



Essentia Health

January 30, 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 leverage transportation improvements for the development of jobs and residential opportunities.

This project will improve Rice Lake Rd, which is a County State Aid Highway, as well as other intersecting county roads along the project corridor. These roadway improvements include construction of roundabouts 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, any new development and the associated jobs would become more accessible to residents.

Recently incorporated in 2015, the City of Rice Lake has identified Rice Lake Rd as the corridor that will support its future commercial and mixed-use development in its Comprehensive Plan published in 2020. Rice Lake Rd is a key transportation corridor that serves the Twin Ports Metropolitan area. Without completing these roadway improvements, the vision of new development could not be supported by the existing roadway infrastructure and would therefore likely not be fully realized.

This project will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to develop a new community 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 community.

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

Sincerely,

Bradley Beard
Chief Operating Officer
Essentia Health