents. Past decisions made by both parties have had significant impacts on the neighborhoods intersected by and surrounding the extensive infrastructure required for such rail operations. Now, everyone must work together to find a solution. Even the seemingly informed decisions of decades past could not have foreseen the implications of trains that have since tripled in length.

Federal requirements for locomotive air brake testing, aimed at safety, have created a significant obstacle for residents in accessing essential services they need for success and survival. These challenges continue to affect the descendants of strikebreakers who came to the "Promised Land" and still live in deteriorating homes and neighborhoods. These areas have lost value compared to less integrated parts of the community, contributing to the generational wealth gap. Additionally, the facilities these residents are dependent on receive subsidies and enjoy "Special Legal Congressional Status," while the homes in the Smokey Row Triangle area cannot qualify for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding due to the negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of the nearby railyard. The railroads seem to operate without facing any repercussions for obstructing vital links to education, employment, healthcare, and opportunities, exacerbating the fragmentation within the community.

Consequently, we witness neighborhoods grappling with blight, insufficient investment in suitable housing, persistent poverty, restricted access to opportunities, and a national ranking as one of the areas with the lowest quality of life for Black Americans.

Overview: Credentials for Administering Federal Funds

The City of Waterloo is well-prepared to execute the Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study. The City has consistently demonstrated its abilities to administer federally funded transportation projects. Notable recent federally funded transportation projects administered by the City of Waterloo include the US Hwy 63 Reconstruction and Enhancement (Surface Transportation Block Grant), Park Ave and 11th St Bridge Replacements (Competitive Highway Bridge Program), and La Porte Rd Revitalization Project (RAISE). These projects serve as concrete evidence of Waterloo's capacity to ensure project compliance with federal requirements and harness Federal funds for the enhancement of its transportation networks.

With their vast experience, a proven record of DOT grant achievements, and a thorough knowledge of federal regulations and grant compliance, the City of Waterloo is ideally positioned to spearhead this project that promises to elevate transportation safety and equity within the community. Additionally, Black Hawk County MPO staff are fully prepared to provide any necessary assistance to support the project in every possible way.

Overview: Alignment with State and Regional Plans

This crucial initiative strongly aligns with the overarching goals outlined in the 2021 Iowa State Rail Plan. This study reflects the Iowa DOT's commitment to enhancing rail transportation safety, efficiency, and connectivity throughout the state. By relocating the downtown railyard and improving railroad crossings in Waterloo, this project directly contributes to the Plan's objective of reducing congestion and enhancing the flow of freight rail traffic. Additionally, it prioritizes safety, a core focus of the State Rail Plan, aligns with a goal of the Black Hawk County MPO's 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan to improve the safety of the transportation system, and aligns with the U.S. DOT's National Safety Performance Measures.

Location & Map

The Canadian National Railway (CN) Railyard in Waterloo, Iowa, occupies a prominent location within the heart of the city. Situated just north of the downtown area between East 4th St and Martin Luther King Jr. Dr, the railyard spans a considerable expanse of land, characterized by a labyrinth of rail tracks and infrastructure. The study will focus on investigating the railyard, the rail lines leading into the yard, associated at-grade railroad crossings, and their effects on the surrounding neighborhoods. It will be confined to the geographic area bounded by East Donald St, North Elk Run Rd, Martin Luther King Jr. Dr, Franklin St, and East Mullan Ave/US Hwy 63.

This central position continues to have a significant impact on the surrounding area, most notably the neighborhoods north to Donald St and east to North Elk Run Rd. The railyard and connecting tracks are surrounded by residential neighborhoods to the north and east, a commercial district to the west, and the East High School complex to the south (see excerpt from Waterloo's Zoning Map below).

Project Location and Disadvantaged Census Tracts



Project Merit Criteria: Equity and Environmental Justice, Justice40

One of the community's most perilous and disruptive railway crossings lies a mere six city blocks away from East High School, frequently causing delays that can stretch for hours. Equally common is the students' perilous choice to risk their well-being by either crawling under or climbing over these halted rail cars, all in a desperate attempt to arrive at school on time. Technically, this act is labeled as "trespassing" by the railroad. However, for these students, the only alternative is to wait for an indeterminate amount of time until the trains move on, or to backtrack and find another route. The closest alternative route involves a half-mile detour to the US Hwy 63 overpass. No pedestrian overpasses currently exist at East 4th St and the railroad line.

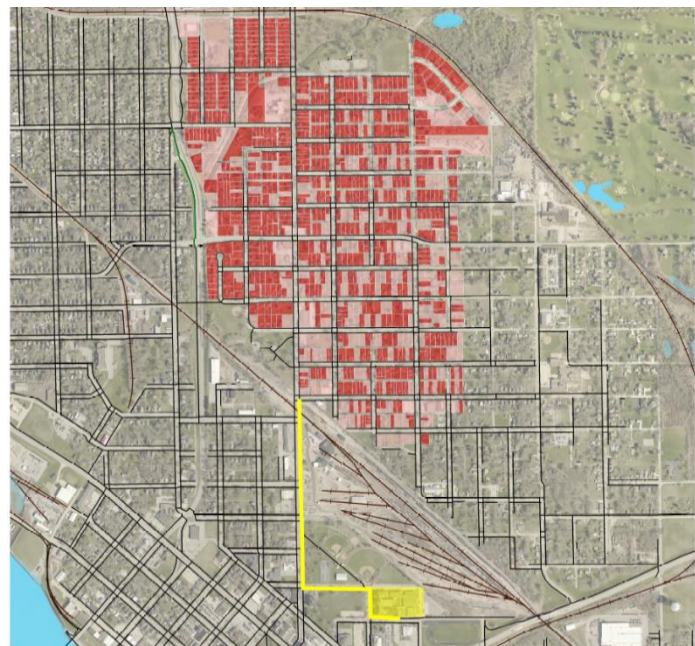


Figure 1: Historically Disadvantaged Neighborhood Directly Impacted by Blocked Crossing at E 4th St

In 2023, East High School enrolled a total of 988 students, out of which 60% belonged to minority communities, and 72% faced economic disadvantages². Notably, the school's graduation rate stood at 87% which falls considerably below the state median. Figure 1 illustrates that there are 665 homes situated in historically impoverished areas north of the railyard, with East 4th St serving as the most direct route to East High School. Within these homes reside 266 high school students, with a staggering 91% belonging to minority groups. These students, on average, were late to school 22% more often than the district's average. While it's challenging to precisely quantify the impact of blocked railroad crossings on these statistics, a clear correlation exists between these obstructions and school attendance.

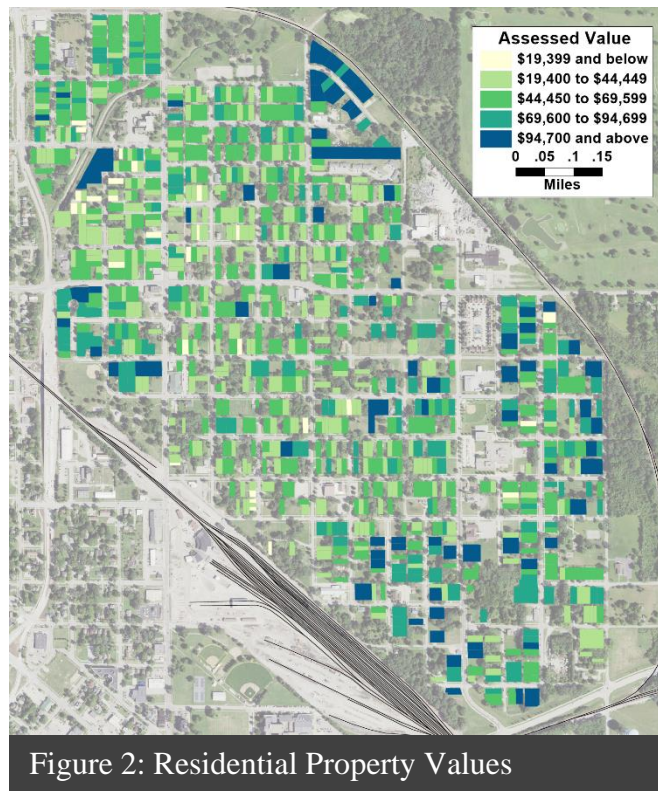


Figure 2: Residential Property Values

The current location of the railyard has had a detrimental impact on neighboring residential property values. The noise and air pollution, safety concerns, the aesthetics of industrial facilities, and constant movement of trains detracts from the appeal of the neighborhood and reduces the desirability of living nearby. As a result, prospective homebuyers and renters often perceive these areas as less attractive, which has led to a decline in residential property values near the railyard. As depicted in Figure 2, the average residential property value in this area stands at \$57,015, a notable 58% lower than the city-wide average property value of \$136,590. This substantial disparity in property values underscores the influence of the proximity to the railyard on real estate values.

Project Merit Criteria: Access

This project promises a transformative shift that would significantly enhance safety and harmonize seamlessly with the surrounding urban fabric. This ambitious endeavor not only prioritizes the safety of all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians, but also embodies a holistic approach that caters to public health, the environment, and the local economy. By relocating the railyard and improving railroad crossings, the project mitigates the risks associated with railway-related accidents, particularly for those on foot or bicycle. It embraces a vision of safe, interconnected streets, where pedestrians and cyclists can move freely without the hazards posed by rail traffic. Moreover, the project's thoughtful integration with the urban environment and land use ensures that it preserves the area's unique character and enhances its aesthetic appeal, making it a more attractive and vibrant place for residents and visitors alike. By promoting non-motorized transportation, this initiative aligns with public health objectives, encouraging active lifestyles and reducing traffic delays, thereby improving air quality and overall well-being. It also demonstrates a

commitment to sustainability, by reimagining the use of land previously dedicated to rail yards for more community-friendly purposes, fostering economic growth, and reinforcing the city's green credentials. In essence, this project epitomizes a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to urban development that prioritizes safety, community cohesion, and the broader public interest.

Project Merit Criteria: Facility Suitability

The Study is a comprehensive effort to address the significant barriers to access, mobility, and economic development in the City's Justice40 and EPA IRA disadvantaged community. The study is expected to consider a range of options including relocating the CN Railyard outside of the downtown core and improving the safety and efficiency of railroad crossings.

One of the most significant barriers to access and mobility in the disadvantaged community is the railyard itself. The railyard physically divides the community in two. Residents deal with lengthy delays daily due to trains blocking crossings, especially on East 4th St which serves as a main arterial for the community. This can make it difficult for residents to get to work, school, and other appointments. It also makes it difficult for businesses to operate and attract customers and for residents to access essential services. The blocked crossings are not only inconvenient for drivers. Pedestrians have attempted to cross under slow-moving trains which have resulted in several serious injuries and maimings. A lawsuit in 2018 claimed that since 1991, at least five people have lost hands, arms, or legs while trying to climb through a stopped freight train that started moving unexpectedly.

The current railyard creates numerous environmental burdens on this disadvantaged community. The railyard is a major source of air pollution, including particulate matter, diesel emissions, and nitrogen oxides. These pollutants can cause a variety of health problems, including respiratory problems, heart disease, and cancer. The project location is in the top 85th percentile for all 13 categories of Environmental Justice Indexes for the State, including toxic releases (97), particulate matter (96), diesel particulate matter (92), air toxics cancer risk (91), ozone (90), and air toxics respiratory HI (86). Furthermore, the area is in the top percentile in the state for asthma (98), persons with disabilities (94), people of color (94), low income (93), unemployment rate (91), and low life expectancy (91). The railyard is also very noisy, creating sleep disturbances, stress, and other health problems. Furthermore, the railyard takes up a significant amount of land in the community which could be used for parks and other green spaces. Increased green space would provide tremendous benefits to the community, especially considering the location immediately adjacent to East High School.

