



**RAPID CITY AREA
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

*300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-394-4120*

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, DC 20590

Re: City of Rapid City Downtown Railroad Crossing Safety Improvements RAISE Grant Program Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

At its February 15, 2024 meeting, the Executive Policy Committee of the Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization approved a motion to support the City of Rapid City's RAISE Program Grant Application to complete a planning study for downtown railroad crossing safety improvements.

Rapid City features a vibrant, growing downtown, with arts, entertainment, shopping, and residential components. The area between the downtown core and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology is currently redeveloping into an expansion of the downtown, as well as a technology innovation district. To the north of downtown, the recently expanded Monument civic center features arena and theater space, with many events attracting residents and visitors to the area.

The Rapid City, Pierre and Eastern Railroad main line bisects the downtown area, forming a barrier to multi-modal traffic moving between the activity centers. As the population of Rapid City continues to expand, along with increasing tourism, more demand is placed on the existing transportation system.

The railroad crossings throughout the downtown area consist only of flashing train crossing signals and lack many safety features, including crossing gates and pedestrian barriers. In order to maintain crossing safety for all modes of transportation, Rapid City has applied for a RAISE Grant to perform a downtown railroad crossing safety study to analyze the crossings, recommend infrastructure improvements including Americans with

Disabilities Act compliant pedestrian projects, and provide a cost estimate for implementation.

The Executive Policy Committee, with a recommendation from the Technical Coordinating Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee, encouraged support of this application. This support is driven by the goal of continuing to expand opportunities for MPO member agencies the chance to provide a safe transportation system within the Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Area.

Sincerely,

Mayor Larry Larson, Chairperson
Executive Policy Committee