

Good morning committee members. My name is Courtney Long. I am the Planning Director at the City of Red Lodge.

For over 100 years, the Roosevelt School has served as an important landmark on the south end of main street in Red Lodge. The 1920's building is located on Broadway Avenue and is highly visible. Visitors drive by the former school as they head toward Red Lodge Mountain or the Beartooth Highway headed to Yellowstone National Park.

Significant progress has been made to transform the vacant historic school to the Roosevelt Center, an arts & culture hub for the region. The Center contributes to the distinctive historic character of the town and through its ongoing restoration work, it will continue to serve an important role as people gather for performances, exhibits, and conferences. This directly reflects the goals and objectives laid out in the Red Lodge Revitalization Master Plan adopted by the Red Lodge City Council, which outlines stabilizing and expanding the economy, making Red Lodge a better place to work, and improving the city's physical appearance.

The Center lies within easy walking distance of the historic downtown commercial district. It is one of the few places in town capable of hosting a large gathering, and is within a walkable distance to local shops and hotels. The Red Lodge Central Business District extends along Broadway Avenue, U.S. Highway 212, from 5th Street to 14th Street, ending just two blocks from the Roosevelt Center.

Retaining the traditional character of downtown Red Lodge was one of the top issues listed by those developing the original 1995 Red Lodge Master Plan as well as subsequent Red Lodge Growth Policies (2001, 2008, 2013, and 2015). Red Lodge and area residents view the Central Business District and as the place where they shop, dine, conduct public business participate in events. Visitors and residents alike cherish and are charmed by its historic buildings and pedestrian scale.

Red Lodge's heavy snowfall, freeze and thaw cycles, and high winds gnaw at brick and stone buildings. Many of the more historic structures in Red Lodge have had issues with weather eating away at the mortar. At the Roosevelt Center, the windows are badly in need of repair and the chimney that stands above the building's third story has deteriorated to the point where it may soon become hazardous to people walking beneath it.

In 2021, local residents marked the 100th anniversary of the Roosevelt Center, and remembered their experiences as students at the former school. By making sure that this 1921 landmark gets the attention it needs, this project will ensure that the building can survive long into the future. Thank you for your consideration.