



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR CITY OF COVINGTON

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February 27, 2024

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

RE: Covington Central Riverfront Development – RAISE Grant Letter of Introduction

Secretary Buttigieg:

Please accept the City of Covington's application to the 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. We are requesting \$25 million to leverage more than \$25 million in local, non-federal funds to construct Phase II public infrastructure to create a Covington Central Riverfront mixed-use, multi-modal Hub on a 23-acres of prime Ohio Riverfront near major highway bridges (including the Brent Spence Bridge), metropolitan business districts, airports and tourism draws.

This site housed an Internal Revenue Service data-processing facility for over 50 years. To attract the facility in the 1960s the City purchased 161 parcels, demolished all structures on those properties, and sold the vacant site to the federal government for \$1. At its peak, the facility employed almost 4,500 workers and was Covington's largest employer. When the IRS shuttered the complex in 2019, Covington lost 1,800 jobs and more than \$1.5 million a year in tax revenue. Qualifying as an area of persistent poverty and a historically disadvantaged community, the neighborhoods surrounding the abandoned IRS Site needs to be reconnected to the regional transportation fabric, as well as the many opportunities this new mixed-use development will provide.

In 2020, the City bought the site for \$20.5 million and worked with an architecture and design firm to engage the community to determine the best uses of the riverfront property and create a conceptual master plan.

The land use plan: [https://www.covingtonky.gov/Portals/covingtonky/8115\\_00-CCR---Option-5-Development-Summary\\_Media-Kit---White-Bar.jpg](https://www.covingtonky.gov/Portals/covingtonky/8115_00-CCR---Option-5-Development-Summary_Media-Kit---White-Bar.jpg)

The US EDA provided a \$1.7 million planning grant for the engineering and design work.

A virtual “fly-through” video that takes the viewer “into” the developed site and can be experienced here: <https://youtu.be/8tUmxT3uMFo>.

While the visuals are inspiring, it will take patience and money to see it come to fruition. We are 100% committed to this path. The City has already invested \$24 million in the project, including purchase price, environmental and geotechnical work, demolishing the former IRS building and parking lots, abatement of hazards, and design and engineering.

We are breaking ground on Phase I of the public infrastructure in April 2024, building separated sewer mains, new public electric, gas and water lines, public greenspace, and complete streets on the southern half of the site, beginning to reconnect our neighborhoods by providing the infrastructure for infill mixed-use development. The project budget is \$15 million with State and City 50/50 match funding.

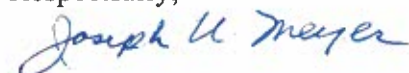
Phase II, for which we are requesting \$25 million in RAISE Grant support, will include construction of a 649 vehicle-capacity multi-modal transportation hub which is budgeted at \$36 million, as well as platformed public greenspace, and infrastructure to support an active, mixed-use community: for a total public investment of \$50 million. The Covington Motor Vehicle Parking Authority will gap finance and manage the parking function.

Connecting to surrounding neighborhoods, business districts, and the Ohio River, the Covington Central Riverfront Hub project will feature a walkable mix of residential, retail, office, recreational and public spaces that will encourage public-private development implemented in multiple phases.

The project will improve transportation safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and connectivity, and economic opportunity in the Covington urban core and surrounding region. Investment from the U.S. Department of Transportation will help make this opportunity a reality for the entire Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Area; in fact, the site has been called one of “the most exciting land redevelopment opportunities between Baltimore and New Orleans” because of its riverfront location and proximity to downtown Cincinnati and the region’s thriving CVG international airport.

The City of Covington looks forward to working with the U.S. Department of Transportation on this impactful project. For any further information, please contact Elizabeth Wetzel, Director of Special Projects & Intergovernmental Affairs, at [elizabeth.wetzel@covingtonky.gov](mailto:elizabeth.wetzel@covingtonky.gov).

Respectfully,



Joseph U. Meyer