The Study is expected to address these barriers in multiple ways. By relocating the railyard outside of the downtown core, the study would improve safety, access, and mobility for residents and businesses. The study could also recommend improvements to railroad crossings, such as grade separations and pedestrian overpasses. By relocating the railyard, the study would reduce air pollution and noise pollution, greatly improving the quality of life for residents in this historically disadvantaged area.

If the CN Railyard remained in its current location, this historically disadvantaged community would continue to be disproportionately burdened by its negative impacts. Residents would continue to be exposed to high levels of air pollution, noise pollution, and

vibration. This would have a significant impact on their health and well-being, leading to increased rates of respiratory problems, heart disease, cancer, and other health conditions. The railyard would continue to divide the community, making it difficult for residents to get to work, school, and other essential services. This would further exacerbate the existing disparities between the disadvantaged community and other parts of Waterloo, further dividing a community that has been recognized as one of the worst cities for Black Americans.

Project Merit Criteria: Equitable Development

The Smokey Row Triangle is on the cusp of a transformative rejuvenation, as it is poised to receive a substantial injection of funds aimed at revitalizing its dilapidated infrastructure and housing—a much-needed boost that has historically been unavailable to this district. What were once abandoned commercial properties and districts will soon be vibrant hubs teeming with access to opportunities previously out of reach. With this newfound access comes the promise of progress that will not only breathe life into these areas but also catalyze broader positive changes in our community.

The City of Waterloo, recognizing the pressing need for a resolution, took a significant step by funding a preliminary study conducted by VIA Rail in 2019. This strategic move aimed to identify alternative locations and assess their feasibility comprehensively. One of the primary proposals under consideration involves relocating closer to the Northeast Industrial Area, a change that promises multifaceted benefits. In 2024, the MPO will commence a NEPA Study aimed at determining the optimal solution for enhancing access to this vital industrial zone, with the potential to catalyze robust and sustained economic growth in the years ahead. A relocation of the railyard to this area would substantially enhance the safety of our transportation network and create an environment ripe for extensive economic development, ushering in new opportunities for growth and prosperity. Beyond its economic implications, this relocation would establish a vital lifeline, forging an essential connection for disenfranchised residents within our metropolitan area. It represents a tangible pathway toward a more equitable and interconnected community.

Project Merit Criteria: Community Engagement, Stewardship, and Partnerships

For decades, the Waterloo CN Railyard and East 4th St crossing have been safety and access problems for the community. Recognizing the urgent need for improvement, the City of Waterloo and the Black Hawk County MPO have made it a top priority. In the past five years, we've worked closely with the community and formed valuable partnerships to address these challenges in an underserved area. We've received strong support for this project, including endorsements from organizations like the Walnut Historic Neighborhood Association and We Care Neighborhood Association, which are nearby.

We plan to continue this collaboration by engaging the community and gathering input, insights, and concerns from residents, organizations, and stakeholders. Our commitment to working together highlights our dedication to improving safety and accessibility in this underserved area.

In September 2023, Veridian Credit Union announced a significant collaboration with various organizations in Waterloo, including Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity, 24/7

BLAC, House of Hope, and the City of Waterloo Neighborhood Services. They were chosen by the Filene Research Institute to lead a Racial Economic Equity (REE) Incubator in Waterloo. Veridian's REE initiative, called "Driving Wealth Home," aims to address and bridge the racial wage gap within the community.

Veridian recognizes that simply removing barriers and offering equal opportunities for a few decades won't make up for the 400-year wealth disadvantage faced by African Americans. "Driving Wealth Home" aims to work closely with the African American community to achieve several key goals: closing homeownership gaps, increasing financial empowerment, advocating for fair wages, ensuring equal access to loans, and eliminating transportation obstacles.

LeKeisha Veasley, a community inclusion strategist at Veridian Credit Union, acknowledges the challenges faced by Black Americans after centuries of slavery, segregation, and discrimination and emphasizes the need for innovative and equity-focused strategies.

This collaborative effort brings together the resources of local organizations, the City of Waterloo, and the Black Hawk County MPO. This partnership is expected to significantly enhance the success of both the REE initiative and the proposed study, complementing each other and addressing important community issues.

The study will also have a positive impact on the new All-In Grocers project, aimed at addressing the food desert issue in Downtown Waterloo. Rodney Anderson, the driving force behind this initiative, is committed to enhancing his community despite numerous challenges. His \$10 million project will repurpose a Brownfield site and cover 28,000 square feet in one of the most underserved areas of town. It includes a grocery store, restaurant, community center, laundromat, and a location for the 1619 Freedom School, a free after-school literacy program.

The American Family Insurance Institute for Corporate and Social Impact is a proud partner and investor in this project, demonstrating their commitment to improving Waterloo and its underserved communities. Rodney Anderson's vision and the All-In Grocers project show how determined individuals and partnerships can address social issues and revitalize communities. American Family acknowledges the structural barriers that hinder families and individuals from achieving their goals and is dedicated to helping remove these obstacles.

Project Merit Criteria: Climate and Environment

Waterloo is taking big steps to address environmental challenges and combat climate change. By moving the railyard to a better location, we'll reduce downtown congestion and train idling, leading to lower emissions and better air quality. This change will also make traffic smoother, reducing fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions from idling cars.

The potential redevelopment of the Smokey Row Triangle and a new industrial site in the Northeast Industrial Area will promote sustainable practices, like eco-friendly designs and energy-efficient infrastructure, along with green spaces. The study will also explore the possibility of turning the old railyard's area into a green space, which will not only improve

downtown's appearance but also help the environment by capturing carbon, controlling erosion, collecting rainwater, and providing a habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

This study is a significant step toward a more eco-friendly and sustainable future for Waterloo. It aligns with our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and build a resilient community in the face of climate change.

Project Merit Criteria: Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity

This project holds the promise of boosting workforce development and economic opportunities for several reasons. The proposed site's strategic placement would enable the expansion of rail services near Waterloo's Northeast Industrial Area. In 2019, the Black Hawk County MPO collaborated with AECOM to conduct a feasibility study aimed at alleviating congestion and improving the condition of the current over-the-road freight traffic originating from US Highway 20, 63, and 218, along with other routes. This study identified various alternatives that would address rail freight access and congestion issues near the preferred relocation site. The Northeast Industrial Park, home to Tyson, John Deere, Ferguson Supply, Ryder Logistics, among others, would, if awarded, synergize with the railroad analysis and NEIA Study, creating a vast industrial site capable of accommodating thousands of acres of development.

Equally important is the potential for revitalizing the once-thriving business districts in Smokey Row. Reinvesting in this historic triangle holds the potential to fortify the community and foster cultural integration. This district represents the last remaining commercial area within the original city plat that has not seen investment in five decades, offering the prospect of once again becoming a vibrant extension of the downtown district.

Conclusion

Waterloo, Iowa's black population has a long history of social inequity, made evident after the community was named the worst city for Black Americans in 2018. This history of segregation and injustice endures, necessitating collective action to address historical disparities. The Downtown Waterloo Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study offers a chance for transformative change. Waterloo's history in project management, along with support from the Black Hawk County MPO, positions us well to lead this initiative. Moving the railyard closer to Waterloo's Northeast Industrial Area can improve safety, connectivity, equity, and economic development for our residents. Planned investments in the Smokey Row Triangle area signal a much-needed revitalization.

This project goes beyond transportation improvements; it reflects our commitment to addressing environmental concerns. By reducing rail-related roadway congestion and emissions and promoting sustainable development, we take a big step toward a more environmentally conscious and resilient future.

In essence, this study represents a comprehensive approach to urban development, prioritizing unity, safety, community, and the public interest. It reflects our dedication to creating a better, equitable future for all Waterloo residents while addressing historical injustices. Together, we are poised to make meaningful changes and shape a more inclusive and prosperous future for our city.

135 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501
(202) 224-3744
www.grassley.senate.gov

721 FEDERAL BUILDING
210 WALNUT STREET
DES MOINES, IA 50309-2106
(515) 288-1145

111 7TH AVENUE, SE, Box 13
SUITE 6800
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52401-2101
(319) 363-6832

United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE EMERITUS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

120 FEDERAL BUILDING
320 6TH STREET
SIOUX CITY, IA 51101-1244
(712) 233-1860

210 WATERLOO BUILDING
531 COMMERCIAL STREET
WATERLOO, IA 50701-5497
(319) 232-6657

201 WEST 2ND STREET
SUITE 720
DAVENPORT, IA 52801-1817
(563) 322-4331

2146 27TH AVENUE
SUITE 550
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-6985
(712) 322-7103

September 27, 2023

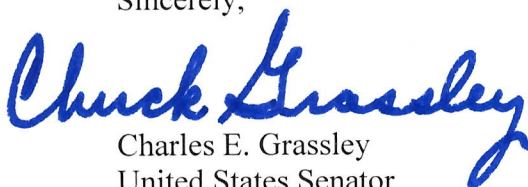
Noel Anderson
Community Planning & Development Director
City of Waterloo
City Hall
715 Mulberry Street
Waterloo, Iowa 50703

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I have contacted Secretary Buttigieg of the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant application submitted by the City of Waterloo for the Canadian National Railyard Improvements Project. I asked that this application be given all due consideration. Should I receive a response from the U.S. Department of Transportation, I will relay any helpful information to you.

Thank you for allowing me to be of assistance to you. If you have any further questions regarding this, or any other federal matter, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

Committee Assignments:

RANKING MEMBER
BUDGET

JUDICIARY
FINANCE
AGRICULTURE

CO-CHAIRMAN
CAUCUS ON
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL

From: [McBurney, Kristina](#)
To: [Nick Fratzke](#)
Subject: RE: City of Waterloo Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Grant Application - Letters of Support ONE LAST CHANCE TO SUPPORT THESE TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 4:29:36 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Nick,

I apologize for the late reply today! I work for Rep. Ashley Hinson and will get the two letters of support put together and sent in. Our practice is to send letters of support directly to the agency and we adhere to different deadlines that the actual application and are able to submit letters after the application deadline. I think the only thing I need are application IDs or application numbers to include in each respective letter.

I apologize again for my slow response and will get the letters of support sent directly to the agency. Thank you for reaching out and asking for the support!

Best,
Kristina McBurney



Kristina McBurney
District Representative
Congresswoman Ashley Hinson (IA-D2)
p: (319) 266-6925
w: www.hinson.house.gov
e: kristina.mcburney@mail.house.gov
t: @repashleyhinson
Sign up for Rep. Hinson's e-newsletter [here!](#)

From: Nick Fratzke <nfratzke@inrcog.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 11:12 AM
Cc: NOEL ANDERSON <NOEL.ANDERSON@WATERLOO-IA.ORG>; JAMIE KNUTSON <jamie.knutson@waterloo-ia.org>; Schindel, Douglas <DOUG.SCHINDEL@aecom.com>; Hosford, Matthew <matthew.hosford@aecom.com>; QUENTIN HART <QUENTIN.HART@WATERLOO-IA.ORG>; Michelle Sweeney <michelle.sweeney@aecom.com>
Subject: RE: City of Waterloo Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Grant Application - Letters of Support ONE LAST CHANCE TO SUPPORT THESE TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

All:



September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kevin T. Donahue

Kevin T Donahue

Manager US Government Affairs

Canadian National Railway



Iowa Northern Railway Company

201 Tower Park Drive, Suite 300 • Waterloo, Iowa 50701

September 27, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg - Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

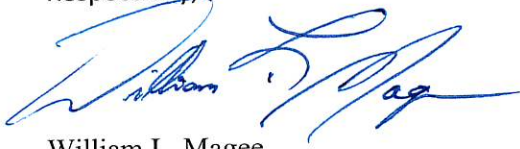
Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) and Iowa Northern Railway (IANR) Railyard & Rail Corridor improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN and IANR railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN and IANR railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety, and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown CN railyard. In addition, the Project would include a comprehensive analysis of the IANR railyard and the rail line connecting the IANR to the CN, including an operational analysis of how to best accomplish interchange of rail traffic between the two facilities in order to promote a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The railroads have a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of safe and efficient railyards in the vicinity of Waterloo. However, the existing railyards located in or near Downtown Waterloo create significant barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and causing economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN and IANR to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

IANR has great interest in improving the rail corridor extending through the City of Waterloo. IANR has a railyard and mechanical facility located south of the downtown Waterloo area and east of State Highway 218. IANR also operates an average of four trains per day over CN's rail corridor under trackage rights and interchange agreements. This cooperative study will identify safe and efficient improvements that will modernize the flow of vital rail traffic through Waterloo.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William L. Magee', is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature that is partially obscured.

