

IOWA'S FARM-TO-MARKET NETWORK OF PROJECTS

2023-2024 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Opportunity

PROJECT READINESS

Project Name: Iowa's Farm-to-Market Network of Projects
Project Type: Rural – Network of Projects
Total Project Cost: \$41,966,538
FY 23/24 MPDG Funds Requested: \$29,628,321

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Supporting Information can be found at:
<https://www.srfconsulting.com/icea/>

CHICKASAW COUNTY, IOWA



ENGINEERS OFFICE & SECONDARY ROADS DEPT.



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CONTENTS

PROJECT READINESS	1
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK	1
TECHNICAL CAPACITY	4
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS.	4

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 SCHEDULE – CHICKASAW COUNTY V18 PROJECT	1
FIGURE 2 SCHEDULE – FAYETTE COUNTY W51 PROJECT.	1
FIGURE 3 SCHEDULE – GUTHRIE COUNTY F65 PROJECT	2
FIGURE 4 SCHEDULE – MITCHELL COUNTY T40 AND A23 PROJECT	2
FIGURE 5 SCHEDULE – WAPELLO COUNTY T61 PROJECT.	2
FIGURE 6 SCHEDULE – WEBSTER COUNTY D36 AND D20 PROJECT	2

TABLES

TABLE 1 PROJECT APPROVALS	3
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PROJECT READINESS

Guthrie County is leading this application on behalf of Chickasaw, Fayette, Mitchell, Wapello, and Webster Counties (herein known as the Project Counties) to request MPDG Rural grant funds for **Iowa's Farm-to-Market Network of Projects** (herein known as the Project). This [geographically diverse Project](#) consists of six sub-projects across nine census tracts in eight Counties and several small rural communities across Iowa.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

Project Counties and their partners, the Iowa County Engineers Association Service Bureau (ICEASB), the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), Howard County, Monroe County, and Cities of Alta Vista, Elma, Wadena, and Stacyville, have been champions of the Project and represent the culmination of aggressive planning efforts coordinated by all stakeholders and project partners. Guthrie County will serve as the Primary Agency responsible for administering the grant if awarded. The Iowa DOT Local Systems Bureau will provide oversight of project delivery. The Project has steadily maintained all major milestones per the detailed Project schedule linked [here](#).

Schedule

The Project schedule identifying major milestones and timelines is noted in Figures 1-6 below, for each sub-project. Project Counties guarantee that all necessary activities will be completed to allow FY 23/24 MPDG funds to be obligated sufficiently in advance of the statutory deadline (September 30, 2026). The Project is currently in the preliminary engineering design phase. Final designs will be submitted to the Iowa DOT for review and approval per the established, FHWA-approved [Local Systems Instructional Memorandums](#). The current construction cost estimates are based on 15 percent engineering design. Public engagement activities are to occur over the next year for all of the sub-projects. Minimal right-of-way acquisition may be required as most of the Project is being constructed within the existing right-of-way.

All six sub-projects will follow Iowa DOT's Standard Road Plans and I.M.s [3.210](#) and [3.220](#) to ensure consistency in design and construction. These design guidelines were created via a cooperative effort between the ICEASB and the Iowa DOT Local Systems Bureau and have been approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

