



CITY OF CARMEL

JAMES BRAINARD, MAYOR

March 28, 2017

The Honorable Eric Holcomb
Governor of Indiana

Mr. Cameron Clark, Director
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Ms. Elaine Bedel
President, Indiana Economic Development Corporation

Re: A regional project worthy of support – the Mounds Greenway

Governor Holcomb, Mr. Clark and Ms. Bedel:

It has been my great pleasure to serve as the Mayor of Carmel for six terms. During that time, I have seen our city grow in population from 25,000 to almost 90,000, taking the top spot on Money Magazine's "Best Places to live in America" list along the way. Such substantial growth presents both challenges and opportunities to any community, and I am immensely proud of how we have risen to the challenges, one of them being the maintenance of a high quality of life for our residents amidst such dramatic population growth. Key to maintaining a high standard of living for our residents has been investing in our parks, greenspaces, and trails – it is no coincidence that these places in our community have grown from 40 acres to more than 800 acres during my time as Mayor.

As Mayor, I cannot overstate the role art and cultural attractions, a healthy and clean environment, and ample places for outdoor activities, gatherings with friends and family, and for quiet reflection play in building a vibrant, thriving city. Projects such as Carmel's Central Park, City Center, the Arts and Design District, the Center for the Performing Arts, and our efforts to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity within our community have been critical in building our reputation as a top quality place to live and do business. However, there is one project that deserves special recognition for its contribution to Carmel's successes – the Monon Greenway. The Monon Greenway has been the cornerstone of our efforts to breathe new life into previously neglected parts of our community. Without the Monon, places like our Arts and Design District and City Center would be greatly diminished. It is the thread that weaves our city together, connecting and enhancing our great places while providing opportunities to experience much of what our wonderful city has to offer by bike or foot. As such, the Monon – and the redevelopment that has sprung up around it – along with our arts and cultural attractions, parks, and unique dining establishments serve as both enormous points of pride for my administration and as valuable quality of life amenities that will continue to attract baby boomers, families and young professionals alike to live – and invest – in our city.

March 28, 2017
Page Two

As Mayor, I have long recognized the value in building a strong sense of place in our community. Carmel's tremendous success over the past two decades is undoubtedly due, in large part, to our efforts to do just that. Unfortunately, Carmel's position today is not one shared by many communities throughout our great state, with many Indiana communities losing population to parts of our country perceived as providing a better quality of life. It is with this backdrop that the Regional Cities Initiative was first proposed in 2015. I commend the state's effort to incentivize regional thinking, and I offer my own desire for regionalism and quality of life to play a central role in our state's economic development narrative.

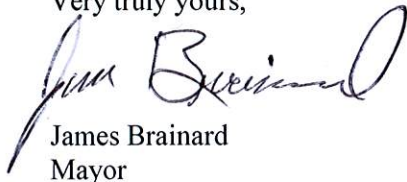
That is why I write you today to urge your support of an excellent project that will further build our quality of place while connecting us to our neighboring communities in central and east central Indiana. That project is the Mounds Greenway, a linear park and trail network following the White River from Muncie to Anderson and ultimately Indianapolis. Carmel has long been a leader in environmental initiatives, and I am thrilled that the Mounds Greenway would conserve the free-flowing White River, its forested floodplain, and the historic resources along its path, meanwhile connecting communities and contributing to economic well-being on a regional scale. What's more, completing this "missing link" between Anderson and Muncie sets the stage for a regional trail network of remarkable dimension.

Consider the possibilities: from Anderson to the south, the greenway would eventually continue through Hamilton County, connecting the trail networks of Noblesville, Westfield, Carmel and Fishers, ultimately reaching the White River Greenway in Indianapolis. With its connection to the Cardinal Greenway via Muncie's White River Greenway, the Mounds Greenway connects Anderson and communities downstream to Upland and Taylor University; and also via the Cardinal Greenway to New Castle and Henry County trails, and to Richmond.

The Mounds Greenway *Economic, Health and Environmental Benefits Analysis* forecasts that the Greenway between Anderson and Muncie would produce \$13 million in annual economic, health and environmental benefits, boost neighboring property values by nearly \$33 million, and lead to over \$10 million in construction spending. These forecasted benefits are in line with the actual economic outcomes being produced by existing greenway projects throughout the U.S, and given the ultimate goal of a fully connected Muncie to Indianapolis White River Greenway, the potential future impact would be far greater.

Recognizing its potential as a regional outdoor recreation, economic, and quality of life project of substantial scope, for Carmel, and for the central and east central Indiana regions, I am declaring my support for the Mounds Greenway and urge you to join in making this proposal a reality. Thank you.

Very truly yours,



James Brainard
Mayor