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DOLE PLEDGES TO SEEK FUNDING FOR MANHATTAN

-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) said today that he would attempt to pass legislation early next year to qualify Manhattan for federal funding to aid its downtown redevelopment plan.

As part of its downtown revitalization plan, Manhattan is attempting to construct a Southern Arterial highway to provide easier access to the downtown area. To make way for this highway, the city must locate funds with which to move the Union Pacific rail yards on the east side of town further to the east.

"The Railroad-Highway Crossing Demonstration Projects program, enacted by Congress in 1974, is aimed exactly at this type of problem, and would provide federal monies for relocation of the tracks," said Dole. "However, to be eligible a city must be specifically designated by Congress, and only nineteen cities have been so designated to date. Early next year the Senate is scheduled to reauthorize the highway programs, at which time I will attempt to add a provision providing funding for Manhattan. This is precisely the type of situation for which the program was designed, so it would be a shame to pass up this opportunity," Dole said.

Senator Dole expressed caution and urged Manhattan officials to continue to pursue other sources of funding. "You can't always depend on legislation to move as quickly as you would like, and the Railroad-Highway Crossing program has a number of detractors on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and at the Federal Highway Administration. However, I have received encouraging indications that it may be possible to make Manhattan eligible for this program. I certainly intend to make the effort. The highway legislation could pass the Senate as early as mid-May," said Dole.

Senator Dole has been working with Manhattan officials in their attempt to locate funding for a number of aspects of the downtown redevelopment program.