William L. Magee
President & Chief Executive Officer
Iowa Northern Railway Company

wmagee@iowanorthern.com
319-415-7293



Antioch Baptist Church
426 Sumner Street
Waterloo, IA 50703
319-233-2587

September 20, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Pastor Charles Daniel with Antioch Baptist Church, located at 426 Sumner Street in Waterloo, Iowa. Antioch Baptist Church has been in the city over 100 years and is located next to the railroad crossing on East 4th Street. We understand all the incredible ways the railroad benefits our community and this nation.

With that said, we are in support of the Reconnecting Neighborhoods Grant to continue to redevelop our neighborhoods and make them more user-friendly. As an instrumental community faith leader, I believe there are two main benefits that could result:

1. To offer more mobility and access for the citizens in the neighborhood that drive the streets and walk the sidewalks every day.
2. To help redevelop residential and commercial prosperity in this part of the city, to foster economic growth for all involved.

Sincerely,

Charles Daniel

Charles Daniel
Senior Pastor
Antioch Baptist Church



620 Mulberry St, Waterloo, IA 50703

Phone: (319) 291-4429

CITYOFWATERLOOIA.COM



September 20, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Stephanie Shavers; I am the Neighborhood Services Coordinator for the City of Waterloo. Waterloo currently has 28 neighborhood associations. Some are directly impacted by the railroad, both in proximity and adjacent traffic. I have conversations with some of these residents on a daily basis in regards to some of the hardships that can result from rail transportation roadblocks or detours.

I am in support of the Reconnecting Neighborhoods Grant to continue to redevelop our neighborhoods as good faith partners with the railroad for two reasons:

1. To increase walking and biking and pedestrian safety throughout and around the railroad.
2. To strategically design a redevelopment plan focused on housing, business and retail that will be a win-win for all involved.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Shavers".

Ms. Stephanie Shavers

Neighborhood Services Coordinator





Waterloo Fire Rescue
425 East 3rd Street, Waterloo, IA 50703
Phone: (319)291-4460

September 18, 2023
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Waterloo Fire Rescue backs the city's interest in obtaining a more comprehensive look at the impact the downtown railyard has on the response times to emergency apparatus. Currently, when the railway is blocked by train traffic, Waterloo Fire Rescue must divert to overpasses, underpasses or find a fire lane that is no longer blocked by rail cars. This delay in service can be catastrophic to victims of fires. It also can be detrimental to individuals who have serious medical events, such as acute breathing problems or a cardiac event. Finding alternative locations that would decrease these experiences would greatly enhance the lives of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William D. Beck", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William D. Beck
Chief of Fire Services, Waterloo, IA
425 E 3rd St.
Waterloo, IA 50703



715 Mulberry St, Waterloo, IA 50703

Phone: (319) 291-4340

WWW.WATERLOOPOLICE.COM

CITYOFWATERLOOIA.COM

Date: September 26, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo.

The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. In addition, the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life.

The railyard location in Waterloo creates several barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

From a public safety standpoint, the rail yard and crossings create a response issue. If the crossing at 4th Street is blocked emergency responders must travel several blocks out of their way to respond. This wastes valuable time in emergency situations. Removing the crossing or yard, would improve emergency response times, therefore improving safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph Leibold".

Joseph J. Leibold
Chief of Police
Waterloo Police Department



716 COMMERCIAL STREET
WATERLOO, IOWA 50701
319-233-8350

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and planning of the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improve safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

Experience Waterloo strongly supports the Canadian National Railyard improvement project. We believe that this project will serve as an immediate catalyst for economic development and improved connectivity to vital resources for underdeveloped areas of Waterloo. In addition, we believe that this project will help to; improve current blighted areas, allow our organization to highlight existing community assets to attract visitors,

create a greater sense of place for Waterloo residences and empower Waterloo to boost its competitiveness as a leading destination city for visitors.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Construction Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tavis Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "T" and "H".

Tavis Hall, CDME
Executive Director
Experience Waterloo

September 20, 2023

Main Street Waterloo
Board of Directors

President
Samantha Gutknecht

Vice President
Star Rupe

Past President
Zach Hansen

Treasurer
Daniel Janssen

Design Council
Brandon Alvarado

Economic Vitality
Council
Michael Huisman

Organization Council
Jeanne Miller

Promotions Council
Nick Hedrick

At Large
David Deeds
Mark Iehl
Bailey Moore
Ivan Valtchev
Brendon Wagner

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard Improvements Project (the project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to the quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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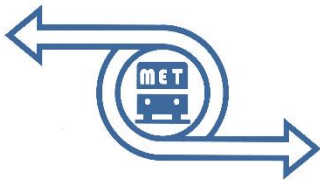
Main Street Waterloo dedication to revitalizing our downtown center is epitomized by this project as it meticulously addresses pivotal aspects of our mission. By seeking out solutions to enhance safety, foster equitable opportunities, and stimulate potential redevelopment, we are not just embarking on a project, we are embarking on a transformative journey that aims to breathe new life into our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Jessica Rucker
Executive Director
Main Street Waterloo



METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF BLACK HAWK COUNTY

1515 BLACK HAWK ST., WATERLOO, IOWA 50702

PHONE (319) 234-5714

FAX (319) 234-6809

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and planning of the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improve safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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MET Transit supports this effort to explore potential solutions and alternatives to the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. Transit routes are established in this area and our buses frequently stop or reroute during train blockages. MET Transit understands the importance of the CN railroad to Waterloo and we are hopeful that potential solutions will arise from this study.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Construction Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

David Sturch
General Manager



September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and planning of the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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Grow Cedar Valley supports the continued operations of the CN railyard along with the collaboration proposed by this application to make sure it is a safe and productive portion of the City of Waterloo.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Construction Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cary Darrah".

Cary Darrah, President and CEO
Grow Cedar Valley, Inc.

360 Westfield Ave., Ste. 200/Waterloo, IA 50701

319/232.1156

GrowCedarValley.com



Black Hawk County Engineer

316 E. 5th Street ■ Room 211 ■ Waterloo, Iowa 50703 ■ Phone: 319-833-3008 ■ Fax: 319-833-3139

Email: engineer@blackhawkcounty.iowa.gov

Website: www.blackhawkcounty.iowa.gov

"The mission of the County Engineer and Secondary Roads Department is to develop, construct, manage and maintain a safe and modern network of county roads and bridges, by being efficient, financially responsible and environmental stewards to the residents and visitors of Black Hawk County."

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590


Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Catherine F. Nicholas, P.E.
County Engineer



Black Hawk County Public Health

1407 Independence Avenue • 5th Floor • Waterloo, IA 50703
(319) 291-2413 • www.BHCPublicHealth.org

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Black Hawk County Public Health enthusiastically supports the City of Waterloo's application to improve communities and neighborhoods in Waterloo. Black Hawk County is the fifth largest county in Iowa by population and one of the most diverse counties with of 9.8% identifying as Black or African American, 4.7% Hispanic, and 6.5% foreign born with immigrant and refugee communities from Bosnia, Syria, Burma, Marshall Islands, Liberia, and Congo. Community members from diverse backgrounds are often disproportionately impacted in experiencing barriers to employment, education, healthcare, food, and other essential needs due to the built environment of the neighborhoods where they live.

The current railway infrastructure has a negative impact on the communities living directly adjacent to railways and railyards and introduces health and safety concerns. Historical discriminatory practices, such as redlining, resulted in racial and socioeconomic segregation impacting communities of color and individuals in poverty. These communities were often forced to live in neighborhoods with heavy railway infrastructure and higher levels of industrialization and pollution. Contamination from heavy metals and hydrocarbons, noise and air pollution, and other environmental conditions negatively impacts the citizens that live there.

Black Hawk County Public Health and the City of Waterloo have been partners in improving the health and safety of the Waterloo community for decades, and we are excited to support the much-needed opportunity to assess citywide railway infrastructure to understand the impact on neighborhoods, and identify solutions to improve the safety, equity, convenience, and health of the people of Waterloo. Please contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kaitlin Emrich".

Kaitlin Emrich, MPH
Interim Health Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jared S. Parmater".

Jared S. Parmater
Environmental Health Program Manager



MAYOR ROBERT M. GREEN

CFD 1202

CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

220 CLAY STREET

CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613

PHONE: 319-273-5118

EMAIL: mayor@cedarfalls.com

September 20, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the current federal grant request being made through INRCOG for a comprehensive rail study being proposed for the Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan area. While rail is a vital component of our national and regional transportation infrastructure, some of the features of it in our area are incompatible with quality of life and economic development.

The proposed study would help our communities to determine the best next steps for our transitioning rail yards to other areas, rehabilitate affected neighborhoods, and remediate the negative effects on areas which have a predominantly Black population. Such measures would allow our governments to better serve all residents of our community, as we seek earnestly to remove ourselves from the top ten of 24/7 Wall Street's "Worst Places for Black Americans to live". Concrete positive actions like rail reconfiguration are important for this work, so I greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Green'.

Mayor Robert Green



September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Billie Bailey
Executive Director

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods.

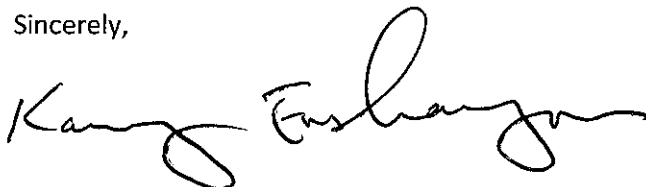
I work in Waterloo often to improve access to good food among vulnerable populations and have noticed several places where railroad can block a major road for extended amount of time.

The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

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Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Kamyar Enshayan, PhD

Director



INRCOG

Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of INRCOG and the Black Hawk County MPO, I am writing to express our full support for the City of Waterloo's application requesting funding for the Downtown Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study. Our organization is dedicated to collaborating with communities to facilitate the development of safe, accessible, and equitable transportation systems that benefit all residents.

The Study stands as a crucial undertaking for the City of Waterloo. The railyard's proximity to East High School, where the minority enrollment stands at 60 percent and 72 percent of students face economic disadvantages, has resulted in a multitude of disruptions. Frequent train stoppages lead to extended road closures, obstructing the mobility of students, employees, and residents within this historically disadvantaged community. The relocation of the railyard holds the potential to open doors to economic growth and urban revitalization, concurrently fostering a city that is accessible and welcoming to all its residents.

The existing railyard acts as a physical barrier that divides the city. Additionally, it contributed significantly to both noise and air pollution. The relocation of the railyard to a more suitable location promises to enhance air quality, diminish noise pollution, and streamline the flow of people within this area of persistent poverty.

