



February 20, 2024

**RE: 2024 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Planning Grant
submittal for Minot's Accessible, Growth-driving Intermodal Connector (MAGIC)**

Dear Mr. Buttigieg,

I am writing in strong support of Ward County, North Dakota and the City of Minot's joint 2024 RAISE Planning Grant request to implement new highway connections south and west of Minot, North Dakota on US Highways 2, 52, and 83. Ward County, the City of Minot, NDDOT, and all other project partners need federal grant assistance to plan and implement these improvements that will result in improved safety and mobility for the region, enhanced connections to northwest North Dakota's only regional trauma hospital, better access to the economy for agriculture and energy sectors, and reliable movement for Minot Air Force Base's 91st Missile Wing's operations.

The proposed alternatives contained in MAGIC will be an investment in a system that prioritizes all highway users. Southern Minot is unique with three of the state's eight US Highways converging near this project area, and this system is not forecasted to meet the needs of a region that has been steadily growing since 2000. With continued growth, efficient connectivity will be most important so that residents, and tourists, can get to areas where they live and work. Additionally, with the opening of the new Trinity Hospital campus, emergency services will require alternative routes in and around the city to be able to quickly respond to emergencies for those in need. This hospital serves as the region's only Level II Trauma center, supporting 11 rural hospitals, as well as Fort Berthold and Turtle Mountain Reservations.

Prior planning efforts included feedback from industry in Ward County, such as Enbridge and Minot Milling, with strong support. Alternative heavy freight routes will be able to bypass Minot's urban core, along US Highway 2, 52, and 83/Broadway, and these routes can help close a 16-mile gap in east-west freight routes south of Minot. These improved connections mean better access of goods and services to support this critical economy, and lower congestion on the existing US Highway network. Improved freight routes provide separation between trucks and passenger vehicles that will reduce the number of fatalities and serious delays especially during the morning rush hour when traffic is the heaviest.

Lastly, Minot Air Force Base utilizes reliable and well-maintained routes that traverse the region and Minot. The 91st Missile Wing and 5th Bomb Wing will be supported indirectly, and possibly directly, with the completion of new roadway connections. Within the next 10 years, the United States Air Force will be renovating nearby facilities and missile sites. This will require the movement of materials, many of which currently pass through Minot's urban core. The improvements will lower congestion and provide routing alternatives for the operations and maintenance of some of our nation's most critical military assets.



For all the reasons above, I fully support and request your strong consideration of Ward County and Minot's RAISE Planning Grant application. We thank you for this opportunity. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 701-857-4750.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ross
Mayor