



MAYOR
Toby Barker

COUNCIL - WARD ONE

Jeffrey George

COUNCIL - WARD TWO

Deborah Denard Delgado

COUNCIL - WARD THREE

Carter Carroll

COUNCIL - WARD FOUR

Dave Ware

COUNCIL - WARD FIVE

Nicholas Brown

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit requests for congressionally directed spending.

Our biggest priority is funding to complete the Hall Avenue West Overpass. We wrote that grant when construction estimates were at \$13 million for project completion. When the project went to bid last fall, bids came in at \$24 million. While the city is capable of covering the entire shortfall, it will significantly hinder our ability to complete other projects. We have also submitted a RAISE grant for the funding gap and plan on submitting a reallocation request to DOT later this summer. However, we are trying to use every means possible to offset some of the Hall Avenue West Overpass funding shortfall. **We are requesting \$3 million in congressionally directed spending to help finish the Hall Avenues West Overpass.**

These three projects will help move our city and entire region forward. I appreciate your consideration and advocacy for our community. Thank you for your service to our district and the nation.

All the best,

Toby Barker
Mayor – City of Hattiesburg



Celebrating 100 Years

State of Mississippi
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER TOM KING
SOUTHERN DISTRICT

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2023

Dear Congressman Ezell,

As Southern District Transportation Commissioner, I write to you today to express my support for the Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation Project and the City of Hattiesburg's \$3 million request for community project funding under the THUD-HIP account. This project, which is also supported through a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for Hattiesburg through the Hall Avenue West Overpass project and related roadway improvements.

The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, visitors and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. Though the project has received grant funding in the past, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of the Hall Avenue West Overpass will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes. The current lack of a reliable route to circumvent a train delay has a severe negative impact on businesses within and around Downtown, dissuading residents and visitors from shopping, eating, and living in the area. A reliable route that is unaffected by train delays would eliminate this issue, resulting in increased utilization of businesses in Downtown Hattiesburg.

This project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. I urge you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

Tom King
Southern District Transportation Commissioner

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

Constitution, Chairman
Finance, Vice-Chairman
Business and Financial Institutions
Drug Policy
Education
Medicaid
Public Health and Welfare
Tourism



Post Office Box 18247
Hattiesburg, MS 39404
chjohnson@senate.ms.gov

Mississippi State Senate

SENATOR CHRIS JOHNSON

**District 45
Forrest and Perry Counties**

March 8, 2023

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

As the District 45 state senator, I write today in support of additional funds for the Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation Project through THUD-HIP community project funding support from the United States Congress. This project, which was awarded funding through a 2019 CRISI grant and a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses and roadway enhancements are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg in the heart of the city. Though the project has received grant funding in the past, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates that were performed as part of the grant applications in 2019 and 2020. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

For generations, railroad tracks – and blocked train crossings – divided the city of Hattiesburg. It became an indicator of more affluent versus less affluent neighborhoods. It dictated which areas could have access to emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance. The city's bold efforts to bridge these divides is worthy of additional financial support from the United States Congress.

In short, this project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. As an advocate for the citizens of my district, I urge you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Johnson".

Chris Johnson
State Senator – District 45

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



MISSY W. MCGEE
District 102
Forrest and Lamar Counties
P O Box 19089
Hattiesburg, MS 39404

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mimcgee@house.ms.gov
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STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

As District 102 state representative, I am writing you today to express my support for the Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation Project and the City of Hattiesburg's request for community project funding under the THUD-HIP account. This project, which is also supported through a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg through the Hall Avenue West Overpass project and related roadway improvements.

The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, first responders and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. Though the project has received grant funding in the past, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of the Hall Avenue West Overpass will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes. The current lack of a reliable route to circumvent a train delay has a severe negative impact on businesses within and around Downtown, dissuading residents and visitors from shopping, eating, and living in the area. A reliable route that is unaffected by train delays would eliminate this issue, resulting in increased utilization of businesses in Downtown Hattiesburg.

This project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. As the legislator representing Central Hattiesburg, I urge you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Missy McGee".

Missy McGee
State Representative – House District 102



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

*Office of the Vice President
for Finance and Administration*

118 College Drive #5005
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
Tel: 601.266.5005
Fax: 601.266.6313
usm.edu

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

I write to you today to express my support for the City of Hattiesburg's request for \$3 million in Congressional community project funding through the THUD-HIP account. This Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation project, which we refer to as the Hall Avenue West Overpass, was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant. This solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses and roadway enhancements are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg in the heart of the city. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, visitors, and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. It will also offer more reliable access to our university for students and a more efficient commute to our faculty and staff.

We have been made aware that the project has received grant funding in the past, however, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed its 2020 cost estimate. While the city has committed millions of dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes.

As a senior officer and member of The University of Southern Mississippi's Leadership Team, I urge you to support this request for funding which will help to create safer and more reliable access to our campus for our students, employees, alumni and friends.

