

March 12, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities region is pleased to support the US Highway 212 Rural Freight Mobility and Safety Project as a priority project for consideration in the small project funding category under the US Department of Transportation (DOT) INFRA program. This important project in Carver County will expand 2.5 miles of US Highway 212 from a two-lane undivided rural highway to a four-lane divided expressway facility west of the city of Cologne in the southwest area of the region. The region's overall highest priority for funding consideration is the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Council's joint submittal for the Interstate 494 project in the large project category, which provides widespread benefits to the region and state.

The 212 corridor is part of the National Highway System and is an important economic and highway freight corridor in the State of Minnesota and the Upper Midwest region, connecting the Twin Cities to South Dakota and beyond. US Highway 212 provides a critical connection for agricultural and industrial areas throughout the region. In addition, it is identified as a high priority "Tier One" Truck Corridor by the Metropolitan Council, the region's MPO. In late 2020, the MPO also awarded part of the project \$3.5M indicating the freight, mobility, and safety needs of the project.

This project will benefit the highway freight network, improving a critical connection to and from the Twin Cities metropolitan area and meet the priority objectives of the INFRA funding program by emphasizing economic vitality, leveraging non-federal funding sources of infrastructure investment, and deploying innovative technology and financing approaches.

As the region's MPO, the Metropolitan Council is committed to amending the TIP and long-range transportation plan to include this project if the project is fully funded.

On behalf of Metropolitan Council, I would encourage your support for Carver County's small area category application for the US Highway 212 Freight Mobility and Safety Project.

Sincerely,



Charlie Zelle, Chair
Metropolitan Council