



**RAPID CITY AREA
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

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

October 17, 2024
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing regarding the application submitted by the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program. The SDDOT will use this grant funding for the Interstate 90 Exit 46 Bridge Reconstruction Project. The project includes reconstructing the Exit 46 (Elk Creek Road) bridge to include multimodal facilities for those walking and biking, grade-separating Elk Creek Road from a railroad, as well as regrading and resurfacing both directions of I-90 from east of Exit 44 to west of Exit 48. The current interchange at Elk Creek Road is a considerable barrier for the rural communities of Piedmont and Summerset, South Dakota. The interchange restricts access between residents, who primarily live on the east side of I-90, and their daily destinations such as schools, markets, the library, employment opportunities, and recreational opportunities in the Black Hills National Forest, all of which are located on the west side of I-90. The current bridge overpass is narrow and restricts mobility as it does not include shoulders or sidewalks for those who need and/or desire to walk or bike; the only way to cross the interstate is by vehicle.

This grant will provide needed funding to ensure the interchange and railroad crossing no longer present barriers to community access and mobility. The cities of Piedmont and Summerset, and the greater Meade County community's quality of life will be improved as a result of this project.

In addition to enhancing the community's access and mobility, the new structure will address and correct existing unsafe conditions and accommodate future expansion of I-90. For example, the closely spaced intersections at the ramp terminals and railroad cause conflict and safety concerns, and difficult turning movements for large vehicles.

I strongly urge you to give full and careful consideration to SDDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program application.

Sincerely,

Mayor Larry Larson
Chair, Rapid City Area MPO Executive Policy Committee