Sincerely,

Allyson Easterwood
Vice President for Finance and Administration



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

I write to you today to express my support for the City of Hattiesburg's request for \$3 million in Congressional community project funding through the THUD-HIP account. This Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation project, which we refer to as the Hall Avenue West Overpass, was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant. This solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses and roadway enhancements are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg in the heart of the city. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, visitors, and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. It will also offer more reliable access to our university for students and a more efficient commute to our faculty and staff.

We have been made aware that the project has received grant funding in the past, however, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed its 2020 cost estimate. While the city has committed millions of dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes.

As President of William Carey University, I urge you to support this request for funding which will help to create safer and more reliable access to our campus for our students, employees, alumni and friends.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Burnett
President – William Carey University

"EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD; ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD."



March 9, 2023

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

I am writing you today to express my support for the City of Hattiesburg's request for \$3 million in Congressional community project funding through the THUD-HIP account. This Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation project, which we refer to as the Hall Avenue West Overpass, was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant. This solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses and roadway enhancements are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg in the heart of the city. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, visitors, and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. It will also offer more reliable access to healthcare not to mention an improved commute for our healthcare employees.

We have been made aware that the project has received grant funding in the past, however, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed its 2020 cost estimate. While the city has committed millions of dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes.

We support this request as this is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. As President and CEO of Forrest General Hospital, I urge you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

R. Andy Woodard, President & CEO
Forrest General Hospital

Tony Ducker
Mayor

Melissa Martin
City Clerk

Rocky Eaton
City Attorney



Aldermen
Drew Brickson
Craig Bullock
Mike Lott
Blake Nobles
Gerald Steele
Craig Stickland
Steve Stringer

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

I write to express the City of Hattiesburg's \$3 million request for community project funding through the THUD-HIP account. This project, which was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses, roadway enhancements, and railyard improvements are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg in the heart of the city. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees, visitors, and commercial traffic more reliable and expedient navigation into and out of the city center. Though the project has received grant funding in the past, the impacts of the pandemic and supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates that were performed as part of the grant applications in 2019 and 2020. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall Avenue and a spur line on the Norfolk Southern rail line will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg, which will greatly benefit the citizens of Petal. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes. The current lack of a reliable route to circumvent a train delay has a severe negative impact on those traveling to and through Downtown.

This project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Petal, Downtown Hattiesburg and our entire region. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. As the elected representatives for the City of Petal, I urge you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Ducker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Tony Ducker and Board of Aldermen
Mayor – City of Petal



March 8, 2023

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell,

I am writing you today to express my support for the Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation Project and the City of Hattiesburg's application for additional funds through Congressional Project Funding under the THUD-HIP account. This project, which was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees and visitors more efficient ways of moving in and out of the city center. Though the project has received grant funding in the past, supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates that were performed as part of the grant applications in 2020. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall Avenue will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes. The current lack of a reliable route to circumvent a train delay has a severe negative impact on businesses within and around Downtown, dissuading residents and visitors from shopping, eating, and living in the area. A reliable route that is unaffected by train delays would eliminate this issue, resulting in increased utilization of businesses in Downtown Hattiesburg.

This project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg and for public safety. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a significant barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. For the future of Downtown Hattiesburg, I ask you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

Andrea Saffle, Executive Director
Downtown Hattiesburg Association

DOWNTOWN HATTIESBURG ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 150 HATTIESBURG, MS 39403 601.583.4329 DOWNTOWNHATTIESBURG.COM



308 Newman Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Honorable Mike Ezell
United States Congressman (MS-4)
443 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ezell:

I am writing you today to express my support for the Hattiesburg Downtown Railroad Innovation Project and the City of Hattiesburg's application for additional funds through Congressional Project Funding under the THUD-HIP account. This project, which was awarded funding through a 2020 BUILD grant, solves a generational problem for the City of Hattiesburg. The construction of rail overpasses are crucial for providing reliable access to Downtown Hattiesburg. The proposed improvements will also offer residents, employees and visitors more efficient ways of moving in and out of the city center.

Though the project has received grant funding in the past, supply chain disruptions have caused the cost of the project to significantly exceed the initial estimates that were performed as part of the grant applications in 2020. While the city has committed millions of additional dollars in local matching funds, gaps still remain in order to see the entire project through to completion.

The construction of railroad overpasses on Hall Avenue will create a reliable new route through Downtown Hattiesburg. Travel delays due to train traffic at the Hattiesburg Train Depot occur often during peak mid-day traffic and can last over 45 minutes. The current lack of a reliable route to circumvent a train delay has a severe negative impact on businesses within and around Downtown, dissuading residents and visitors from shopping, eating, and living in the area. A reliable route that is unaffected by train delays would eliminate this issue, resulting in increased utilization of businesses in Downtown Hattiesburg.

This project is crucial for sustaining the revitalization of Downtown Hattiesburg and for public safety. While there has been significant private investment in recent years, train delays are a continued barrier to the long-term success of the area and its businesses. For the future of Downtown Hattiesburg, I ask you to support this request for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marlo M. Dorsey".

Marlo Dorsey
Executive Director/CEO
mdorsey@visithburg.org