

November 25, 2024

Re: Local funding and support for the *Federal Highway Administration FY2023 & FY 2024 National Scenic Byway Program Grant Application* project titled: ***Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway Project***.

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington D.C.. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of The Forks Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to you in support of the project to create inviting visitor centers in two locations on the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway (OCR), one of America's oldest scenic byways and located on a major state highway to Quebec, Canada. As a local organization composed of business owners and community members, we have a stake in the economic benefits of a byway, and the visitor experiences that can be enhanced by this project. Because of this, we enthusiastically support the efforts of the OCR Board of Directors as they seek funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

How do we invite people into our trail-friendly communities? How do we enhance sites on the byway that enhance our communities? Fortunately, the Board of Directors of the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway have developed a proposal that attempts to address these two questions. Two locations, one in West Forks and one in The Forks form the basis of the FHWA funding proposal.

The C. E. Ball Field in West Forks will become a more inviting location for the communities to use and for visitors to enjoy and learn about the area. This location is the hub of the Forks Area Scenic Trail system with multimodal trails to access year-round.

The trailhead to the Forks Area Scenic Trails system located in The Forks is the *Gateway* to the heart of the byway. River access for boating and fishing, a trail for biking and walking along the Kennebec River, a family picnic/ play area, and kiosks to learn about the environment and the culture of the area are components of this project.

We join with other local organizations along the byway in supporting this project that gives us the opportunity to be intentional about how we invite people in.

Best Regards,

The Forks Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors,
Scarlett DeShong, Executive Director
Ben Towle, Board Vice President
Cindy Russell, Board Secretary
Suzie Hockmeyer, Board Director
Kerri Goodwin, Board Director
Lindsay Doria, Board Director
Mallory Newton, Board Director
Joe Christopher, Director

Emily Yearwood, Board President
Holly Towle, Board Treasurer
Kim Christopher, Board Director
Rachel Crommett, Board Director
Lindsey Weiser, Board Director
Jimmy Doria, Board Director
Chris Halpin, Board Director