Dear Corridor MPO Member (Name):

My name is (insert name) and I am a resident of (insert city of residence, work, leisure, etc). (Explain how or why you use the trails. Make a personal statement about why this decision would benefit you).

I understand the role of the Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization is tasked with reviewing and approving transportation investments in Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Marion, Hiawatha, Robins, Ely and Fairfax. I also understand that the major activities of the MPO have been the preparation of plans to guide growth and development – specifically related to the Transportation Improvement Program, Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Enhancements Program.

I’m writing to express my interest and support in the MPO guiding the growth and development of a comprehensive trail/alternative transportation plan for the region using 100% Surface Transportation Programming (STP) funds. There are some key reasons why it is so important for the MPO to consider this strategy for Linn County residents right now.

With a budget of $3 million in STP, there is not a significant opportunity to see impactful projects from start to finish – unless looking at alternative transportation options such as trails. The report “Active Transportation: Cost-Effective Mobility Improvements—for Everyone” by Rails to Trails Conservancy explains that walking and bicycling transportation projects make the most of every tax dollar spent. “With fewer federal dollars available, these projects can be completed at a low cost, are highly popular and significantly improve mobility (RailstoTrails.org).”

 In addition to being tax effective, trails align well with Iowa’s Healthiest State Initiative. Iowa has set a goal to be the healthiest state in the nation. To do this, cities in Iowa are currently organizing plans to create “blue zones” in their communities. “Rather than asking people to increase their will power, the Blue Zones Community model works to improve environments. Little changes to your home, work, school, social, physical, and policy environments can make healthy choices the easy choices so that well-being improves naturally (BlueZonesProjects.com).”

Quality of life is an important aspect to community development. Communities that provide high quality of life standards – including the development of trails have happier, healthier residents. Please consider making a statement about the importance of spending tax dollars wisely and increasing the quality of life in Linn County and growing our local “Blue Zones” by committing 100% of SPT funding to trails and alternative transportation options.

Thank you,

Your name
(Contact info if you choose)