



Dan M. Gibson, Mayor  
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April 12, 2021

Honorable Michael Guest  
United States House of Representatives  
418 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Guest,

We write to request your support for an important safety improvement project on Morgantown Road in Natchez and Adams County. This project has been a major priority for both the County and City for years, but budget constraints at the state and local level have made it difficult to complete.

Morgantown Road is in dire need of safety improvements through reconstruction, widening, and drainage projects. Any significant rain event causes flooding along the roadway making it dangerous for the 4,700 average daily drivers navigating this road through a predominantly minority area. This road services eight (8) churches, Morgantown Road School, and many low-income neighborhoods. The narrow, poorly lit road has experienced an average of approximately one (1) traffic accident per month for the past decade.

Morgantown Road School has approximately 336 students in attendance. All students in the Natchez-Adams School District utilize a free lunch. Each day, 28 buses travel in and out of campus and along the dangerous road, making an average of 15 stops. The lack of turn lanes and adequate shoulders, plus the absence of safety striping and other measures, makes this a hazard for students even in good weather. Add in the flooding that routinely occurs and the situation cannot continue.

The project will consist of widening sections of the road, improving drainage to mitigate flooding hazards, and reconstruction of the approximately 1-mile long road. Adams County has committed \$1 million to match the request of \$2,400,000 from federal government. This amounts to a thirty percent (30%) match by the local government.

We would appreciate your strong consideration of this project and will be happy to provide other information as required. Thank you for the continued support of Adams County and our plans for growth and investment in this part of Southwest Mississippi.

Sincerely,

Dan Gibson, Mayor

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
ADAMS COUNTY**

*Wes Middleton, DIST. 1  
Kevin Wilson, DIST. 2  
Angela G. Hutchins, DIST. 3  
James "Ricky" Gray, DIST. 4  
Warren Gaines, DIST. 5*

*314 State Street  
Natchez, Mississippi 39120  
Phone: (601) 442-2431  
Fax: (601) 304-8088*

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Morgantown Road is in dire need of safety improvements through reconstruction, widening, and drainage projects. Any significant rain event causes flooding along the roadway making it dangerous for the 4,700 average daily drivers navigating this road through a predominantly minority area. This road services eight (8) churches, Morgantown Road School, and many low-income neighborhoods. The narrow, poorly lit road has experienced an average of approximately one (1) traffic accident per month for the past decade.

Morgantown Road School has approximately 336 students in attendance. All students in the Natchez-Adams School District utilize a free lunch. Each day, 28 buses travel in and out of campus and along the dangerous road, making an average of 15 stops. The lack of turn lanes and adequate shoulders, plus the absence of safety striping and other measures, makes this a hazard for students even in good weather. Add in the flooding that routinely occurs and the situation cannot continue.

The project will consist of widening sections of the road, improving drainage to mitigate flooding hazards, and reconstruction of the approximately 1-mile-long road. Adams County has committed \$1 million to match the request of \$2,400,000 from federal government. This amounts to a thirty percent (30%) match by the local government.

We would appreciate your strong consideration of this project and will be happy to provide other information as required. Thank you for the continued support of Adams County and our plans for growth and investment in this part of Southwest Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Angela Hutchins  
President

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Dear Congressman Guest,

We write to request your support for an important safety improvement project on Morgantown Road in Natchez and Adams County. This project has been a major priority for both the County and City for years, but budget constraints at the state and local level have made it difficult to complete.

Morgantown Road is in dire need of safety improvements through reconstruction, widening, and drainage projects. Any significant rain event causes flooding along the roadway making it dangerous for the 4,700 average daily drivers navigating this road through a predominantly minority area. This road services Morgantown Middle School, eight (8) churches, and many low-income neighborhoods. The narrow, poorly lit road has experienced an average of approximately one (1) traffic accident per month for the past 10 years.

Morgantown Middle School has approximately 336 students in attendance (100% of the students are on free and reduced lunch). Each day, 28 buses travel in and out of campus and along the dangerous road, making an average of 15 stops. The lack of turn lanes and adequate shoulders, plus the absence of safety striping and other measures, makes this a hazard for students even in good weather. Add in the flooding that routinely occurs and the situation cannot continue.

## **Funding Commitment**

Adams County has committed \$1,000,000 to match the request of \$2,400,000 from the federal government. This amounts to a thirty percent (30%) match by the local government. Adams County's commitment for this project comes from its State Aid Road Program funding allocation from the State of Mississippi.

The Mississippi State Aid Road Program assists Mississippi's 82 counties in the construction and maintenance of secondary, non-state-owned roads and bridges, as well as administering special projects funded through the Federal Highway Administration. Morgantown Road is on the State



Aid System and as such this project will be administered by the County but overseen by the Mississippi Office of State Aid Road Construction (OSARC).

Adams County is empowered to commit \$1 million of its current allocation of State Aid funds. The County has the authority to make that allocation and does not require further approval or authorization from any other body to do so. The funds are available to be committed as well.

### **Project Description and Status**

The project will consist of widening sections of the road, improving drainage to mitigate flooding hazards, and reconstructing the approximately 4.5-mile road. Adams County will administer the project and funding. The County is accustomed to administering federally funded road construction projects.

The Morgantown Road safety improvements project is truly "shovel ready" and can be constructed within three (3) fiscal years. Project design and engineering have been fully completed according to Mississippi Office of State Aid Road Construction (OSARC) standards and approved by the OSARC. Complete bid documents are prepared for publication as soon as all funding is committed. Due to public procurement law, we expect a Notice to Proceed can be issued approximately six (6) weeks after requests for bids are posted. Project construction duration is estimated to be 24 months.

The County last completed environmental reviews of the project as required by the OSARC in 2009. At that time, the Federal Highway Administration agreed that the project was covered under a Categorical Exclusion. This environmental review also consisted of consultations with state and federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. There were no adverse issues uncovered through this consultation process and the project was subsequently cleared by the OSARC.

### **Closing**

Morgantown Road is in dire need of safety improvements to support the vulnerable populations that live, work, and are educated along that route. This has been a major priority for both Adams County and the City of Natchez for some time. We appreciate your strong consideration of this project and will be happy to provide other information as required.

Thank you for the continued support of Adams County and our plans for growth and investment in this part of Southwest Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Angela Hutchins, President  
Adams County Board of Supervisors