This study will also address the pressing safety concerns associated with the city's numerous railroad crossings. The frustration stemming from frequent blockages has given rise to legitimate safety concerns, leading to unfortunate accidents involving pedestrians and motorists. The study's objectives include identifying strategies to enhance the safety of these crossings, making them more secure for all residents and visitors.

The Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program represents an ideal funding source for this crucial initiative. This program is specifically designed to support projects aimed at improving transportation access for low-income and minority communities. The relocation of the railyard and the enhancement of the city's railroad crossings would unquestionably yield substantial benefits for these historically disadvantaged citizens.

I urge you to approve the City of Waterloo's application for the Downtown Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study. This project holds undeniable significance for the future of Waterloo, promising to leave a lasting positive impact on the lives of countless individuals in our region for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Brian Schoon
Executive Director

INRCOG | PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Developing Strong Local Government through Regional Cooperation



September 18, 2023

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20590

855-368-4200 | reconnectingcommunities@dot.gov

Dear Grant Coordinator,

On behalf of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), I am writing to express our strong support for the application being submitted by the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) for funding under the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program for the fiscal year 2023 cycle.

AMPO serves the needs and interests of MPOs across the US. We understand the critical role that MPOs play in planning, programming, and coordinating federal highway and transit investments. INRCOG's proposed comprehensive analysis of railroad infrastructure, along with the evaluation of the social, public, and environmental health, and economic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, aligns closely with the planning and coordination work that is central to the mission of MPOs nationwide. The analysis will help to pinpoint crucial areas for enhancement, thereby elevating safety protocols for all road users, facilitating equitable access for underprivileged communities, stimulating economic growth, and advancing environmental sustainability within communities.

The initiative proposed by INRCOG for assessing and addressing the multi-faceted implications of railroad infrastructure in their community is both timely and significant. The comprehensive analysis will not only benefit their immediate community but can also serve as a model for other MPOs and urbanized areas dealing with similar challenges. We believe INRCOG's multifaceted approach is essential in achieving sustainable development and ensuring that the federal highway and transit investments have a long-lasting tangible impact on communities. AMPO enthusiastically endorses INRCOG's application for the 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program.

Thank you for considering AMPO's endorsement of this project. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at bkeyrouze@ampo.org if you require any further information or have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Keyrouze". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin blue rectangular border.

William Keyrouze

Executive Director

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations



Kim Reynolds, Governor
Adam Gregg, Lt. Governor
Scott Marler, Iowa DOT Director

September 25, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Waterloo Railroad Infrastructure Analysis and Improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project includes a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

The Iowa Department of Transportation sees the benefit of studying ways to increase overall safety and specifically reducing unsafe trespassing habits along the corridor. This project aligns well with our Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Action Plan related to the documented action item number 11 - Pedestrian Safety / Trespasser Prevention.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Scott C. Marler, Director



September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and preliminary planning for the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improved safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

We at Spellers True Value Hardware witness the blockages daily at our storefront one block from the East 4th Street Rail Crossing. It breaks your heart to see these children risk their lives each day just trying to get to school. Something can and should be done to give these kids a chance at the same access to opportunity that someone on the other side of the tracks has been given.

The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendell A. Speller".

Wendell Allen Speller
Owner/Manager
Spellers True Value



VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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As the economic development and urban planning consultant for the City of Waterloo for over two decades, we are close partners to the City in the realization of downtown redevelopment and revitalization goals. One of the key areas of focus for the City is the reconnection of Waterloo neighborhoods and connecting residents to the economic and cultural opportunities of downtown. In particular, this project will advance the efforts of the City Central Initiative and Rath Neighborhood plan. Relocation of the railyard will heal a major division in the City while providing once in a lifetime redevelopment opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Construction Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Brian Vandewalle
CEO & Founder
Vandewalle & Associates

120 East Lakeside Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715 • 608.255.3988 • 608.255.0814 Fax
247 Freshwater Way • Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204 • 414.988.8631
www.vandewalle.com

Shaping places, shaping change



MidAmerican Energy Company
666 Grand Avenue
P.O. Box 657
Des Moines, IA 50306-0657

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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As the electric and natural gas utility for the community and region, we understand the value of infrastructure and the immeasurable value and benefit it brings to all residents and businesses. Additionally, it provides the necessary connections and mobility to support the vibrancy and growth of a sustainable community.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kathryn M. Kunert
Vice President, Economic Connections and Integration

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Construction Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



David Deeds
President
ddeeds@jsadevelopment.com
773.255.2258

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) mission is to create opportunities for every child to be able to walk and bike to school through safety and skills based education and infrastructure improvements. It is proven that children perform better academically when they have physical activity before school. Working with Waterloo Community Schools transportation department, we are concerned that several neighborhoods must allow students acceptance for hazardous bussing due to railroad tracks that otherwise would live less than 1-mile to elementary or 2-miles for middle school. This hazard greatly diminishes the school's and SRTS program's ability to create a bike and walk friendly model for school transportation issues.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Brenda Vavroch
Safe Routes to School Coordinator
319-235-0311
bvavroch@inrcog.org



YOUTH ART TEAM



September 15, 2023

To Secretary of Transportation Buttigieg,

Youth Art Team is a nonprofit that provides opportunities and removes obstacles so young people from different backgrounds can create beauty together. Our innovative approach empowers three teams, about young 75 artists, to create public art projects for hundreds of their peers each year. Connecting communities and neighborhoods is a major part of our work in Waterloo. Artwork by Youth Art Team artists brings new life to neighborhoods and public spaces that are experienced by thousands of people every day.

We are writing in support of INRCOG's proposal for a study of Waterloo's citywide railroad infrastructure:

- Many of the youth we serve are impacted by the current railroad system; many students walk to their activities from home and are blocked by the railyard. This robs the students of time and agency -- often the routes are too long and unsafe for them to navigate by foot or bike.
- Railroads divide neighborhoods, cutting off critical services to our youth, including access to East High School.
- Elimination of the East 4th Street River Crossing would significantly improve access to core services in downtown Waterloo, including recreational activities, work, dining, pharmacies, grocery stores, and more.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heidi Fuchtman
Executive & Creative Director

Youth Art Team
325 East Park Avenue, Suite 101
Waterloo, Iowa 50703



Tisdale

September 20, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Maxine Tisdale, and I am a longtime resident of Waterloo, Iowa who has been active for some 25 years with my local neighborhood association, currently serving as its president. Our group is called We Care—and the name accurately reflects the truth, that we do care immensely about the health, safety and wellbeing of the residents here that all deserve a decent quality of life.

It is in this spirit that we are excited about a Reconnecting Neighborhoods Grant to support redevelopment of our area for two reasons:

1. We have lived adjacent to the railyard for decades and would like to support constructive ways to make the area more accessible for car traffic and pedestrians.
2. We wholeheartedly support a redevelopment plan and are excited about our best days being ahead of us. This grant can help make that a reality with tangible changes to the area that I represent.

Sincerely,



Maxine Tisdale
President, We Care Neighborhood Association
Waterloo, Iowa

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

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Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity has invested millions of dollars in mixed income housing improvements in the Walnut Neighborhood over the past seven years, which is immediately adjacent to CN, across East 4th Street to the west. The neighborhood has suffered for decades due to divestment and disinvestment, a neighborhood that was redlined dating as far back as the 1940's. The revitalization efforts within the neighborhood and in the south commercial corridor are seeing great results. However, we feel the opportunities for development and transformation along East 4th Street are significantly limited because of CN's presence there. The aesthetics along East 4th Street are poor and don't invite folks to travel from downtown and Lincoln Park to the south to the north down East 4th Street to Sullivan Park.

In addition, the train tracks run directly to the north of the neighborhood, cutting the neighborhood off from Sullivan Park and the other neighborhoods on the North End. The railyard cuts the neighborhood off to the east, and the train tracks cut the neighborhood off to the north. The funds for this Project would benefit the neighborhood immensely and stretch our reinvestment dollars further as they could be leveraged to promote further needed development in the area.

The Project would create a more welcoming neighborhood for families to choose to live in, creating the opportunity for more vibrant retail and commercial spaces in the neighborhood, as well as more mixed income housing development. Lastly, the Project would provide safer access through the neighborhood and to local schools by improving access across East 4th Street and aesthetics on the street, better crossways, and a safer way to move throughout the area.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Parrish', followed by a horizontal line.

Ali Parrish, Executive Director
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity
aparrish@webuildhabitat.org
319-235-9946
803 W 5th Street
Waterloo, IA 50702

September 22, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept this letter of support for the Canadian National (CN) Railyard improvements Project (the Project hereafter). The Project would include a comprehensive analysis and planning of the CN railroad infrastructure in Downtown Waterloo. The intent of this proposal is to identify solutions and alternatives to the various blockages, safety and environmental health issues, and overall barriers to a quality-of-life that each citizen of Waterloo is entitled to. The scope of this study is inclusive of the CN railroad and railyard impacts to the City of Waterloo neighborhoods. The study will evaluate the potential for pedestrian at-grade crossing elimination, safety and aesthetic enhancements, creating neighborhood access to equitable opportunities, and the potential relocation of the Downtown railyard to a more sustainable and developmentally suitable area to promote redevelopment and improve quality-of-life. The Project goals will include providing improve safe access, connectivity, and equity to surrounding neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.

The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

Moving the railyard will mean trains are no longer parked for hours across an interesection that our high school students use to access East High. Students often crawl under the trains that block their walking path to school rather than walk the miles necessary to find an unblocked intersection.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Felicia Cass
Chair
Waterloo Complete Streets Advisory Committee



UnityPoint Health
Allen Hospital

Jenni Friedly
Market President

1825 Logan Avenue
Waterloo, IA 50703
office (319) 235-3997
fax (319) 235-3906

Jenni.Friedly@unitypoint.org

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The railroad has a significant economic benefit for the City of Waterloo and the City understands the importance of keeping the railyard in Waterloo. However, the railyard location in Downtown Waterloo creates a number of barriers to the community and undeveloped adjacent lots, such as restricting access and economic blight. The City of Waterloo will partner with CN to develop and evaluate alternatives to address barriers, spur redevelopment, address environmental hazards, and improve the overall quality-of-life for the citizens of Waterloo.

The CN rail separates the City of Waterloo from two major hospitals. Emergency healthcare services may be negatively impacted when switching operations occur at the railyard as roads blocked for an hour or more increases the potential of delays and detours for emergency transport personnel responding to life-threatening circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration of this Neighborhood Access and Equity Community Planning Grant request. If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jenni Friedly
Market President

Scope of Work: Downtown Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study, Waterloo, IA

Project Overview:

The Downtown Railyard Relocation and Railroad Crossing Improvement Study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current Canadian National (CN) Railway railyard in Waterloo, Iowa, with a focus on assessing its generational impact on disadvantaged communities. The study area will be limited to the area between Hwy 63, Newell, Walnut, Independence, and Linden Ave. This study will identify present barriers created by the existing rail infrastructure, explore public health and safety solutions, and develop alternatives to address the diminished quality of life resulting from a history of redlining and segregation that still affects the community. The study will be conducted in close collaboration with the CN Railroad, local authorities, community stakeholders, and transportation and engineering experts.

