

Staff Report**Subject:** Ratification of the Railway Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Application**Author:** Kathy Candler, Grants Coordinator**Department:** Effingham County Management**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, August 6, 2024**Item Description:** To seek approval from the Effingham County Board of Commissioners to ratify the submission of the Railway Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant application, requesting \$2.5 million in federal funding for the design phase of the grade-separated railway overpass and new east-west road from McCall Road to SR 21, as part of the Southeast Railway Network (SERN) Project.**Summary Recommendation:**

Staff requests the Board's approval to ratify the submission of the Railway Crossing Elimination (RCE) grant for SERN Project 1C, which requests \$2.5 million in federal funding.

Executive Summary:

This staff report seeks approval from the Effingham County Board of Commissioners to ratify the application to the Department of Transportation's Railway Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program. The application requests \$2.5 million in federal funds for the engineering and design phase of Project 1C, which includes constructing a new east-west road and an overpass over the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The project is a critical element of the Southeast Railway Network (SERN) Plan, aimed at improving traffic flow, enhancing safety, and supporting regional economic growth.

Background:

Project 1C of the Southeast Railway Network (SERN) Plan will address the need for a new, grade-separated crossing over the Norfolk Southern Railway, enhancing traffic safety and providing a new, efficient connection between McCall Road and SR 21.

The project includes the construction of a two-mile east-west road that will run parallel to existing power line easements, providing a vital connection to the county's major industrial and residential areas. A new traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of SR 21 and the new road, improving access and reducing congestion.

The project's total cost is estimated at \$27.5 million, with \$2.5 million requested from the RCE Program for the design phase. Effingham County is committed to providing a 20% local match of \$500,000.

Alternatives for the Commission to Consider:

1. Approve the ratification of the Railway Crossing Elimination grant application submission.
2. Do not approve the ratification.
3. Provide staff with direction.

Recommended Alternative:

Staff recommends Alternative number 1

Other Alternatives:

N/A

Department Review: (list departments)

Effingham County Management

Financial Impact:

The total cost of Project 1C is estimated at \$27.5 million. The breakdown of the project funding is as follows:

- **Federal Funding Requested:** \$2.5 million (for the design phase)
- **Local Match:** \$500,000 (20% of the design phase)
- **Total Design Phase Cost:** \$3.0 million
- **Overall Project Cost:** \$27.5 million (including right-of-way acquisition and construction)