HUD letter gives support to Minot’s resilience plan

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A one-stop social service center, a technical education center, affordable housing and non-structural techniques to reduce flood risk were among projects that federal officials liked when awarding the City of Minot a $74.3 million grant in the National Disaster Resilience Competition this week.

The city is hoping foundations and other private groups will like the projects as well. The grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development could open the door to leverage other outside funds to support Minot's resilience efforts, according to city officials.

HUD anticipates the city will proceed with its full proposal, even though the federal grant will cover only part of the cost. The city will need funds from other sources to match the federal dollars and complete the projects.

The city still is waiting to hear from HUD about how the money from the competition will be spread over projects proposed in the city's $182.7 million application request. However, a letter from HUD to the city indicated that it is willing to partially fund all the projects the city outlined, specifically:

- Reduce flood risk and increase resilience. The flood risk reduction projects... reframe Minot's approach to flood risk reduction, from an infrastructure-only approach to a layered strategy of grey, green, and non-structural techniques to reduce risks and costs while adapting to a changing climate.
- Build affordable, resilient neighborhoods. So that people who move out of harm's way through the buy-out program can remain in Minot. For civilian military personnel at Minot Air Force Base who want to put down roots in our city. For our most vulnerable residents, including the elderly, the disabled and the homeless.
- Foster economic resilience and diversification. Three activities are included in this project. They are a Center for Technical Education, relocation of the MSU Art Department Complex to downtown, and moving City Hall outside of the flood plain along with a new one-stop social services facility.

"Your success is a testament to your extraordinary work to design a new way of rebuilding. The rest of the nation will be looking to your projects as a model of resilient recovery," HUD officials stated in the letter. The full amount of the award was listed as $74,340,770.

Once the competition results are published in the Federal Register, HUD and city staff will begin working through the steps necessary to receive the grant and determine specific funding for each of the projects, according to the city. The Federal Register system is an official legal information service of the U.S. government. It is uncertain when that publication will take place.

After publication happens, the city will have 90 days to develop an operational plan for spending the grant. A public meeting will be held to share that plan once developed.

Minot’s application can be viewed online by following the links for "Flood Control and Resilience" on the city’s website at minotnd.org.
During the process of developing the application, Minot representatives attended an event in Washington, D.C., where they were able to present an application draft to representatives of various foundations and to other people who had connections to private funding sources. The purpose was to gain input into improving the application and to learn about other potential funding sources.

Minot finance director Cindy Hemphill said the city will be following up and likely applying for assistance from these other sources after getting more information from HUD about the resiliency grant.

Various foundations target specific types of projects so the city will have to determine how its projects fit into those missions, she said.

Minot was one of 13 communities selected from 40 applications to share in about $1 billion. Other cities receiving awards were New York, $176 million; New Orleans, $141.3 million; and Springfield, Mass., $71.1 million. Shelby County in Tennessee received $60.4 million. States receiving grants were Virginia, $120.5 million; Iowa, $96.9 million; Louisiana, $92.6 million; California, $70.4 million; Connecticut, $54.3 million; Tennessee, $44.5 million; New York, $35.8 million; and New Jersey, $15 million.