Objectives:

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

0. **Comprehensive Rail Analysis for the Project Area:** Conduct an in-depth assessment of the existing rail infrastructure within the study area, including rail yards, tracks, and crossings, to understand the current operational constraints and identify potential areas for improvement.
1. **Community Impact Assessment:** Evaluate the historical and present-day impact of the railyard on disadvantaged communities in the study area, particularly regarding segregation, socioeconomic disparities, access to opportunity, and minimal public or private investment in the defined project location area.
2. **Barriers Identification:** Identify physical, social, and economic barriers created by the current rail infrastructure in the study area that affect the community's mobility, public health, safety, economic development, and quality of life.
3. **Public Health and Safety Solutions:** Develop recommendations and strategies to mitigate or eliminate identified public health and safety risks resulting from the railyard's presence, considering factors such as air quality, noise pollution, and emergency response times.
4. **Community Engagement:** Engage with community members, neighborhood organizations, places of worship, the community school district, youth services coordinators, Iowa Workforce Development, local businesses and investors, and stakeholders to gather input, insights, and hear concerns related to the railyard and its impact on the community.
5. **Alternatives Analysis:** Develop a range of alternative scenarios and solutions to address the identified barriers and mitigate the negative impacts of the railyard on disadvantaged communities. Alternatives should include options for the existing railyard modifications and relocation of the railyard to another portion of the Project Area.
6. **NEPA Review:** Complete initial National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations review, including environmental and historical impact review, public involvement, and mitigation measures.
7. **Economic Development Opportunities:** Assess the potential economic benefits and opportunities associated with relocating the railyard and/or investment in increased safety and connectivity measures, such as increased land value, job creation, and potential for commercial and industrial growth.
8. **Redevelopment and Enhancement/Beautification:** Propose plans and designs for the redevelopment and beautification of the former railyard and adjacent areas, including parks, green spaces, a culturally significant exhibition center, passenger rail depot, and mixed-use developments, ensuring they align with community needs and desires.

9. Cost-Benefit Analysis: Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed alternatives to determine their feasibility and potential economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Phases:

Phase 1: Project Initiation

- Conduct a project kick-off meeting in a location of historical significance and convenience for those residing in proximity to the project location, including city officials, CN representatives, stakeholders, community representatives, and technical experts
- Define the railyard's impact on the community, project goals, objectives, and successful implementation criteria
- Develop a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan

Phase 2: Existing Conditions Assessment

- Inventory of existing rail infrastructure within Project area
- Gather historical data on railyard development, redlining, and community demographics
- Document physical, social, and economic barriers
- Assess the socioeconomic and health impacts of the rail network on disadvantaged communities
- Identify and assess community concerns related to railyard
- Community impact analysis
- Public health and safety assessment
- Identify environmental contamination of the former site

Phase 3: Community Engagement

- Public meetings and workshops
- Disadvantaged community outreach
- Gather input and feedback

Phase 4: Planning and Alternatives Analysis

- Identify the functions and capacity required to protect in the CN rail operations
- Identify and evaluate existing CN railroad crossing and railyard site modifications, safety improvements and enhancements
- Develop conceptual designs for each alternative
 - Railyard relocation
 - Site modifications, enhancements
 - Grade-Separated Pedestrian Crossing(s)
- Consider innovative solutions to enhance community access and well-being
- Assess the feasibility, costs, and benefits of each alternative
- Economic impact analysis, including potential for industrial and commercial growth at relocation site

Phase 5: NEPA Review

- Environmental impact Review
- Public Information Meetings

Deliverables:

- Progress reports at key milestones
- Draft and final Report including Conceptual Design
-

Project Timeline:

The project timeline is estimated to be 24 to 30 months.



EJScreen Community Report

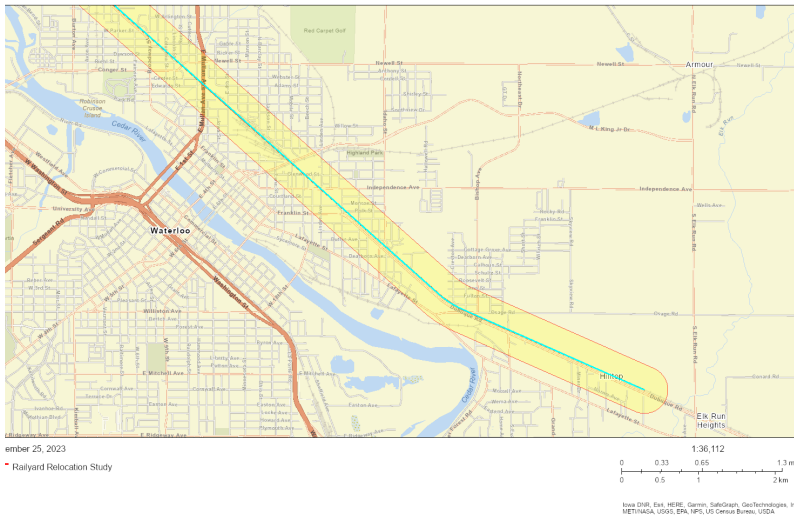
This report provides environmental and socioeconomic information for user-defined areas, and combines that data into environmental justice and supplemental indexes.

Waterloo, IA

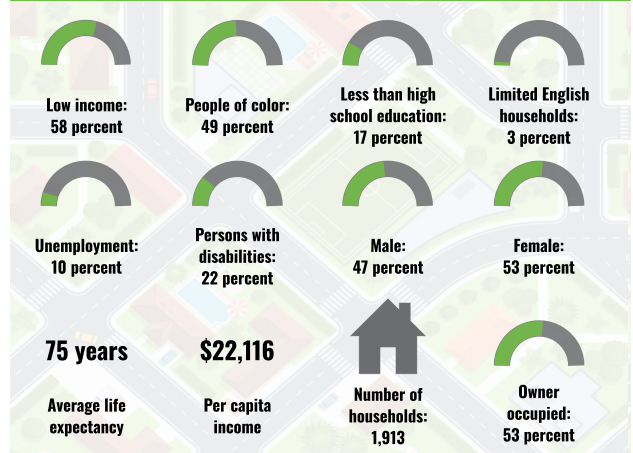
.19 miles Ring around the Corridor

Population: 4,830

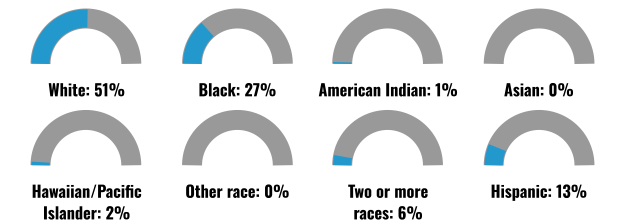
Area in square miles: 2.45



COMMUNITY INFORMATION



BREAKDOWN BY RACE



BREAKDOWN BY AGE



LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING BREAKDOWN



Notes: Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding. Hispanic population can be of any race. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021. Life expectancy data comes from the Centers for Disease Control.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

LANGUAGE	PERCENT
	87%
	11%
Other Asian and Pacific Island	2%
Total Non-English	13%

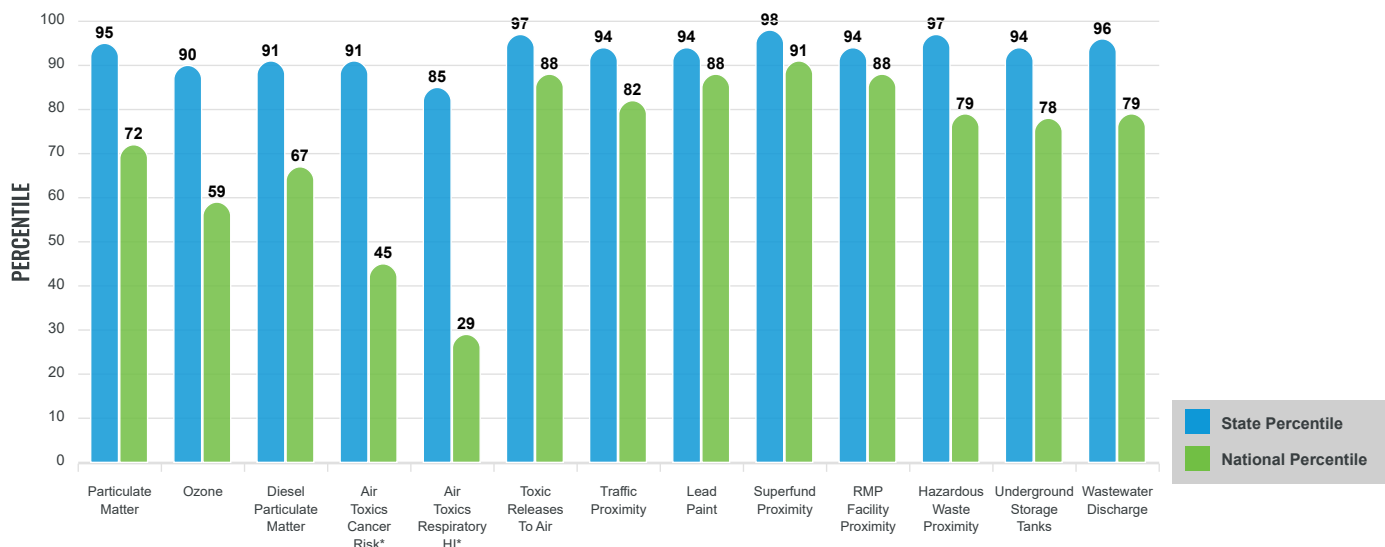
Environmental Justice & Supplemental Indexes

The environmental justice and supplemental indexes are a combination of environmental and socioeconomic information. There are thirteen EJ indexes and supplemental indexes in EJScreen reflecting the 13 environmental indicators. The indexes for a selected area are compared to those for all other locations in the state or nation. For more information and calculation details on the EJ and supplemental indexes, please visit the [EJScreen website](#).

EJ INDEXES

The EJ indexes help users screen for potential EJ concerns. To do this, the EJ index combines data on low income and people of color populations with a single environmental indicator.

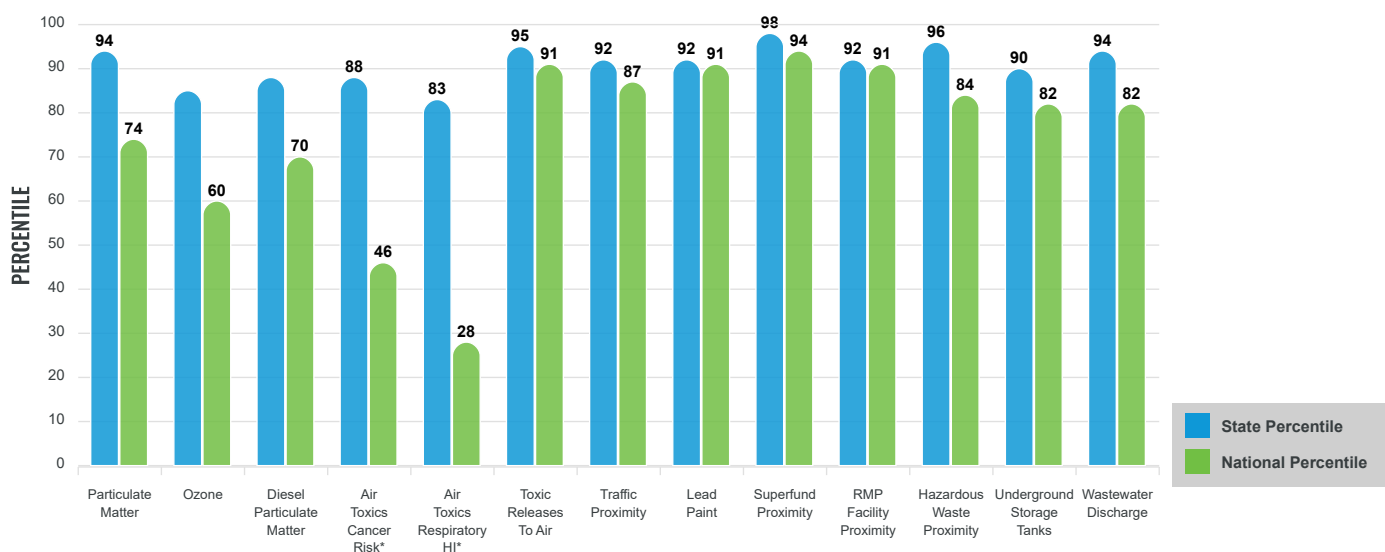
EJ INDEXES FOR THE SELECTED LOCATION



SUPPLEMENTAL INDEXES

The supplemental indexes offer a different perspective on community-level vulnerability. They combine data on percent low-income, percent linguistically isolated, percent less than high school education, percent unemployed, and low life expectancy with a single environmental indicator.

