

CITY OF WHEELING



CITY-COUNTY BUILDING
1500 CHAPLINE STREET
WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA 26003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHEELING OFFICIALS MEET WITH KEY STATE & FEDERAL LEADERS ON FUNDING “WHEELING RENEWAL” DOWNTOWN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT *Seeking U.S. Department of Transportation BUILD Grant to Launch Construction*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Wheeling Mayor Glenn Elliott and City Manager Robert Herron were glad to join with key state and federal leaders on Wednesday, Oct. 16 in Washington D.C. about completing the funding package for the “Wheeling RENEWAL” project to upgrade downtown streets for safety, walkability, beautification and the attraction of investment.

Herron said he is very pleased that Congressman David McKinley, Senator Shelley Moore Capito, Senator Joe Manchin, West Virginia Governor Jim Justice and West Virginia Secretary of Transportation Byrd White have all conveyed their strong support for funding and implementing the RENEWAL street improvement project.

“The proposed project was well received in meetings with senior White House and U.S. Department of Transportation officials. We are eager to learn if the city’s application for \$15.3 million in U.S. DOT “BUILD grant” funds was selected by the expected mid-November 2019 announcement,” he said.

Five years ago, the City of Wheeling joined with the West Virginia Department of Transportation, the Belomar Regional Council and others to launch a project to improve the streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, ADA accessibility, utility and stormwater management infrastructure, traffic signalization and streetscape aesthetics of key street segments. The project area encompasses Wheeling’s Main Street, Market Street, Chapline Street, and Eoff Streets and their cross streets in the area between Interstate 70 at the north of downtown to 16th Street and Wheeling Creek on the south of downtown.

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Elliott explained this area is designated a federal “Opportunity Zone”, where major tax incentives are available for investments in real estate improvement and business enterprises. “Led by WV DOT, the project is now nearly fully designed and engineered, and ready to construct. When completed, this ‘REvitalized NETwork for Walking, Accessibility & Livability’ (Wheeling “RENEWAL”) will enhance safety and accessibility, beautify the downtown, upgrade critical downtown utility systems and help attract new business and downtown housing investments,” he said.

The project will cost nearly \$28 million, and already Wheeling has leveraged \$5.5 million in local government commitment, \$6.7 million in WV DOT resources, and nearly \$400,000 from the Oglebay Foundation for construction. Wheeling and the State of West Virginia now seek to fill the funding gap of \$15.3 million through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant called the “BUILD Grant”. Wheeling applied on July 15, 2019 for this funding, and decisions are expected from the federal government by Nov. 12, 2019. These grants are highly competitive and difficult to secure, but Wheeling is confident that the RENWEAL project is strong and competitive.

Elliott said Wheeling is particularly glad to have unified state leadership behind the federal funding application for the Wheeling RENEWAL project.

In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, West Virginia Secretary of Transportation Byrd White conveyed that WV DOT was pleased to announce the state’s support as a co-applicant with the City of Wheeling in the BUILD grant and pledged to manage the implementation of the project when it is funded and launched. On Oct. 16, Senator Capito, Senator Manchin and Congressman McKinley each reported that their offices stand behind the Wheeling project and funding application, and are conveying this to the federal government, echoing letters of support they have provided to U.S. DOT Secretary Elaine Chao in support of Wheeling RENEWAL.

Elliott and Herron also presented the RENEWAL project and discussed its importance with the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and the U.S. DOT Office of the Secretary during their trip to Washington.

Elliott said, “This downtown street improvement project will be a game-changer for the future success of downtown Wheeling, and I am glad to have the support of my state and federal representatives for this renewal.”

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