

**Natalie Zeleznikar**  
State Representative  
District 03B



# Minnesota House of Representatives

February 29 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to support the RAISE Grant funding application for the Rice Lake Rd (CSAH 4) Corridor Project located in the cities of Duluth and Rice Lake, Minnesota. This is a cooperative project between St. Louis County and the City of Rice Lake to improve the local transportation system which will support new opportunities for development that results in jobs and new housing.

This project will improve Rice Lake Rd, which is a County State Aid Highway (CSAH 4), as well as other intersecting county roads along the project corridor. These roadway improvements include construction of roundabouts, creation of an urban roadway environment, and implementation of robust access management strategies. Additional improvements include construction of a new city street and paved walking and biking trails. Because of the multi-modal emphasis of this project, new jobs and housing that would result would be more accessible to residents thereby improving their quality of life.

Recently incorporated in 2015, the City of Rice Lake's Comprehensive Plan, published in 2020, has identified Rice Lake Rd as the corridor that will support its future commercial and mixed-use development. Rice Lake Rd is a key transportation corridor that serves the Twin Ports Metropolitan area and the east Iron Range. Without completing these critical roadway improvements, traffic operations and safety are expected to continue to deteriorate, and the vision of new development would therefore likely not be fully realized.

This project will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a gateway or "downtown" for the new City of Rice Lake that supports jobs, new places of residence and a good quality of life, all in one place. I am committed to supporting St. Louis County as they develop this project which will improve the mobility and safety of transportation in the Rice Lake and Duluth communities.

Thank you for your interest and support to improve Minnesota's transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Zeleznikar".

Natalie Zeleznikar  
District 3B