SUPPLEMENTAL INDEXES FOR THE SELECTED LOCATION



These percentiles provide perspective on how the selected block group or buffer area compares to the entire state or nation.

Report for .19 miles Ring around the Corridor

EJScreen Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators Data

SELECTED VARIABLES	VALUE	STATE AVERAGE	PERCENTILE IN STATE	USA AVERAGE	PERCENTILE IN USA
POLLUTION AND SOURCES					
Particulate Matter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	8.01	7.63	67	8.08	45
Ozone (ppb)	58.8	58.8	49	61.6	30
Diesel Particulate Matter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	0.184	0.158	68	0.261	41
Air Toxics Cancer Risk* (lifetime risk per million)	20	20	14	25	5
Air Toxics Respiratory HI*	0.2	0.21	3	0.31	4
Toxic Releases to Air	2,800	2,800	81	4,600	78
Traffic Proximity (daily traffic count/distance to road)	200	140	81	210	75
Lead Paint (% Pre-1960 Housing)	0.64	0.45	73	0.3	82
Superfund Proximity (site count/km distance)	0.56	0.094	96	0.13	95
RMP Facility Proximity (facility count/km distance)	0.96	0.72	73	0.43	87
Hazardous Waste Proximity (facility count/km distance)	1.2	0.42	90	1.9	64
Underground Storage Tanks (count/km ²)	2.7	1.9	76	3.9	64
Wastewater Discharge (toxicity-weighted concentration/m distance)	0.0054	0.28	81	22	62
SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS					
Demographic Index	53%	22%	95	35%	77
Supplemental Demographic Index	22%	12%	93	14%	84
People of Color	49%	15%	94	39%	65
Low Income	58%	29%	92	31%	87
Unemployment Rate	10%	4%	90	6%	81
Limited English Speaking Households	3%	2%	83	5%	69
Less Than High School Education	17%	8%	88	12%	75
Under Age 5	8%	6%	78	6%	78
Over Age 64	12%	18%	23	17%	33
Low Life Expectancy	23%	19%	89	20%	83

*Diesel particulate matter, air toxics cancer risk, and air toxics respiratory hazard index are from the EPA's Air Toxics Data Update, which is the Agency's ongoing, comprehensive evaluation of air toxics in the United States. This effort aims to prioritize air toxics, emission sources, and locations of interest for further study. It is important to remember that the air toxics data presented here provide broad estimates of health risks over geographic areas of the country, not definitive risks to specific individuals or locations. Cancer risks and hazard indices from the Air Toxics Data Update are reported to one significant figure and any additional significant figures here are due to rounding. More information on the Air Toxics Data Update can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/haps/air-toxics-data-update>.

Sites reporting to EPA within defined area:

Superfund	0
Hazardous Waste, Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facilities	0
Water Dischargers	1
Air Pollution	8
Brownfields	6
Toxic Release Inventory	2

Other community features within defined area:

Schools	1
Hospitals	1
Places of Worship	7

Other environmental data:

Air Non-attainment	No
Impaired Waters	No

Selected location contains American Indian Reservation Lands*	No
Selected location contains a "Justice40 (CEJST)" disadvantaged community	Yes
Selected location contains an EPA IRA disadvantaged community	Yes

Report for .19 miles Ring around the Corridor

EJScreen Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators Data

HEALTH INDICATORS					
INDICATOR	HEALTH VALUE	STATE AVERAGE	STATE PERCENTILE	US AVERAGE	US PERCENTILE
Low Life Expectancy	23%	19%	89	20%	83
Heart Disease	7.2	6.5	64	6.1	71
Asthma	11.6	9.4	97	10	86
Cancer	5.4	6.8	15	6.1	33
Persons with Disabilities	19.5%	12.5%	93	13.4%	84

CLIMATE INDICATORS					
INDICATOR	HEALTH VALUE	STATE AVERAGE	STATE PERCENTILE	US AVERAGE	US PERCENTILE
Flood Risk	20%	11%	88	12%	85
Wildfire Risk	0%	2%	0	14%	0

CRITICAL SERVICE GAPS					
INDICATOR	HEALTH VALUE	STATE AVERAGE	STATE PERCENTILE	US AVERAGE	US PERCENTILE
Broadband Internet	23%	16%	80	14%	80
Lack of Health Insurance	6%	5%	69	9%	43
Housing Burden	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transportation Access	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Food Desert	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Footnotes

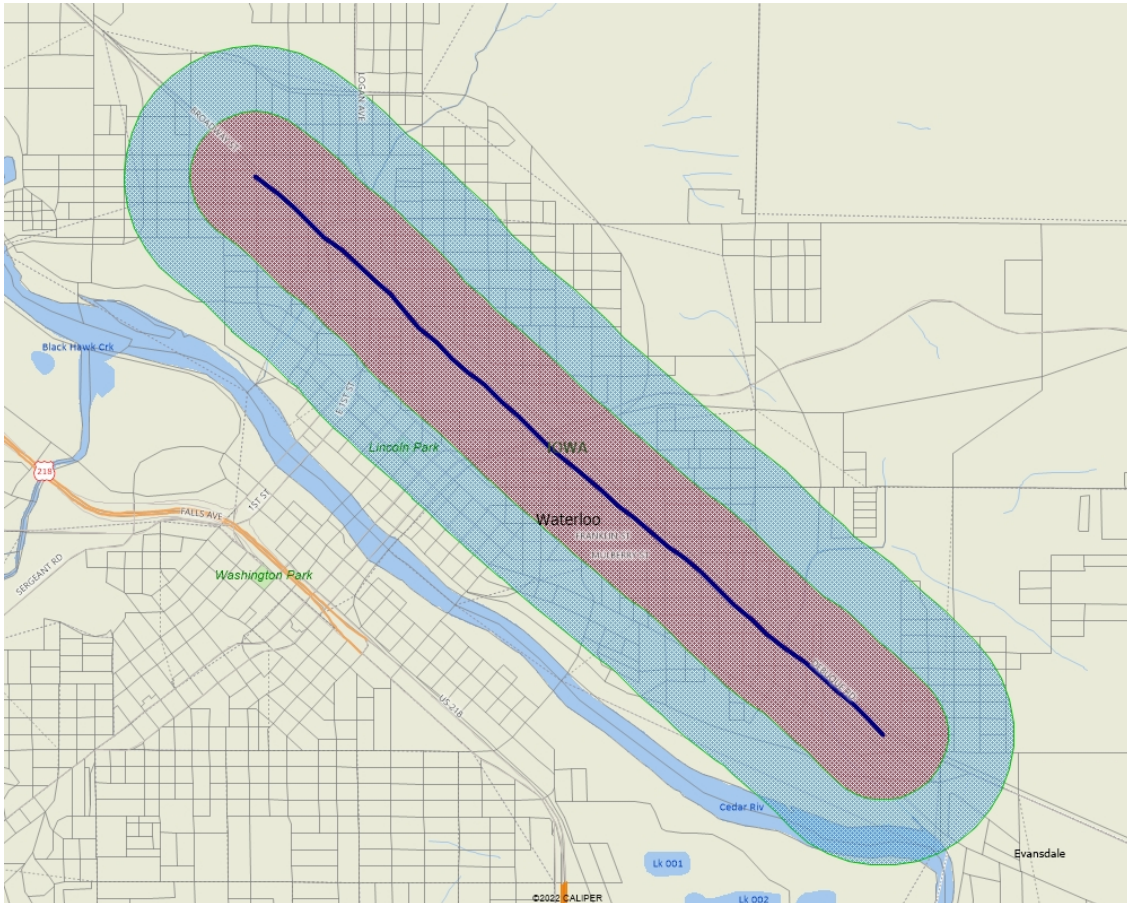
Report for .19 miles Ring around the Corridor

www.epa.gov/ejscreen

Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects (STEAP)

Project Buffer Analysis Profile Report

Source: 2020 Census Block Data and NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS)
Prepared by FHWA Office of Planning



Analysis of 2 Buffers of Size 0.3 and 0.5 Miles

Reference Layers
City/Town: Waterloo IA
County: Black Hawk IA
State: Iowa

Note: Source: 2020 Decennial Census PL94-171 Redistricting Data

0.3 Miles Buffer Analysis

	Buffer Estimates	Percent	City/Town Waterloo IA	County Black Hawk IA	State Iowa
General Buffer Area Statistics					
Land Area (in square miles)	2		62	566	55,853
Population	5,492		67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Housing Units	2,411		31,603	58,559	1,412,789
Households	2,117		28,962	54,223	1,288,560

Population by Race					
Total	5,492	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Population Reporting One Race	4,982	91%	93%	95%	94%
White	2,521	46%	68%	78%	84%
Black	1,822	33%	18%	10%	4%
American Indian	53	1%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	72	1%	3%	3%	2%
Pacific Islander	108	2%	1%	1%	0%
Some Other Race	406	7%	3%	2%	3%
Population Reporting Two or More Races	510	9%	7%	5%	6%

Population by Ethnicity					
Total	5,492	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Hispanic Origin	798	15%	7%	5%	7%
Not Hispanic	4,694	85%	93%	95%	93%

Total Non-Hispanic Population					
Total	4,694	100%	62,521	124,696	2,974,383
White Alone	2,361	50%	71%	81%	89%
Black or African American Alone	1,808	39%	19%	11%	4%
American Indian & Alaska Native Alone	13	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian Alone	72	2%	3%	3%	3%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone	105	2%	1%	1%	0%
Some other Race Alone	8	0%	0%	0%	0%
Two or More Race	327	7%	5%	4%	4%

Note:, Source: 2020 Decennial Census PL94-171 Redistricting Data

	Buffer Estimates	Percent	City/Town Waterloo IA	County Black Hawk IA	State Iowa
Population in Housing Units vs. Group Quarters					
Total	5,492	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
People in housing units	5,484	100%	99%	97%	97%
People in group quarters	7	0%	1%	3%	3%

Population in Group Quarters					
Total	7	100%	694	4,508	98,558
Nursing facilities		0%	45%	24%	29%
College/University student housing		0%	0%	67%	47%
Military quarters		0%	0%	0%	0%
Other facilities	7	100%	55%	9%	24%

Housing Unit					
Total Housing Units	2,411	100%	31,603	58,559	1,412,789
Occupied Housing Units	2,117	88%	92%	93%	91%
Vacant Housing Units	294	12%	8%	7%	9%

2016-2020 Five Year Fatal Crashes and Fatalities					
Total Fatal Crashes	3	100%	23	45	1,553
Vehicle Crashes	2	68%	57%	73%	91%
Pedestrian and Cyclist Crashes	1	32%	43%	27%	9%
Total Fatalities	4	100%	24	49	1,713
Vehicle Crash Fatalities	3	74%	58%	76%	91%
Pedestrian and Cyclist Fatalities	1	26%	42%	24%	9%

0.5 Miles Buffer Analysis

	Buffer Estimates	Percent	City/Town Waterloo IA	County Black Hawk IA	State Iowa
General Buffer Area Statistics					
Land Area (in square miles)	4		62	566	55,853
Population	10,724		67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Housing Units	4,877		31,603	58,559	1,412,789
Households	4,249		28,962	54,223	1,288,560

