



P.O. Box 222
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**Connecting the Canyon for
Business and Community Growth**

October 11, 2017

Re: TIGER Grant for Mill City Infrastructure Improvement

To the Grant Advisory Council,

The North Santiam Chamber of Commerce thanks you for your consideration of this project. Mill City is the center of our Canyon communities and has been part of a pivotal transformation over the last few years from a historic logging economy to a tourism based economy. This transformation has been significantly helped by the many community volunteers and we ask you for your support to continue these efforts.

While the Chamber typically focuses on economic activity, we would like to mention first that one of our biggest challenges in the downtown corridor is pedestrian safety. We have recently seen several traffic incidents where pedestrians were harmed due to lack of lighting and crosswalks. One of those was a ten year old girl heading to a school book fair. She really loves books!! But when she crossed the street to get to the evening fair, she was hit by a vehicle and has since had several surgeries to help heal her shattered leg. She was crossing at a commonly used pedestrian intersection and we feel that this could have been avoided if the crossing was marked better and had better lighting. This particular area is an ODOT highway and drivers tend to use it that way despite a reduced speed limit. It is also a vital pedestrian crossing point for people heading to the school campus, or seeking library, grocery, medical and church services. Economic activity in the downtown area can only continue successfully if people feel safe. Your help in approving this grant could prevent another incident like this one.

We also have several community members who are highly involved who use wheelchairs. Neither of those people are able to enjoy the railroad bridge pathway. One of them said, "The 'walking path' that follows the old tracks is not passable for my chair. The tree roots have compromised the asphalt so that it is uneven and not safe." ADA accessibility is very important to our downtown area because many of our tourism related activities in the area are not ADA accessible; most involve steep and narrow forest paths. This project would enhance the lives of both local residents and visiting tourists who require ADA accessibility.

Our downtown area was once a thriving commercial zone and was devastated by the economic challenges of the recent past. Your help would significantly improve the area in both looks and atmosphere. Mill City has been blessed with several new businesses on our nearby Highway 22 corridor and this grant would help the downtown area match that growth. We have many established businesses in the area that would benefit tremendously from a sidewalk and lighting improvement. We also have many vacant buildings and this improvement project could be the inspiration for more entrepreneurship in the area.

Additionally, this project would establish a larger community pride which has been shown to further increase participation from local families, rolling the ball for continued improvement. We hope that you consider our community as you decide on your funding projects. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle Gates
Chamber Liaison
North Santiam Chamber of Commerce