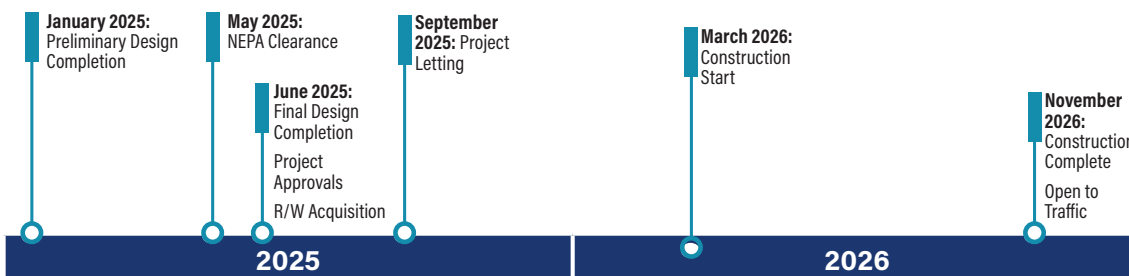


Figure 1 Schedule – Chickasaw County V18 Project



Figure 2 Schedule – Fayette County W51 Project

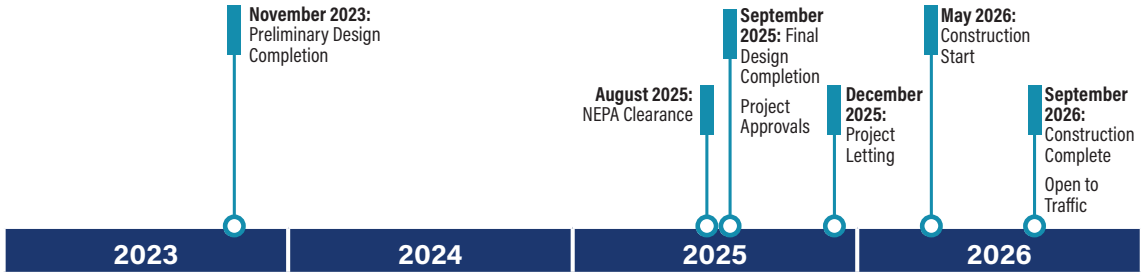


Figure 3 Schedule – Guthrie County F65 Project

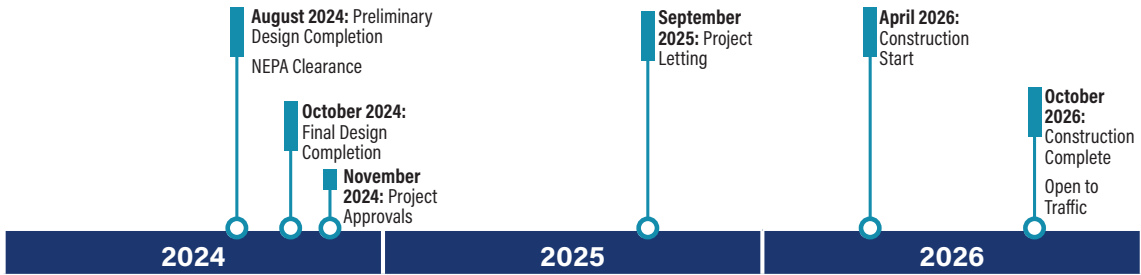


Figure 4 Schedule – Mitchell County T40 and A23 Project



Figure 5 Schedule – Wapello County T61 Project



Figure 6 Schedule – Webster County D36 and D20 Project

The Counties anticipate construction will begin between March and June 2026 and would be completed between July 2026 and September 2027, well within 18 months after the obligation deadline of September 30, 2026. Additionally, all sub-projects can begin construction quickly

upon obligation of grant funds, and the grant funds will be spent expeditiously once construction starts.

Required Approvals

Environmental Permits and Reviews

The Project is a network of six sub-projects, all of which are low impact overlay/reconstruction of an existing road on an existing alignment. All six sub-projects will be Programmatic Categorical Exclusions as none to minimal ground disturbances are anticipated. The Project Counties have initiated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and approval process and have drafted [Concept Statements](#) required by Iowa DOT as part of project submittal. A copy of the draft statements can be found [here](#).

Right-of-Way Acquisition Plans

All the required right-of-way for sub-projects in Fayette, Guthrie, Mitchell, and Wapello Counties has already been preserved and does not require further acquisition. Some right-of-way is required for sub-projects in Chickasaw and Webster Counties which will be acquired as the design progresses.

State and Local Approvals

Iowa DOT will act as a “pass-through” and will oversee this Project through the long-established Local Public Agency (LPA) processes as described in Iowa DOT Instructional Memorandums (I.M.s). This will ensure federal-aid project delivery compliance and will assist with procurement, NEPA documents, and right-of-way verification and acquisition. The Iowa DOT Bureau of Bridges and Structures conducts hydraulic reviews, when warranted. Structural design reviews are not necessary when using the aforementioned

Iowa Bridge Standards. Additionally, the Counties have further guidance through Iowa DOT’s Project Development Guide for Local Public Agencies. This guidance, vetted by Iowa FHWA, details all of the steps throughout the project development process, ensuring successful collaboration and support for the counties involved in this application. All of the sub-projects will be let through the Iowa DOT following standard, approved processes, including establishment of DBE goals, if applicable, and inclusion of Build America, Buy America requirements.