Population by Race					
Total	10,724	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Population Reporting One Race	9,774	91%	93%	95%	94%
White	4,871	45%	68%	78%	84%
Black	3,708	35%	18%	10%	4%
American Indian	102	1%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	159	1%	3%	3%	2%
Pacific Islander	194	2%	1%	1%	0%
Some Other Race	740	7%	3%	2%	3%
Population Reporting Two or More Races	949	9%	7%	5%	6%

Population by Ethnicity					
Total	10,724	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
Hispanic Origin	1,463	14%	7%	5%	7%
Not Hispanic	9,261	86%	93%	95%	93%

Total Non-Hispanic Population					
Total	9,261	100%	62,521	124,696	2,974,383
White Alone	4,586	50%	71%	81%	89%
Black or African American Alone	3,683	40%	19%	11%	4%
American Indian & Alaska Native Alone	24	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian Alone	159	2%	3%	3%	3%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone	189	2%	1%	1%	0%
Some other Race Alone	23	0%	0%	0%	0%
Two or More Race	596	6%	5%	4%	4%

Note: Source: 2020 Decennial Census PL94-171 Redistricting Data

	Buffer Estimates	Percent	City/Town Waterloo IA	County Black Hawk IA	State Iowa
Population in Housing Units vs. Group Quarters					
Total	10,724	100%	67,314	131,144	3,190,369
People in housing units	10,503	98%	99%	97%	97%
People in group quarters	221	2%	1%	3%	3%

Population in Group Quarters					
Total	221	100%	694	4,508	98,558
Nursing facilities		0%	45%	24%	29%
College/University student housing		0%	0%	67%	47%
Military quarters		0%	0%	0%	0%
Other facilities	221	100%	55%	9%	24%

Housing Unit					
Total Housing Units	4,877	100%	31,603	58,559	1,412,789
Occupied Housing Units	4,249	87%	92%	93%	91%
Vacant Housing Units	628	13%	8%	7%	9%

2016-2020 Five Year Fatal Crashes and Fatalities					
Total Fatal Crashes	6	100%	23	45	1,553
Vehicle Crashes	5	83%	57%	73%	91%
Pedestrian and Cyclist Crashes	1	17%	43%	27%	9%
Total Fatalities	7	100%	24	49	1,713
Vehicle Crash Fatalities	6	85%	58%	76%	91%
Pedestrian and Cyclist Fatalities	1	15%	42%	24%	9%

SPECIAL REPORT: Rail Wait in Waterloo

By adwpadmin

May 19, 2018



By adwpadmin

Trains are a common sight and sound in the City of Waterloo. More often than not, a halted train is halting the community, blocking intersections and blocking people from their daily routines. One driver said, "It's frustrating. How the hell are you supposed

to get back and forth to work? You can't." Another said, "All it does is go back and forth and then most of the time it doesn't really accomplish anything." Freddie Lee was born and raised in Waterloo, living here for more than six decades. He says the stopped trains have always been a problem, but now it appears trains are getting longer. Lee said, "They sit up here all day long and nobody does a thing about it."

It also affects local businesses. There's only one way to get in and out of Huff Construction off Broadway Street. Joe Huff says at least once a week, an employee gets stuck because of a train, with no other way around it. Huff said, "We've been stuck on the other side of the tracks waiting to come back for our truck until 5:30-6 p.m. when we normally get off at 3:30 in the afternoon."

Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart says he's experienced the issue first-hand. Hart said, "We've been getting a ton of calls right now, trying to figure out what's going on with the trains and why they are taking so long."

To put the timing to the test, we watched and waited on a Wednesday afternoon. One train was stopped for more than 10 minutes, but we're told, some days it can be triple even quadruple that amount of time.

According to city ordinance, the trains are not supposed to block an intersection for more than 10 minutes with 4 exceptions:

1. When complying with signals affecting the safety of the movement of trains.
2. To avoid striking an object, or person on the track.
3. When the train is disabled
4. To comply with government safety regulations.

Waterloo City Councilman Steve Schmitt admits the 10-minute ordinance is not enforced by the city.

Schmitt said, "The federal ordinance oversees city ordinance, and the federal ordinance is that the train has to do this air test for the brakes before they can pull out of the yard, and depending on the length of the train, someone has to walk the track and make sure they are working." He continued, "The city has a 10 minute ordinance, but I don't think in reality it's enforceable because it's not realistic given today's railroads."

For first responders, waiting is not an option.

Battalion Chief Mike Moore said, "The trains have been here since the 1800's, and on the fire department as a first responder, if there's a train on the track, there's a way around it...you just gotta know how to get around it."

Mayor Hart said, "We are a railroad city, but we are also a people city and we want to make sure this is a good marriage between us."

The city says it's trying to work on the problem, especially since construction projects are only adding to it. In fact, with safety as the number one priority, the DOT recently added live cameras on the tracks at 4th for first responders to access.

Moore said, "Dispatch has those cameras on their computers, we have it here at the fire house and a few guys have it on their phones. This way, they know as they are headed toward Allen Hospital, or even if it's a fire engine going that way, either there's a train there or it's not and we can take an alternative route."

Waterloo Fire Rescue's Chief Medical Officer Jason Hernandez says the cameras have already made a big difference, they no longer have to waste time checking for a train.

Hernandez said, "We'd look over to see if there's a train and then we would have to turn and go to Dane St. and then go under, but that will be closed for two years with construction now, so we really had problems."

Mayor Hart added, "We are just asking that we can work together, be better partners with the railroad because we absolutely need them."

We're told the city hasn't issued a ticket to Canadian National because the city code is virtually unenforceable.

Mayor Hart and other city officials want to remind people, as frustrating as those wait times are, Waterloo wouldn't be the city it is without the railroads.

In fact, two Iowa women who lost limbs when they were struck while trying to climb through trains that were blocking the road sued the railroad for allegedly ignoring a safety hazard that's left a trail of horrific injuries. Read more

here: <http://www.kwwl.com/story/38220212/2018/05/Thursday/amputees-sue-railroad-in-iowa-saying-it-creates-danger>

Amputees sue railroad in Iowa, saying it creates danger

Ryan J. Foley

Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Ia. — Two Iowa women who lost limbs when they were struck while trying to climb through trains that were blocking the road sued the railroad Thursday for allegedly ignoring a safety hazard that's left a trail of horrific injuries.

The lawsuits filed in state court allege that trains operated by the Canadian National Railway and its subsidiaries routinely block street crossings in Waterloo, sometimes for hours. They say this leaves pedestrians trapped and facing bad options on a daily basis: wait for the trains to move, walk to an unblocked crossing that can be more than a mile away, or risk crossing between stopped cars that can start moving without warning.

"This problem exists in cities throughout the United States, but Waterloo is the poster child," said attorney Bob Pottroff, whose Kansas-based law firm is representing the women and known for advocating on behalf of train accident victims nationwide. "We consider this a matter of great public safety concern."

He said the lawsuits allege that Canadian National essentially uses part of Waterloo as its switching station, a facility that is usually located outside of population centers and includes fencing and other security measures.

The lawsuits claim that since 1991, at least five people have lost hands, arms or legs while trying to climb through a stopped freight train that started moving unexpectedly.

One was filed on behalf of a 37-year-old woman who lost her left leg and nearly all of the skin on the back side of her body when she was struck and dragged by a train in April 2017. The other was filed on behalf of a 67-year-old woman who lost both of her legs when a train rolled over them last September.

A third lawsuit is pending in Chicago in the case of a former Waterloo resident who lost three limbs in a similar collision in 2011.

Each happened on streets near the rail yard in the poor, heavily African-American east side of Waterloo, a city of 68,000 in northeastern Iowa.

Residents say the company's mile-long trains stretch far beyond the yard and can block several crossings, sometimes for hours multiple times per day, while they undergo maintenance and safety checks and load and unload cars. Those routinely affected include students at East High School.

Iowa law and a Waterloo ordinance state that trains cannot block crossings for longer than 10 minutes with some exceptions, for instance if the stop is needed to comply with safety regulations. The company's operating rules also state that they shouldn't block crossings for longer than that unless it can't be avoided.

Canadian National spokesman Patrick Waldron shifted the focus to the actions of the injured women, saying that trespassing on railways tracks and property "is illegal and very dangerous."

"These events are tragic examples of the dangers of climbing on trains or railway cars," he said. "There are no circumstances where climbing on a train - moving or stopped - is worth the risk of serious or fatal injury."

The railroad has previously said it's aware of concerns about blockages in Waterloo but that "operational necessities" cause them. They have long been a source of frustration for residents.

In their lawsuits, the women say they waited an unspecified "reasonable amount of time" before they tried to climb through long-stopped trains, which didn't sound any audible warnings before starting to move. They argue that the railroad has taken no other steps to protect the public at the site, such as building a footbridge over the rails or separating the trains at crossings when they are stopped. They're seeking unspecified damages for their pain and

suffering as well as punitive damages against the railroad, saying it acted with an "intentional disregard for public safety."

The lawsuits were welcome news to Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart, who said his complaints to the railroad and U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley's office about the blockages have gone nowhere.

"Hopefully there can be some resolution that can come from this to help people," said Hart, who grew up in the neighborhood.



WATERLOO POLICE
D E P A R T M E N T

[Train accident update](#)

On Monday, September 5, 2011 at approximately 2:30 PM, Waterloo Police and Waterloo Fire Rescue were sent to the railroad tracks at Conger Street and Reed Street on a report of a person being injured while trying to crossover a train.

The injured person was identified as Shvette NMN Grubbs, age 46, of 218 Conger Street, Waterloo, IA. She was transported to Allen Hospital and later airlifted to Mayo Clinics in Rochester, MN where she is being treated for her injuries.

According to witnesses, the train was stopped when Grubbs started to climb aboard. The train then started to move and Grubbs fell under the train.

Captain Tim Pillack
Waterloo Police Investigations
319-291-4336

[RSS Press Release Feeds](#)



Railroad spokesman says crossing accidents increase with colder weather

by [Radio Iowa Contributor](#) | Sep 25, 2023 | [Fires/Accidents/Disasters](#), [News](#), [Weather](#)



OPERATION LIFESAVER®

Look, Listen & Live

Iowans are being reminded about the dangers of railroads and railroad crossings. Jeffery White, a spokesman for the Canadian National Railway, says the weather will be turning colder soon and that brings an increased risk for motorists.

"For example, when the first snowfall hits, we get the first type of icy condition on the roads, we see drivers that just are driving too fast," White says. "They may approach a railroad crossing, the road surface may be slick when they approach and next thing you know, they're sliding into a train, which is actually something that does happen a lot."

White says pedestrians can put themselves in grave danger whenever they trespass on railroad tracks. "A trespassing incident is where a person is walking down a set of tracks in a spot that they're not supposed to be at," White says. "Walking down the tracks is never safe. It's not only not safe, but it's dangerous and illegal, and depending where you're at, it's either a ticketable fine or you can actually go to jail."

While railroad tracks might provide a tempting setting for senior photos or a family portrait, White says that's another very risky move. "A person will be out there taking photos or a selfie on the track and what they're doing, they're not paying attention to their surroundings, and they're not paying attention, nor are they seeing or hearing the train that's approaching," White says. "That can create a catastrophic situation for that

person on the track. You can never take a photo on the tracks. If you're caught, it could be a pretty hefty fine."

White says the number of train/motor vehicle collisions peaked in 1972 at around 12,000 incidents a year across the U.S.. It's down now to about 2,200 incidents a year, though they'd like to see the number reach zero.

