

GWEN MOORE
4TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
WORK AND WELFARE
OVERSIGHT
TAX

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2252 RAYBURN OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4572

DISTRICT OFFICE:
250 E. WISCONSIN AVE.,
SUITE 950
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202
(414) 297-1140
FAX: (414) 297-1086

January 29, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear The Honorable Buttigieg,

I am writing in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program to support the National Avenue Complete Street Project (Project). An awarded RAISE grant would be matched with state and local funding to advance a Complete Streets vision for the corridor, focusing on equitably improving safety, connectivity, and mobility.

The Project will reshape West National Avenue (WIS 59) between South 1st Street and South 39th Street, a 2.6-mile corridor that is the social, commercial, and cultural heart of Milwaukee's "Near South Side" area and located in the 4th Congressional District. Advanced deterioration of the present infrastructure necessitates action, providing an opportunity to reimagine National Avenue as a modern, community-oriented commercial corridor. The entirety of the Project corridor falls within census tracts identified as both Historically Disadvantaged Communities and Areas of Persistent Poverty, as defined by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Justice40 Initiative. All Project funds will be expended in the historically underserved neighborhoods along National Avenue.

The Project will replace all roadway pavement, curbs, and sidewalk, reimagining these assets to better meet the needs of the community it serves. Through this project, WisDOT seeks to modernize National Avenue into a Complete Street corridor suited for all travelers regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Features of the project include a complete reconceptualization of the public right of way by reducing travel lanes from four to two over most of the corridor, adding vertically separated bike lanes, improving pedestrian accommodations including crossing safety elements, and replacing all curb ramps to achieve ADA compliance. The Project will also upgrade street lighting and traffic signals throughout the corridor and increase green infrastructure to reduce runoff entering local waterways including the Kinnickinnic River. These transformative changes will occur in a way that continues existing bus service while improving transit stop features along the corridor.

According to WisDOT, National Avenue is listed in the Milwaukee Crash Analysis Report (2023) as part of Milwaukee's High Injury Network (HIN) for all analyzed travel modes. HIN corridors are those across the city where most fatal and serious injury crashes occur and are expected to occur if no changes are made to the street design. The segment of National Avenue from South 1st Street

to South 25th Street is identified for a full street transformation based on crash data and the report's prioritization criteria. The Project would deliver a transformed National Avenue to target well-documented pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist crashes through a modern urban roadway design that includes innovative traffic-calming methods such as raised crosswalks across side streets throughout the corridor and a pedestrian friendly raised intersection at South 4th Street. Complete Street improvements proposed along the corridor will also incentivize non-automobile travel by fostering a street environment that is safe for those walking, biking, and taking transit.

The condition of the roadway and related infrastructure requires timely action. Engineering and environmental documentation are already underway for the Project, indicating the readiness of the project partners to transform the corridor. The realization of project benefits, however, relies heavily upon funding.

The monumental changes planned for National Avenue are exemplary of the RAISE program and U.S. DOT's aims to foster safe travel that benefits environmental sustainability, mobility, resiliency, and connectivity through modern, innovative roadway design. These changes will provide access for walking, biking, and transit infrastructure with increased safety for all road users and further seeks to improve quality of life and economic competitiveness in the historically disadvantaged communities that call the National Avenue area home.

In closing, I ask that you give your highest consideration to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) application to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant application. Thank you for your consideration of this important project and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwen Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gwen" and last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

Gwen Moore
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

GM/SE