Upon receipt of Rural grant money, the Iowa DOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) will be amended with these funds for all six sub-projects. Iowa DOT estimates STIP amendment to take approximately three months, which can be easily accommodated within the project schedule.

The Project Counties do not expect impacts in complying with state and federal laws in regard to cultural resources, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, waterways, environmental regulations, utility relocation etc. The potential environmental risks of the Project are primarily limited to construction-related activities and minor impacts to the surrounding natural landscape, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and any adjacent residential populations. However, the Project Counties will obtain all applicable state and federal permits for the Project before commencing construction activities as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Project Approvals

Permits/Approvals	Agency	Action Required (Status)
Cultural & Historic Resources Evaluation	Iowa DOT in conjunction with the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	In-progress
Threatened and Endangered Species determination	Iowa DOT	To be acquired
Programmatic Type 1 Categorical Exclusion (NEPA Clearance)	Iowa DOT	To be acquired
Railroad Agreements	Union Pacific	To be acquired
Clean Water Act - 404 Permit	Corps of Engineers	To be acquired
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. 2	Iowa DNR	To be acquired

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Guthrie County and project partners are prepared to deliver the Project in accordance with the project schedule. The Project presents minimal environmental risks to the surrounding natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and adjacent populations. Potential impacts of the Project are almost entirely those experienced during construction. Project delivery risks have been minimized because:

- The design and environmental engineering work done to date lowers uncertainty around scope, impact, and cost. Project Counties anticipate having preliminary engineering and NEPA clearance finalized between March 2024 and September 2025 for all sub-projects, which allows the right-of-way acquisition processes to be completed by November 2025.
- The Project is noncontroversial and is supported by all project partners. Project Counties have maintained ongoing coordination with ICEASB, Iowa DOT, the partnering Cities and Counties, and other stakeholders.
- The Project is not in proximity to a recreational area (i.e., park, playground, trail, greenbelt, etc.) or wildlife refuge and will not have significant noise, air quality, or water quality impacts.
- All required right-of-way for sub-projects in Fayette, Guthrie, Mitchell, Wapello, and Webster Counties has already been preserved and does not require further acquisition. Some right-of-way is required for projects in Chickasaw and Webster Counties which will be acquired as the design progresses.
- Financial contingencies have been included in the cost estimate, amounting to 15 percent of all roadway construction costs to cover unanticipated cost increases.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY

Guthrie County is an experienced recipient of federal funding and has dedicated professional engineering and administrative staff resources for the development and delivery of the Project. Guthrie County is suitably equipped and has a track record of success delivering projects of similar size and scope in the past. The County Engineer is a full-time employee of Guthrie County and is in “responsible charge” of the Project as required by 23 CFR 635.

The Project Counties, ICEASB, and Iowa DOT will be partnering with local governments (Howard and Monroe Counties and Cities of Alta Vista, Elma, Wadena, and Stacyville) within the Project Corridor to deliver the Project.

The Project will be delivered under the oversight of the Iowa DOT Local Systems Bureau, who oversees over 300 new Local Public Agency (LPA)-led projects annually. Using the established Iowa DOT Instructional Memorandums, vetted, and approved by FHWA, Iowa Division, will ensure consistency with USDOT expectations for project procurement, contracting, development, administration, and construction. Iowa DOT has agreed to act as a pass-through agency, providing oversight, and acting in an advisory role, as described in the executed [28E agreement](#). The local stakeholders and project partners have created a focused vision through multiple planning efforts that will drive the completion of the proposed scope of work in a timely manner.

Guthrie County and project partners, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, will comply with all applicable Federal requirements including but not limited to Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR), and related statutes and regulations.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Links to supporting documents are included throughout this narrative. All supporting documents and the MPDG application narrative are also available to view at the following webpage:

<https://www.srfconsulting.com/icea/>