Learn more from Operation Lifesaver at <https://oli.org/>

(By Pat Powers, KQWC, Webster City)

Waterloo woman seriously injured when struck by train

- **TIM JAMISON**
- Jul 15, 2019 Updated Aug 22, 2019

WATERLOO — A Waterloo woman suffered traumatic injuries after being struck by a train early Sunday.

Gabriella Huston, of 509 Carolina Ave., was hit while crossing the Canadian National Railway tracks across East Fourth Street near Dane Street shortly before 2 a.m., according to a police report.

Huston, no age available, was transported by Waterloo Fire Rescue to UnityPoint-Allen Hospital for treatment.

Fire Rescue officials said they were unable to discuss the nature of any injuries, including reports that the victim lost limbs in the accident.

No further information about the incident was available Sunday.

The railroad crossing in question has been the site of numerous injuries over the years, primarily caused when people attempted to climb through trains which were blocking the roadway.

Woman hurt while trying to board train in Waterloo

Associated Press

Sep. 6, 2011 7:51 am



A Waterloo woman was seriously hurt in a train accident Monday afternoon. (image taken from KCRG-TV9 video)

Authorities say a woman was seriously injured while trying to board a train in Waterloo Monday afternoon.

Officers who were sent to the scene, near the intersection of Conger and Reed streets, around 2:30 p.m. Monday found Shvette Grubbs, 46, of Waterloo, alongside the tracks. The train had severed one of Grubbs' legs, but she was talking to paramedics as she was loaded onto a stretcher.

According to authorities, the train was stopped when Grubbs started to climb aboard. The train then began moving, and Grubbs fell underneath.

Grubbs was taken to Allen Memorial Hospital, then airlifted to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. for further treatment.
The incident is being investigated.

U.S. amputees sue CN Rail, saying it creates danger

Ryan J. FoleyThe Associated Press
Published Thursday, May 17, 2018 4:07PM EDT



Canadian National locomotives are seen Monday, February 23, 2015 in Montreal. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Ryan Remiorz)

IOWA CITY, Iowa -- Two Iowa women who lost limbs when they were struck while trying to climb through trains that were blocking the road sued the railroad Thursday for allegedly ignoring a safety hazard that's left a trail of horrific injuries. The lawsuits filed in state court allege that trains operated by the Canadian National Railway and its subsidiaries routinely block street crossings in Waterloo, sometimes for hours. They say this leaves pedestrians

trapped and facing bad options on a daily basis: wait for the trains to move, walk to an unblocked crossing that can be more than a mile away, or risk crossing between stopped cars that can start moving without warning.

"This problem exists in cities throughout the United States, but Waterloo is the poster child," said attorney Bob Pottroff, whose Kansas-based law firm is representing the women and known for advocating on behalf of train accident victims nationwide. "We consider this a matter of great public safety concern."

He said the lawsuits allege that Canadian National essentially uses part of Waterloo as its switching station, a facility that is usually located outside of population centres and includes fencing and other security measures.

The lawsuits claim that since 1991, at least five people have lost hands, arms or legs while trying to climb through a stopped freight train that started moving unexpectedly.

One was filed on behalf of a 37-year-old woman who lost her left leg and nearly all of the skin on the back side of her body when she was struck and dragged by a train in April 2017. The other was filed on behalf of a 67-year-old woman who lost both of her legs when a train rolled over them last September. A third lawsuit is pending in Chicago in the case of a former Waterloo resident who lost three limbs in a similar collision in 2011.

Each happened on streets near the rail yard in the poor, heavily African-American east side of Waterloo, a city of 68,000 in northeastern Iowa. Residents say the company's mile-long trains stretch far beyond the yard and can block several crossings, sometimes for hours multiple times per day, while they undergo maintenance and safety checks and load and unload cars. Those routinely affected include students at East High School.

Iowa law and a Waterloo ordinance state that trains cannot block crossings for longer than 10 minutes with some exceptions, for instance if the stop is

needed to comply with safety regulations. The company's operating rules also state that they shouldn't block crossings for longer than that unless it can't be avoided.

Canadian National spokesman Patrick Waldron shifted the focus to the actions of the injured women, saying that trespassing on railways tracks and property "is illegal and very dangerous."

"These events are tragic examples of the dangers of climbing on trains or railway cars," he said. "There are no circumstances where climbing on a train -- moving or stopped -- is worth the risk of serious or fatal injury."

The railroad has previously said it's aware of concerns about blockages in Waterloo but that "operational necessities" cause them. They have long been a source of frustration for residents.

In their lawsuits, the women say they waited an unspecified "reasonable amount of time" before they tried to climb through long-stopped trains, which didn't sound any audible warnings before starting to move. They argue that the railroad has taken no other steps to protect the public at the site, such as building a footbridge over the rails or separating the trains at crossings when they are stopped. They're seeking unspecified damages for their pain and suffering as well as punitive damages against the railroad, saying it acted with an "intentional disregard for public safety."

The lawsuits were welcome news to Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart, who said his complaints to the railroad and U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley's office about the blockages have gone nowhere.

"Hopefully there can be some resolution that can come from this to help people," said Hart, who grew up in the neighborhood.

Study looks at moving Waterloo's Canadian National rail yard



The Canadian National Railway yard on East Fourth Street in Waterloo has led to numerous road blockages and pedestrian safety concerns.

COURIER FILE PHOTO

TIM JAMISON

WATERLOO — The city is investigating the possibility of moving a rail yard on East Fourth Street to another location.

Waterloo City Council members voted unanimously Monday to approve a \$22,130 contract with Via Rail Engineering, of Maribel, Wis., to evaluate the Canadian National Railway yard and switching operation.

“We will actually be looking at the potential and what it would take to relocate that rail yard out of that location to a more industrial area,” said Community Planning and Development Director Noel Anderson.

“The railroad is open to looking at this as an evaluation,” he added.

The rail yard, developed around 1870 by the Illinois Central Railroad, has been a source of concern for traffic and pedestrians. Located near East High School and neighborhood homes, there have been frequent issues with students and other pedestrians crawling through stopped trains.

Two Waterloo women have pending lawsuits against the railroad after they lost limbs while trying to climb through trains blocking the road. Many other injuries have been reported over the years.

Switching operations have also caused East Fourth Street to be blocked, sometimes for up to an hour or more, creating detours and delays for motorists.

Mayor Quentin Hart called the rail yard an “age-old problem for people throughout this community.”

“We’ve had so many complaints about the railroad crossings, the railroad blocking,” Hart said. “This is an opportunity to see what it would take to make some changes.”

While it may be considered a problem now, the rail yard was a major economic development coup for Waterloo 150 years ago.

The Illinois Central was planning to move its “roundhouse” repair shop from Dubuque to Black Hawk County in 1870 with Cedar Falls being the desired location, according to historical accounts.

While Cedar Falls officials were apparently bickering over the location and incentives with the railroad, Waterloo inked its own deal with the Illinois Central for the roundhouse.

The complex grew dramatically and became Illinois Central’s division headquarters in 1900.

While the city is paying for the cost of the feasibility study from its tax-increment financing revenue, there has been no public discussion on how any rail yard relocation would be financed if the move could be accomplished.

Canadian National spokesman Jonathan Abecassis said the railroad is always open to discussing important rail issues with municipalities.

“Rail relocation is a complex issue and potentially very expensive,” he said. “Any proposal would need careful study by many stakeholders, including rail customers and landowners.”



Antioch Baptist Church in Waterloo, Iowa, captured in the 1930s, continues to thrive in the present day.



Blocked crossing on East 4th Street



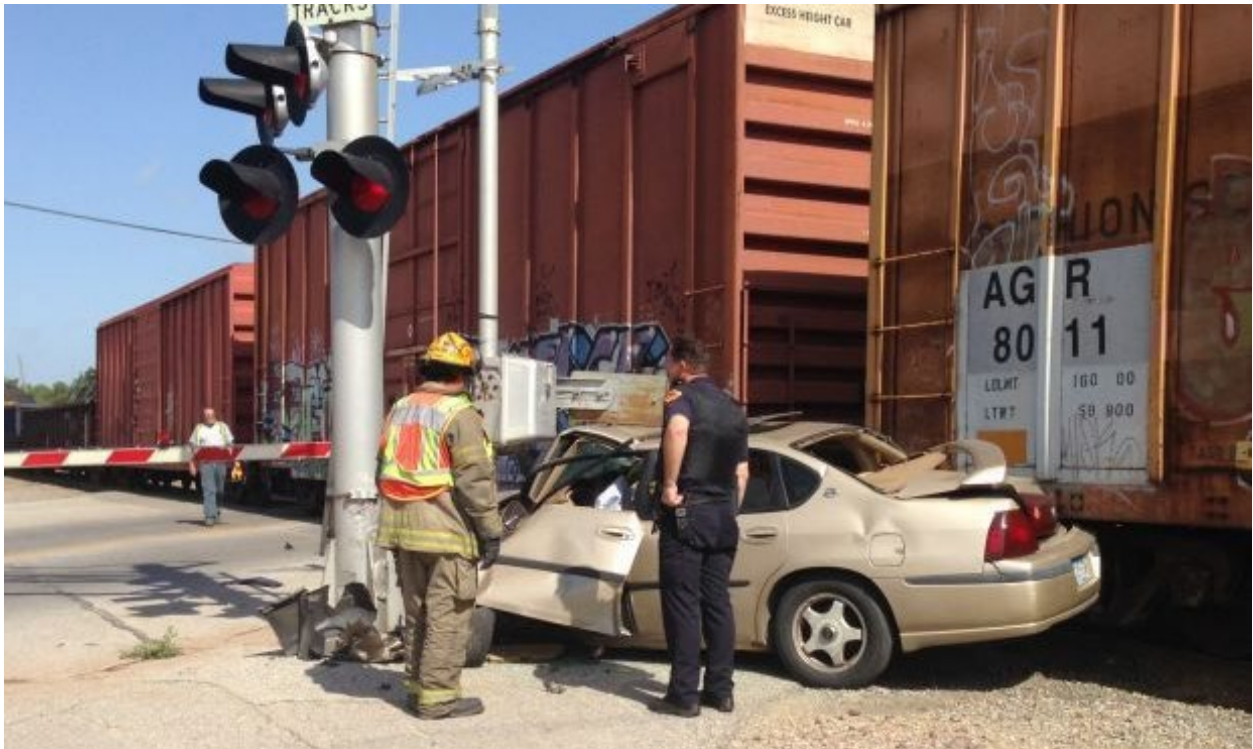


Every day, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers contend with obstructed crossings caused by the CN Rail yard operations.





Daily rail blockages on East 4th Street force students to jeopardize their safety by trespassing on railway property just to reach school.



Train accident involving a car on East 4th Street, 2014





Aerial photos revealing the proximity of the railyard to East High School, along with a typical blocked crossing scene on East 4th Street.







INRCOG

Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of INRCOG and the Black Hawk County MPO, I am writing to you as a means of verifying the intent of the Black Hawk County MPO to include the **Canadian National (CN) Railyard Improvements Planning** in the October adoption of the MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) as an illustrative project. This formal endorsement will then subsequently be forwarded to Iowa DOT for inclusion in the State of Iowa Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). By doing so, the City of Waterloo and Black Hawk County MPO will have solidified their commitment to analyzing and funding the progress of this transformative project.

Further, I urge you to approve the City of Waterloo's application for the 4th, 5th, and 6th Street One-Way to Two-Way Conversion Project. This initiative holds the potential to generate a profound and favorable influence on neighborhood accessibility, equity, and overall quality of life. It promises to transform this region characterized by persistent poverty into a safer, more accessible, and dynamic community, with the added benefits of enhancing public health and fostering greater social cohesion.

Sincerely,

Brian Schoon
Executive Director

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